

**A GLORIOUS INSTITUTION: THE CHURCH IN HISTORY**

**LEADER'S STUDY GUIDE**

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**Part One: When the Church was Young AD 33 – 754**

**Part Two: The Church in the Middle Ages AD 754 – 1517**

**A Glorious Institution: The Church in History**

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## **WHEN THE CHURCH WAS YOUNG**

*This first course will focus on the early growth of the Christian Church as it developed from a small assembly of believers in Jerusalem to become a vast spiritual kingdom touching the lives of millions in many lands. As the Church grew in numbers and acquired territory, it developed a specific form of organization and government. Carefully worded doctrinal statements of beliefs under the influence of the Apostolic Fathers and the guidance of Church councils were issued to form the creeds of Christendom. Included in this early period is the study of the persecution of the saints at the hands of Jews and then the Gentiles. We shall observe how the Church was delivered from death and destruction to become the official guiding spiritual force of the Roman Empire. Finally, this first study will close by examining how the tremendous task of fulfilling the Great Commission was realized.*

# A GLORIOUS INSTITUTION: THE CHURCH IN HISTORY

## PART ONE

### WHEN THE CHURCH WAS YOUNG

AD 33-754

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# WHEN THE CHURCH WAS YOUNG

## CHAPTER 1

### THE BIRTH OF THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH

#### THE BACKGROUND OF THE CHURCH

The story of human history may rightly be called "His-story" or the story of God's work in the affairs of man. There is a grand central theme to be found in history and that is redeeming love. The Bible teaches us that, "*God so loved the world He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life*" (John 3:16). The Son was given about 2,000 years ago. Born in humility, raised in obscurity, Jesus Christ came in the fullness of time (Gal. 3:8) to accomplish the great act of redeeming His people from their sins (Matt. 1:21). The Lord of Glory came to earth through the lineage of the house of David in the nation of Israel. The Hebrew people were privilege to be the recipients of Divine truth. Their prophets predicted the Messiah was to come. And He came. Matthew was careful to record many incidents in the life of the Lord and then wrote, "*That it might be fulfilled which was spoken through the prophets*" (Matt. 2:15; 4:14; 8:17; 12:17; 21:4). Most people in Palestine during the days of the Lord's earthly ministry did not believe that the ancient prophecies were being fulfilled in the person of Jesus Christ. Because of this the religious leaders arrested Jesus. He was tried, sentenced, and executed on a wooden cross at Calvary (Matt. 27:27-35). But on the third day Jesus arose from the dead (Matt. 28:1-6). His resurrection became the foundation on which the New Testament Church would be built (1 Cor. 15:3-8).

#### THE NATURE OF THE CHURCH

It was the Lord's desire to establish a spiritual kingdom (John 18:36) that would touch all the nations of earth (Matt. 28:19-20). It was the Lord's design to call unto Himself a peculiar people (1 Pet. 2:9) from every tongue and tribe (Rev. 5:9) who would be in-dwelt and empowered by the Holy Spirit (John 14:16,26). This called out assembly would be the most glorious institution (Eph. 5:25-27).

#### THE PHYSICAL PREPARATION FOR THE CHURCH

To enhance the physical spread of the gospel in "the fullness of time" (Gal. 4:4), God used the Roman Empire. Peace and safety replaced tribal warfare. Widespread and easy travel was made possible through a network of roads and bridges like the famous Via Apia on the Italian peninsula. The pirates were driven from the sea to protect travelers and trade. Roman justice was swift and severe which reduced robbery and rioting.

## **THE SPIRITUAL PREPARATION FOR THE CHURCH**

While physical conditions of Roman life helped the cause of Christ, there was a spiritual and intellectual hunger in the hearts of people. The Greek altars and philosophy which had "conquered" Rome caused many people to doubt the multitude of gods with their fatal flaws. Myths and legends abounded. Superstitious travelers considered it wise to sail under the figurehead of two Greek gods, the Dioscuri or "Twin Brothers," Castor and Pollux, sons of Zeus and patrons of seafarers. The state religion of Rome offered no real change of heart or life. There was a moral vacuum as individuals became saturated with sins of the flesh. Then came the gospel with its promises of peace from troubled consciences, pardon from all sin, and rest for heavy hearts. In Christ, people could find assurance of salvation, divine forgiveness, and eternal life for Jesus was the Son of God.

## **THE RAPID EXPANSION**

Armed with a powerful message of hope the early Church was poised for rapid expansion. The primary cause for the expansion was the sovereign movement of God visiting people and converting hearts. The book of Acts is careful to record that "the Lord added to the Church daily such as should be saved" (Acts 2:47). As God worked directly so He also worked through secondary causes such as the stoning of Stephen (Acts 7:54-60) and the persecution by Saul and other religious leaders (Acts 8:1-3). The Church was forced to flee for protection. In the flight to safety the gospel was still shared, some were saved, and the Church grew.

## **THE CHARACTER OF THE CHURCH**

People looked at the suffering saints and were impressed. The Gentiles wanted to come to Christ and were welcomed (Acts 10:44-48). People looked at the spiritual body of the earthly Church and found it attractive. An enthusiastic belief that Jesus was alive, the good news of eternal life, high moral standards, followed by miraculous power (Acts 4:33) caused sinners to seek out the Savior. In addition, individuals were impressed with the unity of the saints (Acts 2:44), their firm doctrinal conviction (Acts 2:42), their acts of generosity (Acts 2:45), their joy (Acts 2:46), and the success that was present (Acts 2:41, 47).

Unfortunately, the early New Testament Church soon knew the pain of corruption and dissension as the world, the flesh, and the devil found a way into the local assemblies. Division, taking others to court, drunkenness during communion, open immorality, greed, pride, posturing for position and many other sins were manifested. Still, in spite of transgressions, in spite of human failures, in spite of outward fears and inward corruption, the gates of hell would not destroy the Church (Matt. 16: 17-18). In the power of the Holy Spirit, the Stone which the builders rejected was about to fill the earth (cf. Dan. 2:35).



## SELECTED EARLY CHURCH LEADERS

### APOSTOLIC FATHERS

Clement of Rome	died	c. AD	100
Ignatius	died	c. AD	107
Hermas of Rome	died	c. AD	150
Polycarp of Smyrna		c. AD	156
Barnabas of Alexandria	died	c. AD	130
Papais		AD	60-130
Justin Martyr		AD	100-168

### CHURCH FATHERS

Melito of Sardis		c. AD 100 - 170
Hegesippus		c. AD 120 - 190
Tatian	died	c. AD 180
Irenaeus		c. AD 175 - 195
Tertullian		c. AD 160 - 225
Clement of Alexandria		c. AD 155 - 220
Origen		c. AD 185 - 254
Hippolytus		c. AD 160 - 236
Cyprian		c. AD 200 - 258
Lactanius		c. AD 240 - 320

## SELECTED EARLY WRITINGS OF THE CHURCH FATHERS

The Didache	
Apology of Aristides	
Apologies of Justin Martyr	
Shepherd of Hermes	
Dialogue with Trypho	
Epistle of Diognetus	
Epistle of Ignatius	
Epistle of Barnabas	
Epistle to the Corinthians	Clement
Epistle to the Philippians	Polycarp
The Sayings of the Lord	Polycarp
First Epistle of Clement	Clement of Rome
Second Epistle of Clement	Clement of Rome
Address to the Greeks	Tatian
Harmony of the Gospels	Tatian
Apologetics	Tertullian
Against Heresies	Irenaeus
The Miscellanies	Clement of Alexandria
Outlines of Scriptures	Clement of Alexandria
Against Celsus	Origen
Hexapla	Origen
Tetrapla	Origen
Ecclesiastical History	Eusebius
Confessions	Augustine
Revisions	Augustine
Concerning the Trinity	Augustine
Concerning Christian Doctrine	Augustine
City of God	Augustine

# WHEN THE CHURCH WAS YOUNG

## Leader's Study Guide

### CHAPTER 1

#### The Birth of the New Testament Church

#### ASSIGNMENTS

#### RESPONSE

1. What is meant by a Divine interpretation of history?

*Answer.* The story of human history may rightly be called "His-story" or the story of God's work in the affairs of man.

2. What is the central theme to be found in history? Write out the supportive Scriptural references.

*Answer.* The Bible teaches us that, "*God so loved the world He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life*" (John 3:16).

3. In establishing the Church, what was the Lord's grand design according to 1 Peter 2:9?

*Answer.* *1 Peter 2:9 But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light:* It was the Lord's desire to establish a spiritual kingdom (John 18:36) that would touch all the nations of earth (Matt. 28:19-20). It was the Lord's design to call unto Himself a peculiar people (1 Pet. 2:9) from every tongue and tribe (Rev. 5:9) who would be in-dwelt and empowered by the Holy Spirit (John 14:16,26).

4. How did the Roman Empire enhance the physical spread of the gospel?

*Answer.* To enhance the physical spread of the gospel in "the fullness of time" (Gal. 4:4), God used the Roman Empire. Peace and safety replaced tribal warfare. Widespread and easy travel was made possible through a network of roads and bridges like the famous Via Apia on the Italian peninsula. The pirates were driven from the sea to protect travelers and trade. Roman justice was swift and severe which reduced robbery and rioting.

5. How did Greek culture help the people to accept the gospel?

*Answer.* The Greek altars and philosophy which had "conquered" Rome caused many people to doubt the multitude of gods with their fatal flaws. Myths and legends abounded. Superstitious travelers considered it wise to sail under the figurehead of two Greek gods, the Dioscuri or "Twin Brothers," Castor and Pollux, sons of Zeus and patrons of seafarers. The state religion of Rome offered no real change of heart or life. There was a moral vacuum as individuals became saturated with sins of the flesh.

## **REFLECTION**

1. Briefly describe what you believe will help build up the local body of believers. Include Scripture in your response.
2. What are some of the sins of the saints and why are such sins still found in the sanctuary?
2. Despite inward corruption, what did Jesus promise concerning the Church in Matthew 16:18? Has this promise been fulfilled even to date? What is the evidence?

## **ACCOUNTABILITY**

Have you read all of the passages in the text?

## **WHEN THE CHURCH WAS YOUNG**

### **CHAPTER 2**

**AD 33-313**

#### **THE SUFFERING SAINTS**

##### **THE AGE OF HEROES**

The Greek word *thilipsis* is a very important word in the Christian vocabulary for it speaks of tribulation. Christ has forewarned His disciples that they shall know something about suffering for righteousness by saying, "If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you" (John 15:20). During the first three hundred years of its existence, sometimes called The Heroic Age of the Church, the people of God knew persecution.

##### **THE APOSTOLIC CHURCH IS PERSECUTED**

Peter was put in prison for preaching the gospel (Acts 12:5). Stephen and James died violently as faithful witnesses to Christ (Acts 7:59-60; 12:1-2). While in Corinth, Paul was taken by force into the court of the Roman governor Gallio (Acts 18:12).

At first the sufferings of the Church came primarily from the Jewish community. With the passing of time, the attitude of the Roman government toward the Christian community changed as specific charges were made. Christians were accused of atheism, cannibalism, immorality, and antisocial behavior.

The charge of atheism arose because Christians refused to worship the emperor or the gods of Rome. The charge of cannibalism was based upon a misunderstanding of the celebration of the Lord's Supper. Spiritual language of eating the body of Christ and drinking His blood was taken literally by those who were not spiritually minded (1 Cor. 11:23-26).

Because religious services were often conducted in secret or after dark out of necessity and because Christians displayed great love for each other, they were accused of immorality. Finally, since many Christians found it necessary to remove themselves from public life rather than honor false gods in the same social gathering or engage in unholy relationships (2 Cor. 6:14), the charge of being antisocial was leveled.

The blood of the early Church flowed freely. Leading the path to martyrdom were the Apostles (1 Cor. 4:9). According to tradition each of the Apostles met a violent death with the exception of John. But even he suffered for righteousness sake.

- Simon Peter, the first notable leader of the Church (Acts 1-15; Gal.2: 9) was executed at Rome. It is said that he was crucified upside down (John 21:18,19).
- James, the son of Zebedee, preached in Judea. Herod Antipas about A. D. 44 beheaded him (Acts 12:1,2).
- John, the son of Zebedee, labored in Jerusalem, and then from Ephesus among the Churches of Asia Minor. He was banished to the isle of Patmos, liberated and died a natural death at Ephesus (John 21:20-23).
- Andrew, once a disciple of John the Baptist, preached in Scythia, Greece, and Asia Minor. He died by crucifixion.
- Philip, preached in Phrygia, and died a martyr's death at Hierapolis.
- Bartholomew became a missionary in Armenia. He was flayed to death.
- Thomas labored in Parthia, Persia, and India. He suffered martyrdom near Madras, at Mount St. Thomas.
- Matthew ministered in Ethiopia and was martyred.
- James the Less preached in Palestine and Egypt where he was finally crucified.
- Jude preached in Assyria and Persia where he was martyred.
- Simon the Zealot was crucified.
- Judas Iscariot hanged himself following the betrayal of Christ (Matt. 26:14-16; 27:3-5; Acts 1:16-20).

Of the twelve original disciples, one committed suicide, one died a natural death, ten suffered martyrdom, four of them by crucifixion.

# **THE GLORY AND THE POWER OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE**

## **THE ROMAN EMPERORS FROM AUGUSTUS TO COMMODUS**

### **THE JULIO - CLAUDIAN DYNASTY**

BC 30 - AD 14	Augustus
AD 14 - 37	Tiberius
AD 37 - 41	Gaius (Caligula)
AD 41 - 54	Claudius
AD 54 - 68	Nero

### **THE YEAR OF THE FOUR EMPERORS AND THE FLAVIAN DYNASTY**

AD 68	Galba
AD 69	Otho
AD 69	Vitellius
AD 69 - 79	Vespasian
AD 79 - 81	Titus
AD 81 - 96	Domitian

### **THE ANTONINE EMPERORS**

AD 96 - 98	Nerva
AD 98 - 117	Trajan
AD 117 - 138	Hadrian
AD 138 - 161	Antoninus Pius
AD 161 - 180	Marcus Aurelius
AD 161 - 169	Lucius Verus
AD 180 - 192	Commodus

## **A BEAST NAMED NERO**

One reason why the attitude of the Roman government changed toward the Christians was the need for someone to blame for a tragic fire that occurred in AD 64 during the reign of the emperor Nero. Beginning on June 18, the fire burned brightly for six days and seven nights destroying the greater part of the city. Ten of the fourteen sections of the city were destroyed. Initially, Nero himself was suspected of starting the fire. His dreams of rebuilding the ancient city were well known. In all probability, Nero was several miles away in his palace at Antium. As soon as he heard the news he went to Rome and tried to fight the fire. Still, the people clamored for justice.

In order to dispel the rumors and growing hostility away from himself, Nero accused the Christians of starting the fire. The accusation seemed plausible in view of the fact that the Church taught that Jesus was coming again and the earth was to be destroyed by fire (1 Peter 3:10). And so terrible persecution came to the Church. Some Christians were sewn up in the skins of wild beasts. Fierce dogs were let loose upon them and their bodies were ripped to pieces. On at least one occasion, Nero held a dinner party in which he burned Christians at the stake. His purpose was to use them to illuminate the nighttime skies when daylight ended. And so the slaughter of Christians went. The tides of hostility ebbed and flowed in strength from AD 68 onward. Only one thing was constant. Christians were made to hurt and die because of their faith.

## **IGNATIUS, JUSTIN, AND POLYCARP**

Standing out among the martyrs of the early Church were Ignatius, a Syrian bishop of Antioch; Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna; and Justin, the apologist who wrote extensively and spoke verbally in defense of Christianity. These leaders and others are sometimes called "Church Fathers" because of the esteem in which loyal members of the local assemblies held them. The men who led God's people from AD 90 to 460 are frequently divided into four groups.

- |                     |            |                                                                          |
|---------------------|------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| • Apostolic Fathers | AD 90-150  | Edified the Church                                                       |
| • Apologists        | AD 130-180 | Defended the Church against Roman persecution                            |
| • Polemicists       | AD 180-225 | Defended the Church against internal heresy                              |
| • Theologians       | AD 225-460 | Made a serious attempt to harmonize Christianity with popular philosophy |



**IGNATIUS (AD 67-110).** About AD 110, Ignatius was ordered by the Roman authorities to be arrested because of his Christian profession and was sent to Rome to be executed by being thrown to the wild beasts. The emperor at this time was Trajan (AD 98-117) who was usually a moderate ruler. Though he did fear secret societies, it was not Trajan's official policy to engage in random persecutions of Christians. He allowed no arrests to be made solely on the basis of anonymous tips. However, an open profession of faith could be dangerous as Ignatius discovered. Because of his confession of Christ, he was arrested and sent to Rome. Along the way Ignatius wrote letters to different congregations stressing the importance of Church unity. Unity, he taught, was to be enhanced by rooting out all heresies denying the deity of Christ. Finally, the hour of death came. Ignatius met his fate unafraid saying, "May the wild beasts be eager to rush upon me. If they be unwilling, I will compel them. Come, crowds of wild beasts; come, tearing and mangling, wracking of bone and hacking of limbs; come, cruel tortures of the devil; only let me attain unto Christ."

**JUSTIN MARTYR (c. 100-165).** As Ignatius faced death bravely so did the philosopher Justin Martyr who was scourged and beheaded in Rome with six other Christians. Born about AD 100 in a small town in Samaria, Justin was a natural scholar. After studying the various philosophical systems of his day, he embraced Christianity and became a capable defender of the faith. He wrote two apologies to the emperor Antonius Pius (AD 161-180) and his adopted son, Marcus Aurelius, (who would one day reign from AD 138-161) and a dialogue with Trypho the Jew. [Note: The word "apology" in the basic meaning signifies "defense" and is so used by the Apologists.] In the dialogue with Trypho, Justin contended that Jesus was the Messiah.

On his second stay in the city of Rome, Justin engaged in a public debate with a philosopher by the name of Crescens. Shortly thereafter, about AD 166, he was put to death by Marcus Aurelius, who was probably influenced by pagan philosophies. Justin's last words were, "We desire nothing more than to suffer for our Lord Jesus Christ; for this gives us salvation and joyfulness before His dreadful judgment seat."

**POLYCARP (AD 70-156).** Perhaps the best known of the early martyrs is Polycarp who ministered in Asia Minor (modern Turkey) as a bishop of Smyrna. He was a disciple of the Apostle John. In his messages to the Church, Polycarp emphasized faith in Christ and the necessity of working out faith in daily life. When the hour of his execution came, the proconsul offered Polycarp a way to escape. "Revile Christ, and I will release you," said the proconsul. But Polycarp replied, "Eighty and six years have I served Him, and He has never done me wrong: how can I blaspheme Him, my King, who has saved me? I am a Christian."

**MARCUS AURELIUS (AD 161-180).** Though he is now famous for his thoughtful Meditations, the emperor Marcus Aurelius proved to be a terrible foe of Christianity. It was his decree that the property of Christians should be given to those who accused them. As a result of this policy, ruthless individuals came forward with false accusations against the saints.

Christians were sought out, brought to trial, convicted, and condemned. Their property was confiscated and given away.

In Lyons and Vienne in southern Gaul (France) persecution was severe. Christians who could not be made to deny their faith were beheaded if Roman citizens. Others were thrown to wild beasts in the arena of the amphitheater. One such martyr was Blandina. She had been a spectator of the death of others, exhorting them to remain faithful to the very end. Among those who died was Ponticus, her fifteen year old brother. Finally, Blandina's moment came. She entered the arena. A net was thrown over her and she was tortured in various ways including being burned in a frying pan. In the end, she was put in a basket and exposed to the fury of a raging bull which took her upon his horns and tossed her into the air. Death came swiftly after that. Blandina's body along with others were burned and the ashes thrown into the river Rhone. Along the banks of the river stood the heathen laughing and saying to one another, "Now we shall see whether there will be a resurrection of their bodies." But even the heathen acknowledged that never in their experience had a woman endured so many terrible sufferings.

**DECLINE AND FALL OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE**  
**AD 193 - 476**  
**THE HOUSE OF SEVERUS**

- Pertinax AD 193
- Didius Julianus AD 193
- Septimius Severus AD 193 - 211
- Pescennius Niger AD 193 - 195
- Clodius Albinus AD 195 - 197
- Caracalla AD 211 - 217
- Geta AD 211
- Macrinus AD 217 - 218
- Elagabalus AD 218 - 222
- Alexander Severus AD 222 - 235

**THE STRUGGLE FOR SURVIVAL**

- Maximinus AD 235 - 238
- Gordian I AD 238
- Gordian II AD 238
- Balbinus AD 238
- Pupienus AD 238
- Gordian III AD. 238 - 244
- Phillips AD 244 - 249
- Trajanus Decius AD 249 - 251
- Trebonianus Gallus AD 251 - 253
- Aemilian AD 253
- Valerian AD 253 - 260
- Gallienus AD 253 - 268

**THE PERIOD OF MILITARY MIGHT**

- Claudius II Gothicus AD 268 - 270
- Quintillus AD 270
- Aurelian AD 270 - 275
- Tacitus AD 275 - 276
- Florian AD 276
- Probus AD 276 - 282
- Carus AD 282 - 283
- Carinus AD 283 - 285
- Numerian AD 283 - 284

## **THE TETRARCHY AND THE DYNASTY OF CONSTANTINE**

- Diocletian AD 284 – 305
- Maximian AD 286 - 305/207-308
- Carausius AD 286/287 – 293
- Constantius I Chlorus AD 305 – 306
- Galerius AD 305 – 311
- Severus II AD 306 – 307
- Maxentius AD 306 – 312
- Constantine AD 306 - 337
- Licinius AD 308 - 324
- Maximinus II Daia AD 310 - 313
- Constantine II AD 337 - 340
- Constantius II AD 337 - 361
- Constans I AD 337 - 361
- Magnentius AD 350 - 353
- Julian the Apostate AD 361 -363
- Jovian AD 363 – 364

## **THE HOUSE OF VALENTINIAN RULERS OF THE WEST**

- Valentinian AD 364 - 375
- Valens [East] AD 364 - 378
- Gratian AD 375 - 383
- Valentinian II AD 375 - 392
- Theodosius I The Great AD 379 – 395 [East then the whole empire]
- Magnus Maximus AD 383 - 388
- Arcadius [East] AD 395 - 408
- Honorius AD 395 - 423
- Constantine III AD 407 - 411
- Theodosius II [East] AD 408 - 450
- Constantius III AD 421
- Johannes AD 423 - 425
- Valentinian III AD 425 - 455

**THE SURVIVAL OF THE EASTERN PART OF  
THE ROMAN EMPIRE  
AND  
THE FALL OF THE WEST**

- Marcian [East] AD 450 - 457
- Petronius Maximus AD 455
- Avitus AD 455 - 456
- Leo I the Great [East] AD 457 - 474
- Majorian AD 457 - 461
- Libius Severus AD 461 - 465
- Anthemius AD 467 - 472
- Olybrius AD 472
- Glycerius AD 473 - 474
- Julius Nepos AD 474 - 475/477-480
- Zeno AD 474 - 475 [West] 476 - 491 [East ]
- Basiliscus [East] AD 475 - 476
- Romulus Augustulus AD 475 - 476

**PEACE BEFORE PERSECUTION**

With the death of Marcus Aurelius (AD 180), a general period of peace came to the Church which lasted about seventy years. There was one exception to this peace as persecution broke out during the reign of Septimius Severus (AD 200-211). Great violence broke out against Christians in Egypt. Along with many others who were put to death for the faith was Origen (c.AD 185-254), the most famous of the Alexandrian writers. Origen encouraged the allegorical interpretation of the Scriptures. Simply stated, this method of understanding the Scriptures holds that the literal meaning of the Bible conceals a deeper meaning which can only be perceived by the mature believer. This concealing of the truth by God under the guise of common words was designed to prevent pearls from being cast before the unbelieving.

**RENEWED EFFORTS OF DESTRUCTION**

In AD 249 another general persecution of the Church broke out under the emperor Decius. In the providence of the Lord, his reign only lasted two years (AD 249-251). Then came Valerian (AD 253 - 260) and the Church suffered again. There was hardly any reprieve. Hostility was endured through the reigns of Galienus (AD 260 -268), Aurelian (AD 270 -275) and on into the reign of the emperor Diocletian (AD 284 - 305). Perhaps the most severe of all the persecutions came under Diocletian. Beginning in February 303, three edicts of persecution were issued in quick succession. The Churches were to be burned, all sacred books were to be confiscated, and the religious leaders were to be imprisoned or compelled to offer a sacrifice. Many lives were lost. Mental cruelty was added to physical hardships as Satan's servants assaulted the Church in order

to destroy it completely. During these dark days many Christians in the city of Rome found a small place of security. Under the city in the soft stone were the catacombs. These underground passageways winded and crisscrossed in every direction making up over 500 miles of subterranean passages thirty or more feet below the surface. In the sides of the galleries or passages, excavations were made in rows upon rows so that the dead could be buried. Here among the burial chambers the living found a hiding place.

## **THE GRACE OF GALERIUS**

Despite her great hardships, the Church never lost hope and the Lord began to honor such faith. When the emperor of the East, Galerius, became ill, he suffered excruciating torment. In his hours of agony Galerius had opportunity to consider the pain of the Christians. In the will of the Lord, Galerius manifested a measure of grace. From his deathbed, he issued in the year AD 311, an edict granting Christians permission to worship freely. He even invited prayers for his own soul. By receiving more freedom to worship, and by manifesting a willingness to pray for one's enemies, little by little, the Church began to gain the spiritual victory that Jesus had promised (Matt. 16:18).

## **DOCTRINE OF TRIBULATION**

1. The word "tribulation" is found twenty two times in the Authorized Version. The word "tribulations" is found four times.
2. To suffer tribulation (Gk. thlipsis) is to suffer affliction, to be troubled, to suffer due to the pressure of circumstances, or the antagonism of persons.
3. In examining the passages that speak of tribulation it becomes evident that all God's people in all ages have known emotional, spiritual, and physical affliction (Deut. 4:30; Judg. 10:14; 1 Sam. 26:24; 1 Sam. 10:19; Matt. 13:21).
4. Tribulation also comes to those who are not God's people in the form of Divine discipline (Matt. 24:21, 29; Mk. 13:24; 2 Thess. 1:6; Rom. 2:9).
5. Of particular concern is the Christian and tribulation. The Bible clearly makes the following statements:
  - The disciples of Christ for as long as they are in the world shall have tribulation (John 16:33).
  - Only through much tribulation will the saints enter into the kingdom (Acts 14:22).
  - The value of tribulation is that it works patience (Rom. 5:3; 12:12).

- To endure tribulation is not to be loved less by Christ for nothing shall separate Christians from His faithful love (Rom. 8:35).
  - God finds a special way to comfort the saints who suffer (2 Cor. 1:4).
  - Paul could find reasons to rejoice in the very midst of tribulation Cor. 7:4; Rom.5:3; 2 Thess.1:4) and therefore did not want anyone else to worry on his behalf (Eph. 3:13).
  - When believers at Thessalonica were surprised at the suffering they had to endure Paul reminded them he had taught that Christians must suffer (1 Thess. 3:4).
  - John on the isle of Patmos does not divorce himself from tribulation nor does he ever say of himself that he represents those who shall not suffer tribulation. On the contrary John considers himself at the moment of his writing to be a companion in suffering (Rev. 1:9).
  - The tribulation of the saints is well known to the Lord (Rev. 2:9,10) and is for a stated purpose.
  - Always, God's people emerge victorious out of tribulation no matter how great (Rev. 7:14).
6. In all the Biblical passages there is not a single word that God will spare His people from the purifying effects of tribulation. Just the opposite is stated and demonstrated time and again.
  7. The story of the Old Testament, the writing of the New Testament, the documentation of 2,000 years of history testify to the blood of the saints in the Church.
  8. Any teaching which seeks to exempt God's people from tribulation during any period of human history will not find support from the twenty six passages which uses this word.

# WHEN THE CHURCH WAS YOUNG

## Leader's Study Guide

### CHAPTER 2

#### The Suffering Saints – AD 33-313

#### RESPONSE

1. Why should the Church never be surprised when it is persecuted?

*Answer.* Christ has forewarned His disciples that they shall know something about suffering for righteousness by saying, "If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you" (John 15:20).

2. What were some of the slanderous charges leveled against the early Church and why were such ugly things said?

*Answer.* Christians were accused of atheism, cannibalism, immorality, and antisocial behavior. The charge of atheism arose because Christians refused to worship the emperor or the gods of Rome. The charge of cannibalism was based upon a misunderstanding of the celebration of the Lord's Supper. Spiritual language of eating the body of Christ and drinking His blood was taken literally by those who were not spiritually minded (1 Cor. 11:23-26). Because religious services were often conducted in secret or after dark out of necessity and because Christians displayed great love for each other, they were accused of immorality. Finally, since many Christians found it necessary to remove themselves from public life rather than honor false gods in the same social gathering or engage in unholy relationships (2 Cor. 6:14), the charge of being antisocial was leveled.

3. What important event took place beginning on June 18, AD 64?

*Answer.* Beginning on June 18, the fire burned brightly for six days and seven nights destroying the greater part of the city. Ten of the fourteen sections of the city were destroyed. Initially, Nero himself was suspected of starting the fire.

4. Identify: Ignatius, Justin Martyr, and Polycarp.

*Answer.*

- IGNATIUS (AD 67-110), a Syrian bishop of Antioch.
- JUSTIN MARTYR (c. 100-165). an apologist.



- POLYCARP (AD 70 – 156), bishop of Smyrna.

5. List four groups of the Apostolic Fathers and their dates.

- |                     |            |                                                                             |
|---------------------|------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| • Apostolic Fathers | AD 90-150  | Edified the Church                                                          |
| • Apologists        | AD 130-180 | Defended the Church<br>against Roman persecution                            |
| • Polemicists       | AD 180-225 | Defended the Church against<br>internal heresy                              |
| • Theologians       | AD 225-460 | Made a serious attempt to harmonize<br>Christianity with popular philosophy |

6. Who was Blandina?

*Answer.* She had been a spectator of the death of others, exhorting them to remain faithful to the very end. Among those who died was Ponticus, her fifteen year old brother. Finally, Blandina's moment came. She entered the arena. A net was thrown over her and she was tortured in various ways including being burned in a frying pan. In the end, she was put in a basket and exposed to the fury of a raging bull which took her upon his horns and tossed her into the air. Death came swiftly after that. Blandina's body along with others were burned and the ashes thrown into the river Rhone.

7. When was the persecution of the Christians the worst?

*Answer.* Perhaps the most severe of all the persecutions came under Diocletian. Beginning in February 303, three edicts of persecution were issued in quick succession.

8. Which emperor showed grace to the Church from his bed of affliction?

*Answer.* From his deathbed, Galerius issued in the year AD 311, an edict granting Christians permission to worship freely. He even invited prayers for his own soul.

## REFLECTION

9. Have you ever experienced any form of persecution for the cause of Christ? If so, would you share that experience?

10. Do you think that you would be able to be faithful even unto death if the Lord required that of you?

## ACCOUNTABILITY

11. Have you read all of the passages in the text?

# **WHEN THE CHURCH WAS YOUNG**

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **THE FOUNDATIONS OF FAITH**

**AD 33-325**

#### **CHURCH DOCTRINE AND ORGANIZATION**

Bible doctrine is essential to proper spiritual maturity (Prov. 4:2; 1 Tim. 4:13). Sound doctrine is the foundation of faith (Tit. 1:9). What people believe about sin, salvation, the Scriptures, and the Savior will determine their eternal destiny as well as their relationship with God the Father (John 7:17). Doctrine does not divide the Church as much as it unites the saints around the truth that has been entrusted for preservation and proclamation (Jude 1:3). Any attempt to minimize the importance of doctrine should be challenged (2 John 1:9; 1:10). The Church of Jesus Christ would not be the powerful force it is in the world today apart from the faithful defense of basic Bible doctrine. While it is unfortunate that controversies about doctrine occur, such discussions are necessary (1 Cor. 11:18,19) as they form an essential part of the history of the Church.

#### **THE IMPORTANCE OF DOCTRINE**

The importance of Bible doctrine is demonstrated in the life of Christ. People were astonished at His words (Matt. 7:28; 22:33; Mark 11:18; Luke 4:32). Through doctrinal teaching Jesus set forth the reality of His kingdom and how the citizens of His domain should live. The disciples the Lord chose to be with Him learned His thoughts well. His doctrine became their doctrine. Following the Lord's ascension into heaven, new converts were taught with the result being that they continued steadfast in the apostle's doctrine (Acts 2:42). As a result, the Church grew stronger (Acts 5:28).

#### **A CANON OF SCRIPTURE FOR THE CHURCH THE OLD TESTAMENT**

The early Church trusted the apostle's doctrine because they knew it was grounded in the teachings of the Old Testament which was believed to be inspired by God (2 Tim. 3:16). While the Christian community did not embrace the idea that God inspired all men and all writings, there was selected material that was held to be unique. By the end of the first century AD thirty nine books were listed as being canonical according to Bishop Melito of Sardis (in modern Turkey). Bishop Melito had been asked by a friend to provide an accurate listing of the ancient books as to their number and order. He honored the request. Leaving out the book of Esther, the list Melito provided is recognized by Jews and Protestant today.

It had taken many centuries to determine which thirty nine books would be held in high esteem and which writings would not be received. But finally, the canon on the Old Testament was closed after centuries of consideration. God had been faithful to preserve His Word. The process of preserving the sacred scriptures started immediately after the first recording of the same. The divine revelations of the Old Testament began when specific speeches and sayings were written down. God Himself was the first author of holy Scripture according to Deuteronomy 5:22. It was the Lord who wrote the Ten Commandments in stone. Later, Moses put the Book of the Covenant, including the Ten Commandments into writing (Ex. 20:1 through 23:33). The people of Palestine promised to obey all that had been written and rehearsed in their hearing (Ex. 24:3-8) because they received it as the Word of God through Moses (Deut. 31:24-26).

Subsequent generations would also submit to these Scriptures. For example, in 625 B.C., when repairs were being made on the temple in Jerusalem, a scroll containing the Law of God was discovered. King Josiah had it read before all the people which led to a time of spiritual renewal (2 Kings 22-23). As the centuries passed other speeches or wise sayings were written down and recognized by the Hebrew people as being the authoritative voice of God. The message of Micah (3:9-12) caused King Hezekiah to repent (Jer. 26:17-19). It is Ezra who is credited with gathering the many Old Testament writings into the approximate collection we have today. When the collection of inspired material became enlarged Judas Maccabeus and his associates (c. 164 BC) divided the canonical books into three divisions: the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings. It was this division and this canon which Jesus accepted (Luke 24:44) and the early Church embraced.

## **THE NEW TESTAMENT**

While the Old Testament had taken many years to formulate, the New Testament scriptures were written within one hundred years of each other. However, like the Old Testament canon, it would take time until the multitude of various writings (Luke 1:1) could be duly considered by Church leaders and a canon carefully formulated.

There were good reasons why the Church wanted to settle upon an official body of Scripture. First, there was the matter of persecution. Soon after the ascension of Christ into heaven (Acts 1:9-11) physical acts of hostility were inflicted upon the saints. Initially, the Jewish community was responsible for the ill treatment of believers in Christ as the true Messiah (Acts 8). Later, the Roman government officially attacked the people of God (James 1:1; Rev. 13:1-7). If Christians were called upon to suffer for their faith, they would do so (1 Pet. 2:21). But there was no need to suffer needlessly for non canonical books which were found to be offensive to religious and civil authorities. Spurious writings could gladly be given up or destroyed.

Second, there was the matter of heresy. Some of the enemies of Christ and the enemies of the gospel were brazen enough to tell those in the Christian community which books in their possession were inspired of God and which were not. Certain heretics tried to set the scriptural boundaries for the Church.

One such bold enemy of Christ was a man named Marcion. In about AD 140 Marcion arrived in Rome to spread his heretical ideas about God and Christ. Marcion denied the physical resurrection of Christ and the Judeo heritage of the Church. Therefore, he excluded the early apostolic writings which placed great emphasis upon the doctrine of the resurrection and the deity of Christ. The "Canon Muratori" forced the Church to consider more closely and more formally which books should make up the New Testament.

It was not always easy. Writing in the early part of the fourth century, Eusebius of Caesarea confessed that some texts were still being debated such as the letters of James and Jude, the second letter of Peter, the second and third letters of John, and the letter to the seven churches of the Revelation. And yet, progress was being made. By the middle of the fourth century, the Codex Vaticanus, a Greek volume of both Old and New Testaments, listed the complete New Testament as it is known today. However, the discussion continued. There were other writings which were under consideration for canonicity such as the Letter of Barnabas and the Shepherd of Hermas.

It was not until AD 367, in his annual Easter Festal Letter that Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria, explained to all the churches and monasteries within his sphere of authority, what the Old Testament and the New Testament canon of Scripture should be.

Though his list did not conclude the discussion for everyone, it hastened the day when the debate over books would end. By the first part of the fifth century, the consensus of tradition concerning the canon of Scripture was established and honored. Jerome, in a letter written in 414, accepted the New Testament books listed by Athanasius though he was also willing to include the Letter of Barnabas because, he pointed out, the author was the traveling companion of Paul and was an apostle.

A key in understanding the formation of the New Testament canon is that it was never an arbitrary decision based on the decision of men. Three criteria were used by the Holy Spirit powerfully among widely dispersed groups, to bring unity in the formation of the canon. Inspired books should have:

- authors who were in direct contact with Christ and the Apostles;
- consistency in doctrine;
- wide acceptance and use by churches in all regions, under the guidance of the Spirit;
- and dynamic impact.

The New Testament canon meets these criteria in a unique and special way; it truly has been formulated by the hand of God. Finally, all the discussions were over. In the providence of God, since the days of Jerome, the twenty seven books which make up the New Testament have been confirmed by the Church. Spiritual healing has come to those who read the sacred words. Worthy men have debated and defended these particular books of the Bible against unworthy opponents (Jude 1:4). God has been faithful to give to His people a particular body of truth (Jude 1:3). Fundamental to Christian faith is the fact that we have a God breathed book, the Bible. There is a canon of Scripture for the Church.

## **THE BOOKS OF THE BIBLE**

### **THE OLD TESTAMENT**

#### **I. THE PENTATEUCH**

Genesis  
Exodus  
Leviticus  
Numbers  
Deuteronomy

#### **IV. FIVE MAJOR PROPHETS**

Isaiah  
Jeremiah  
Lamentations  
Ezekiel  
Daniel

#### **II. TWELVE HISTORICAL BOOKS**

##### *Pre-Kingdom Era*

Joshua  
Judges  
Ruth

##### *Duration Of The Kingdom*

1 Samuel  
2 Samuel  
1 Kings  
2 Kings  
1 Chronicles  
2 Chronicles

##### *Exile and Post Exile Period*

Ezra  
Nehemiah  
Esther

#### **V. TWELVE MINOR**

##### *Pre-Assyrian/Assyrian*

Hosea  
Joel  
Amos  
Obadiah  
Jonah  
Micah  
Nahum

##### *Chaldean Period*

Habakkuk  
Zephaniah

##### *Post Exile Period*

Haggai  
Zechariah  
Malachi

### **III. FIVE BOOKS OF POETRY**

Job  
Psalms  
Proverbs  
Ecclesiastes  
Song of Solomon

## **THE NEW TESTAMENT**

### **I. FOUR GOSPELS**

Matthew  
Mark  
Luke  
John

### **II. HISOTRY**

Acts of the Apostles

### **III. FOURTEEN PAULINE EPISTLES**

Romans  
1 Corinthians  
2 Corinthians  
Galatians  
Ephesians  
Philippians  
Colossians  
1 Thessalonians  
2 Thessalonians  
1 Timothy  
2 Timothy  
Titus  
Philemon  
Hebrews

### **IV. GENERAL EPISTLES**

James  
1 Peter  
2 Peter  
1 John  
2 John  
3 John  
Jude

### **V. PROPHECY**

Revelation

## DIFFERENT BOOKS FOR DIFFERENT BIBLES

### OLD TESTAMENT

#### HEBREW BIBLE 24 BOOKS

##### THE LAW

Genesis  
Exodus  
Leviticus  
Numbers  
Deuteronomy

##### THE PROPHETS

Joshua  
Judges  
Samuel  
Kings  
Isaiah  
Jeremiah  
Ezekiel  
Minor Prophets

##### THE WRITINGS

Psalms  
Proverbs  
Job  
Song Of Solomon  
Ruth  
Lamentations  
Ecclesiastes  
Esther  
Daniel  
Ezra

\*\*\*

#### PROTESTANT BIBLE 39 BOOKS

##### THE LAW

Genesis  
Exodus  
Leviticus  
Numbers  
Deuteronomy

##### HISTORY

Joshua  
Judges  
Ruth  
1 Samuel  
2 Samuel  
1 Kings  
2 Kings  
1 Chronicles  
2 Chronicles  
Ezra  
Nehemiah  
Esther

##### POETRY + WISDOM

Job  
Psalms  
Proverbs  
Ecclesiastes  
Song of Solomon

\*\*\*

#### PROPHECY

Isaiah  
Jeremiah  
Lamentations  
Ezekiel  
Daniel  
Twelve Minor Prophets

#### ROMAN CATHOLIC BIBLE

##### 53 BOOKS

##### The Protestant Books Plus

1 Esdras  
2 Esdras  
Tobit  
Judith  
The Rest of Esther  
Wisdom of Solomon  
Ecclesiasticus (Sirach)  
Baruch  
The Song of the Three  
Holy Children  
The History of Susanna  
The Prayer of Manasses  
Bel and the Dragon  
1 Maccabee  
2 Maccabee

Nehemiah  
 1 Chronicles  
 2 Chronicles

**A CANON OF SCRIPTURE FOR THE CHURCH**

<b>MARCION</b> (c. 140)	<b>THE CANON MURATORI</b> (c. 200)	<b>EUSEBIUS</b> (c. 325)	<b>ATHANASIUS</b> (367)
Matthew	Matthew	Matthew	
Mark	Mark	Mark	
Luke	Luke	Luke	Luke
	John	John	John
	Acts	Acts	Acts
Romans	Romans	Romans	Romans
1 Corinthians	1 Corinthians	1 Corinthians	1 Corinthians
2 Corinthians	2 Corinthians	2 Corinthians	2 Corinthians
Galatians	Galatians	Galatians	Galatians
Ephesians	Ephesians	Ephesians	Ephesians
Philippians	Philippians	Philippians	Philippians
Colossians	Colossians	Colossians	Colossians
1 Thessalonians	1 Thessalonians	1 Thessalonians	1 Thessalonians
2 Thessalonians	2 Thessalonians	2 Thessalonians	2 Thessalonians
	1 Timothy	1 Timothy	1 Timothy
	2 Timothy	2 Timothy	2 Timothy
	Titus	Titus	Titus
Philemon			Philemon
			Hebrews
			James
		1 Peter	1 Peter
			2 Peter
	1 John	1 John	1 John
	2 John		2 John
			3 John
	Jude		Jude
	Revelation	Revelation	Revelation
	Wisdom of Solomon		
	The Revelation of Peter		



## THE APOSTOLIC FATHERS

The Church Fathers effectively continued the work of the Apostles because they too believed that, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work" (2 Tim. 3:16-17). By teaching the Scriptures, men like Clement, Hermas of Rome, Ignatius of Antioch, Polycarp of Smyrna, and Barnabas of Alexandria were able to establish others in the doctrines of grace.

**CLEMENT OF ROME (d. 100)**, was a presbyter and bishop in Rome. In AD 96 he wrote a letter to the Church at Corinth admonishing the Christians to restore some older presbyters who had been ousted by younger members. Quoting extensively from the Old Testament and from the words of Jesus, Clement tried to teach the way of humility which yields to God's divine order and peace (Titus 2:10).

**HERMAS OF ROME (died c. 150)**, also taught the doctrines of Christ in his writings such as *The Shepherd*. After providing some biographical information as to how he came to faith, Hermas' book set forth a series of visions about Christian life and morality. *The Shepherd* contains three main parts: five visions, twelve mandates, and ten similitudes concerning an ethical life.

**IGNATIUS (died, c. 107)**, Bishop of Antioch in Syria. Prior to suffering martyrdom for his faith Ignatius was able to teach the Church to stand against false doctrines. He opposed the Ebionite heresy, which demanded that the regulations of the Jewish faith be kept as a means of salvation. He also challenged Docetism which held that Christ only appeared to have a real birth, death, and resurrection.

**POLYCARP OF SMYRNA (c. AD 70 - 156)**, Bishop of Smyrna joined Ignatius in a martyr's death. By life and by lip he defended sound doctrine by opposing some of the Valentinian heretics who embraced Gnosticism. When Polycarp encountered Marcion, a leader of Gnosticism he fearlessly characterized him as "the first born of Satan." Only one of Polycarp's letters has been preserved and that is the letter addressed to the Philippians.

**BARNABAS**, of Alexandria, North Africa, may have gone a little too far in his zeal to combat false doctrine. He became so anti-Judaic as to almost deny a historical connection between Judaism and Christianity. Still, his life throbbed with missionary zeal as he taught individual responsibility.

## **SPECIAL NOTE**

While the Apostolic Fathers were not without their own theological biases, they did want to exhort and edify the Church. In some instances the Apostolic Fathers seem to assign a rather significant place to baptism as a medium of forgiveness of sin. Martyrdom and celibacy are also thought to have special power to atone for sin. Therefore, in reading the Apostolic Fathers, spiritual discernment is needed.

**JUSTIN THE APOLOGIST (born, c. AD 100)**, was probably the most dramatic defender of the faith. He was a prolific writer. Around the year AD 153, while in Rome, Justin wrote his famous Apology whereby he tried to defend Christianity against the charges of atheism and immorality. He tried to prove that Christians were loyal citizens by teaching that God's kingdom was not of this world. Therefore, the Roman Empire had no reason to fear a social insurrection from the Christian community. In the midst of his many literary efforts and his faithfulness to sound doctrine, Justin was beheaded for his faith in AD 165.

## **EARLY HERESIES**

Heresy may be defined as a radical departure from the truth. It differs from "incorrect" teaching by matter of degrees. In the last half of the second century several heresies emerged that shook the foundation of the Church. They were Gnosticism, Montanism, and Arianism.

## **GNOSTICISM**

The name "Gnosticism" derives from the Greek word "gnosis," which means "knowledge." According to the Gnostics, they possessed a special mystical knowledge that was the secret key to salvation. Salvation was their main concern. Unfortunately, the Gnostics came to believe that all matter is evil, or at best unreal. A human being is an eternal spirit that is trapped or imprisoned in a body which is evil being made of matter.

How did this happen? Gnosticism taught that the Supreme Being had no intention of creating a material world, but only a spiritual one. Therefore, only a number of spiritual beings, called eons, were made. One of these eons, far removed from the Supreme Being, fell into error, and created the material world.

Since this world was made by a spiritual being, there are still "sparks" or "bits" of spirit in it which are imprisoned in human bodies and must be liberated through gnosis or knowledge. This liberation is accomplished by listening to special heavenly messengers who have been sent to give individuals that knowledge without which there is no salvation. One messenger, some believed, was Christ.

Since Christ was a heavenly messenger, and since body and matter are evil, the idea that Christ had a body like ours was rejected. Some said that his body was an appearance of a real body. Later, the Church would call this heresy "docetism" meaning "to seem," and would refute it totally (1 John 1:1-4).

## **MONTANISM**

Montanism is named after its founder, Montanus, who had been a pagan priest until his conversion to Christ in AD 155. After a time Montanus began to teach that he was possessed by the Holy Spirit. Soon two women, Priscilla and Maximilla followed him and also began to prophecy. Together, they claimed that their movement was the beginning of a new age demanding a rigorous moral life. To claim, as the Montanists did, that the end of time was beginning with the giving of the Spirit to Montanus and his followers, was to deny the significance of the Person and work of Christ. His teachings made the Gospel just one more stage in the history of salvation. Because of these things, the rest of the Church opposed Montanist.

## **ARIANISM**

The Arian controversy began in Alexandria, Egypt when Licinius was ruling in the East. Constantine ruled Rome in the West. The bishop of Alexandria, Alexander, clashed with Arius, one of the most prestigious and popular presbyters of the city. The main issue at stake was whether the Word of God (Christ) was co-eternal with God. One important phrase of the Arian motto said, "There was when He was not." With these words the Arians denied both the deity of Christ and His eternal pre-existence. From its foundation, the Church had worshipped Jesus Christ. Arius' proposal forced the Church to decide whether it would cease such worship, or to declare that it was worshipping a creature. At the Council of Nicene the Church solved the Arian controversy by declaring that Jesus Christ was very God of very God.

## **THE CHURCH FATHERS**

The Church found spiritual champions to combat these heresies. Among the most capable defenders of the faith were Irenaeus, Tertullian, Clement, and Origen.

**IRENÆUS.** Born sometimes between AD 115 and 142, Irenaeus was reared in Smyrna. While in Smyrna he saw Polycarp and heard him preach. Moving to Lyons in Gaul (France), Irenaeus became a bishop in the Church. In the year AD 200 he suffered a martyr's death having defended the faith in such works as *Against Heresies*.

**TERTULLIAN.** He was born sometime between the years AD 150 and 155 in North Africa in the city of Carthage. After studying law, he practiced in Rome where he was converted to Christ. After his salvation, Tertullian returned to Carthage and became a presbyter in the Church.

**CLEMENT** of Alexandria was a very able instructor in the theological school in Egypt. During his years as a teacher (AD 190-202) Clement wrote the majority of his works in which he covered almost every aspect of Christian conduct. Later, when religious persecution broke out under the Roman emperor Septimius Severus about AD 202, Clement fled Alexandria. He died in Asia Minor.

**ORIGEN** (c. AD 185 - c. 254), a pupil of Clement of Alexandria, was a great scholar in the Church. As a prolific writer he wrote many books in defense of Christianity including one Against Celsus. One of his monumental works was the Hexapla, an enormous edition of the Bible arranged in six columns. It contained the text from the Hebrew scriptures, a Greek translation of the Hebrew, the Septuagint, and the Greek versions by Symmachus, Aquila, and Theodotion. His life ended as a teacher in Caesarea.

## **TWO CREEDS OF CHRISTENDOM**

From the struggles of the Church with the early heresies came three things: a creed, a canon of Scripture, and a formal Church organization. The word "creed" comes from the Latin word "credo" and means "I believe." In AD 325 in Nicea, a city of Asia Minor near Constantinople, the First Ecumenical Council was held. Of the 300 bishops who came, most were from the Greek speaking east. Some were from the west. The atmosphere was euphoric as the ministers of God began to discuss many legislative matters. They approved standard procedure for bringing back into the Church those who had not been faithful in the days of persecution. They established the procedure for the election and ordination of presbyters and bishops. But the most difficult issue that the Council faced was the Arian controversy. After much debate the assembly finally agreed on a formula that rejected Arianism.

### **THE NICENE CREED**

*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, from the substance of the Father, God of God, light of light, true God of true God, begotten, not made, of one substance [homoousios] with the Father, through whom all things were made, both in heaven and on earth, who for us humans and for our salvation descended and became incarnate, becoming human, suffered and rose again on the third day, ascended to the heavens, and will come to judge the living and the dead. And in the Holy Spirit. But those who say that there was when He was not, and that before being begotten He was not, or that He came from that which is not, or that the Son of God is of a different substance [hypostasis] or essence [ousia], or that He is created, or mutable, these the universal Church anathematizes.*

It was this formula, with a number of later additions, and without the judgments of the last paragraph, which provided the basis for what is now called the Nicene Creed. Prior to this, the "Apostles' Creed," was the most universally accepted Christian creed. Being Roman in origin, this creed is known and used only in churches of Western origin such as the Roman Catholic Church, and those stemming from the Protestant Reformation. The Nicene Creed is accepted both by the Western churches and those of the East including the Greek Orthodox and Russian Orthodox.

### **THE APOSTLE'S CREED**

*I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and in Jesus His only Son our Lord, Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty from thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost, the holy universal Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.*

### **NEW FORMS OF CHURCH GOVERNMENT**

As the Church struggled to formulate a core set of beliefs based upon an accepted canon of Scripture, so the Church was determined to preserve what it professed. Many felt a strong form of Church government had to be found and it was. The controversy with the Gnostics and Montanists produced the Episcopal form of government whereby Church authority was invested in spiritual rulers who came to be called "bishops" (lit. Greek, episcopos, overseer). Organizational complexity had found Christianity. But it had taken a long time for at first the organizational structure had been very simple. The ecclesia or Church officers were presbyters or elders and deacons (1 Tim. 3:1-13; Acts 14:23, 1 Tim. 5:17; 1 Pet. 5:1).

As the Church grew in number and the affairs of the Church grew more complex, local assemblies would chose a priest or layman in each city to be an episcopos (overseer), or bishop to help manage its affairs. As the number of bishops grew, they in turn required superintendence and co-ordination. By the fourth century we hear of archbishops, metropolitans, or primates governing the bishops and the churches of a province. Over all these levels of clergy were the patriarchs who ruled at Constantinople, Antioch, Jerusalem, Alexandria, and Rome. A patriarch or an emperor could call the bishops and archbishops to convene in synods or councils to discuss important matters and to make rules and regulations that were binding. If a council represented only a province it was called provincial; if it represented only the East or West it was called plenary; if both, it was a general council. If the decrees of the council were accepted as binding upon all Christians, it was an ecumenical council. In this way the Church grew in organizational intricacy.

## WHEN THE CHURCH WAS YOUNG

### Leader's Study Guide

#### CHAPTER 3

##### The Foundations of Faith – AD 33-325

#### RESPONSE

1. Do you believe that Bible doctrine is important? Why or why not?

*Answer.* Bible doctrine is essential to proper spiritual maturity (Prov. 4:2; 1 Tim. 4:13). Sound doctrine is the foundation of faith (Tit. 1:9). What people believe about sin, salvation, the Scriptures, and the Savior will determine their eternal destiny as well as their relationship with God the Father (John 7:17).

2. List six Apostolic Fathers and tell one significant fact about each of them. Give the dates they lived.

*Answer.*

- **CLEMENT OF ROME (d. 100)**, was a presbyter and bishop in Rome. In AD 96 he wrote a letter to the Church at Corinth admonishing the Christians to restore some older presbyters who had been ousted by younger members. Quoting extensively from the Old Testament and from the words of Jesus, Clement tried to teach the way of humility which yields to God's divine order and peace (Titus 2:10).
- **HERMAS OF ROME (died c. 150)**, also taught the doctrines of Christ in his writings such as The Shepherd. After providing some biographical information as to how he came to faith, Hermas' book set forth a series of visions about Christian life and morality. The Shepherd contains three main parts: five visions, twelve mandates, and ten similitudes concerning an ethical life.
- **IGNATIUS (died, c. 107)**, Bishop of Antioch in Syria. Prior to suffering martyrdom for his faith Ignatius was able to teach the Church to stand against false doctrines. He opposed the Ebionite heresy, which demanded that the regulations of the Jewish faith be kept as a means of salvation. He also challenged Docetism which held that Christ only appeared to have a real birth, death, and resurrection.
- **POLYCARP OF SMYRNA (c. AD 70 - 156)**, Bishop of Smyrna joined Ignatius in a martyr's death. By life and by lip he defended sound doctrine by opposing some of the Valentinian heretics who embraced gnosticism. When Polycarp encountered Marcion, a

leader of Gnosticism he fearlessly characterized him as "the first born of Satan." Only one of Polycarp's letters has been preserved and that is the letter addressed to the Philippians.

- **BARNABAS**, of Alexandria, North Africa, may have gone a little too far in his zeal to combat false doctrine. He became so anti-Judaic as to almost deny a historical connection between Judaism and Christianity. Still, his life throbbed with missionary zeal as he taught individual responsibility.
- **JUSTIN THE APOLOGIST (born, c. AD 100)**, was probably the most dramatic defender of the faith. He was a prolific writer. Around the year AD 153, while in Rome, Justin wrote his famous Apology whereby he tried to defend Christianity against the charges of atheism and immorality. He tried to prove that Christians were loyal citizens by teaching that Lord's kingdom was not of this world. Therefore, the Roman Empire had no reason to fear a social insurrection from the Christian community. In the midst of his many literary efforts and his faithfulness to sound doctrine, Justin was beheaded for his faith in AD 165.

3. Write out your own definition of heresy.

*Answer.* Heresy may be defined as a radical departure from the truth. It differs from "incorrect" teaching by matter of degrees.

4. How should the Church distinguish between heresy and erroneous, or immature, or misguided teaching?

*Answer.* Heresy involves a radical departure from the Bible and the universally accepted historic faith of the church.

5. Summarize the Gnostic heresy and defend the Biblical position that Jesus was true humanity.

*Answer.* The name "Gnosticism" derives from the Greek word "gnosis," which means "knowledge." According to the Gnostics, they possessed a special mystical knowledge that was the secret key to salvation. Salvation was their main concern. Unfortunately, the Gnostics came to believe that all matter is evil, or at best unreal. A human being is an eternal spirit that is trapped or imprisoned in a body which is evil being made of matter. How did this happen? Gnosticism taught that the Supreme Being had no intention of creating a material world, but only a spiritual one. Therefore, only a number of spiritual beings, called eons, were made. One of these eons, far removed from the Supreme Being, fell into error, and created the material world. Since this world was made by a spiritual being, there are still "sparks" or "bits" of spirit in it which are imprisoned in human bodies and must be liberated through gnosis or knowledge. This liberation is accomplished by listening to special heavenly messengers who have been sent to give individuals that knowledge without which there is no salvation. One messenger, some believed, was Christ. Since Christ was a heavenly messenger, and since body and matter are evil, the idea that Christ had a body like ours was rejected. Some said that his body was an appearance of a real body. Later, the

Church would call this heresy "docetism" meaning "to seem," and would refute it totally (1 John 1:1-4).

6. Tell why Montanism was considered heretical.

*Answer.* Montanism is named after its founder, Montanus, who had been a pagan priest until his conversion to Christ in AD 155. After a time Montanus began to teach that he was possessed by the Holy Spirit. Soon two women, Priscilla and Maximilla followed him and also began to prophecy. Together, they claimed that their movement was the beginning of a new age demanding a rigorous moral life. To claim, as the Montanists did, that the end of time was beginning with the giving of the Spirit to Montanus and his followers, was to deny the significance of the Person and work of Christ. His teachings made the Gospel just one more stage in the history of salvation. Because of these things, the rest of the Church opposed Montanist.

7. Why was the Arian controversy so important to combat?

*Answer.* From its foundation, the Church had worshipped Jesus Christ. Arius' proposal forced the Church to decide whether it would cease such worship, or to declare that it was worshipping a creature. At the Council of Nicene the Church solved the Arian controversy by declaring that Jesus Christ was very God of very God.

## **REFLECTION**

Should the government of the Church be simple or complex? Defend your answer with biblical examples.

## **ACCOUNTABILITY**

Learn the Apostle's Creed. Please recite it to your mentor or write it out.



# WHEN THE CHURCH WAS YOUNG

## CHAPTER 4

### THE SIGN OF THE SAVIOUR

AD 313

#### CONSTANTINE THE GREAT

Constantine the Great (c. 285 - 337) is known as the first "Christian emperor" of the Roman Empire. He ruled from AD 306-337. Constantine's parents were Constantius Chlorus, the western co-emperor of the Roman Empire, and Helena, a concubine. When his father died in 306, the Roman army in Britain proclaimed Constantine emperor. This means that he ruled over Britain, Gaul [France], and Spain. Maxentius ruled over Italy and North Africa. A military conflict for power was inevitable.

In a surprise move made in order to get the military advantage, Constantine marched into Italy leading an army of forty thousand men. At Saxa Rubra, ten miles from Rome and a little to the north of it, the two great armies of Maxentius and Constantine met. The date was October 27, 312. On the morning of October 28, the battle would begin. During the night, the only thing separating the army of Maxentius from the army of Rome was the Tiber River and the Milvian Bridge which crossed the river.

Constantine had reason to be concerned as his soldiers made their final preparations for battle. He was outnumbered three to one and the army of Maxentius contained the Praetorian Guard, the elite of all the Roman armies. As the twilight faded away, the outcome of the engagement on the next day was in grave doubt. Constantine felt he needed spiritual help.

Like his father, Constantine's heart was drawn toward the worship of Mithra, the Persian sun god, who was believed to be a great warrior and the champion of truth and justice. Mithra was a soldier's god. Perhaps Constantine was thinking of Mithra when he fell into a fitful sleep that night and dreamed an unusual dream. According to one account, Constantine dreamed of a monogram composed of the first two Greek letters of the name of Christ. The next day he had his soldiers inscribe the monogram on their shields. According to another version, on the evening before the battle, as he watched the setting sun, Constantine suddenly saw a cross above the sun. In letters of light the cross bore the words: Hoc Signo Vinces, "In this sign, conquer." On October 28, Constantine and his soldiers won the victory. The army of Maxentius was completely defeated though the Praetorian Guard fought like lions, being cut down where they stood.

## **THE EDICT OF MILAN**

Constantine believed he had won the battle because he had received help from the God of the Christians. He too would become a Christian and worship the true Light of the world. Whether or not Constantine was indeed converted has been a subject of great debate. Certainly he was very tolerant toward Christians. During the winter of AD 312-313 he instructed an officer in North Africa to provide money to the bishop of Carthage so that the ministers could be paid. At Milan in 313 he issued an edict granting all persons the freedom to worship as they wished. Persecution of Christians stopped. They were placed upon a level of equality, before the law, with the other religions of the Emperor. New laws allowed bishops to decide civil lawsuits. The branding of the face was banned because it marred the image of God. Law courts and workshops were closed on Sundays and the gladiatorial games were stopped.

## **THE BLOOD OF THE MARTYRS**

While the Edict of Milan did not establish Christianity as the only and official religion of the Empire, it did mark the victory of the Church over heathenism. Despite three hundred years of fierce persecutions, the Church had not only survived, it had triumphed. The blood of the martyrs had not been spilt in vain. Upon the throne of Rome finally sat a man who confessed Christ. Buildings were once burned where Christians met. Now, in Constantinople, Jerusalem, Bethlehem, and other places magnificent Church buildings were being erected to the glory of God.

## **AD 313: A DATE TO REMEMBER**

All Christians should remember the date 313 for in that year the Church was granted the same rights and privileges that the followers of other religions had. But as the date is remembered, let it also be remembered that the Church won her rights, not by fighting, but by suffering. The Church survived, not by might or power, but by the Spirit of the Living God (Zech. 4:6).

## **THE EAGLE AND THE CROSS**

After 313 the emblem of the Roman armies was replaced. The eagle gave way to the Cross. However, this was not all good for as the Church transformed the world, the world invaded the Church. Suddenly, the Christian name became an avenue to political, military, and social promotion. Individuals became Christians in name only.

## **THE RELATION BETWEEN CHURCH AND STATE**

Because Constantine granted the Church freedom of religion and many special favors, he felt freedom to take an arbitrary and active role in the internal affairs of the Church. For example, when the appointment of Caecilian was challenged as bishop of Carthage (AD 313) Constantine intervened to settle the dispute in Caecilian's favor.

## **THE DONATISTS**

The Donatists were called after their leader, Donatus. While orthodox in faith, the Donatists caused division in the Church by teaching that those who had denied the faith during periods of severe persecution should not be readmitted to the Church. Constantine instructed the bishops of Rome to hold a formal hearing to review the matter. When the Donatists were not satisfied with the opinion of the commission, Constantine heard the case himself and in 316 declared Caecilian to be the rightful bishop. Constantine also summoned the council of Nicea in 325 which ruled against Arianism, a heresy that denied that Christ as the Son of God was co-eternal with the Father. It was the Edict of the emperor which provided legal force to the Nicene council.

This merging of Church and State became a mixed blessing to the nations of the earth. While some good did come out of the arrangement, the blending of the two became the occasion for misunderstanding, hostility, and bloodshed. It can be argued that more harm than good was done by the merging of Church and State. Certainly the spiritual vitality of the Church was weakened because of the many concessions that had to be made to sinful men and worldly practices in order to survive politically in a sinful society. Instead of transforming the kingdoms of this world by truth, righteousness, holiness, and separation, the Church was transformed and corrupted by the world. In many things the Church first embraced and then practiced all that makes up the satanic cosmos (2 Cor. 4:4).

## **JULIAN THE APOSTATE**

In the year 361, Julian, a nephew of Constantine the Great became emperor. He had been brought up as a Christian but was never converted. Once he was in power, Julian made it clear that his heart preferred the old gods. Because he forsook Christianity, he is known as Julian the Apostate.

In his hostility to the Church, Julian did persecute the Christians. His chief weapon against the Church was the pen. As a gifted writer, Julian attacked Christianity with satire and ridicule. All the while Julian tried to restore pagan worship. There is a wonderful legend that Julian acknowledged his failures in AD 363 when he was mortally wounded in battle against the Persians. A spear pierced his thigh. As the blood spurted out, Julian took some in his hand, threw it toward heaven and cried, "So thou hast conquered after all, Galilean." He was 32 years old.

# WHEN THE CHURCH WAS YOUNG

## Leader's Study Guide

### CHAPTER 4

#### The Sign of the Saviour – AD 313

#### RESPONSE

1. Who is known as the first Christian emperor?

*Answer.* Constantine the Great (c. 285 - 337) is known as the first "Christian emperor" of the Roman Empire. He ruled from AD 306-337.

2. What were the words that Constantine thought he saw before the battle of Milvian Bridge?

*Answer.* *Hoc Signo Vincas, "In this sign, conquer."*

Do you believe that this vision was of God? Why?

*Answer.* Note. Responses will vary.

3. What religious freedoms did the Edict of Milan provide?

*Answer.* At Milan in 313 Constantine issued an edict granting all persons the freedom to worship as they wished. Persecution of Christians stopped. They were placed upon a level of equality, before the law, with the other religions of the Emperor. New laws allowed bishops to decide civil lawsuits. The branding of the face was banned because it marred the image of God. Law courts and workshops were closed on Sundays and the gladiatorial games were stopped.

4. When Constantine united the affairs of the State with the affairs of the Church, did he do right?

*Answer.* Note. Responses will vary.

What should be the Christian's attitude towards separation of Church and state?

*Answer.* Note. Responses will vary.

5. Many people believe that America is a "Christian nation"? Would you agree with this or disagree. Why?

*Answer.* Note. Responses will vary.

What would make any nation a "Christian" nation?

*Answer.* Note. Responses will vary.

### **REFLECTION**

Appealing to Romans 13:1-7 and other passages of your choice, what should be the Christian's attitude toward government?

### **ACCOUNTABILITY**

Read the book of Acts in its entirety at least one time while completing this course. When you have read the book of Acts, indicate that on your assignment sheet.

## **WHEN THE CHURCH WAS YOUNG**

### **CHAPTER 5**

#### **IN THE COUNCILS OF THE CHURCH**

**AD 325-451**

#### **VARIOUS TYPES OF COUNCILS**

The Bible teaches that there is safety in a multitude of counselors (Prov. 11:14). When the early Church became concerned over problems which arose as a result of the conversion of the Gentiles, a council was held by the Apostles and Elders in Jerusalem (Acts 15). An important precedent was established which was followed in the centuries to come. There were various kinds of councils such as the provincial council which represented only one province and a national council where an entire nation was represented. A general or ecumenical council was one in which all churches of all countries present were represented. In a small town in Asia Minor called Nicea in 325 the first general or ecumenical council was held.

#### **THE COUNCIL OF NICEA**

It was at Nicea that the great question was fully discussed which had occupied the mind of the Church for over three hundred years as it debated whether Jesus Christ, the Son, was truly and fully God as the Father. Arius (d. 336), a presbyter in the Church in Alexandria, Egypt, taught that Jesus was not truly God while Athanasius (born c. 295), another presbyter in the same Church, taught he was. The question was important to settle. The value of the saving work of Christ depends upon what kind of Person He is. If Christ is not God, He cannot be the Saviour of man for only God can save man from the desperate state of sin into which he has fallen. Athanasius understood the importance of the controversy and said, "Jesus, whom I know as my Redeemer, cannot be less than God."

The Arian controversy raged for a long time resulting in deep division in the Church. Finally, Constantine (c. 285 -337) called a general council to settle the dispute. More than three hundred bishops made their way to Nicea, located on the shores of the Bosphorus, forty-five miles from Constantinople. The men met in a magnificent hall in the palace of the emperor. Some of the bishops in the council bore in their bodies the marks of the sufferings they had endured for the Saviour.

The debate grew fierce between the young Athanasius and the more mature Arius, a man of integrity and a capable orator. Still, the young "David" was ready to challenge his "Goliath" who was popular with a large number of people. Arius truly thought that to believe that the Son is God as well as the Father is God would mean to believe that there are two Gods. If this were true, then the Church was in danger of falling back into heathenism and polytheism which is the

belief in many gods. To stop this from happening, Arius thought that Jesus, although He is somewhat like God, is not after all fully God with all of His attributes and virtues. According to Arius, Jesus Christ is the first and highest of all created beings and is worthy of honor and veneration. But Jesus does not exist from eternity past, and is not of the same substance or essence as the Father.

Athanasius argued that if Jesus were not God then He is a great blasphemer for He certainly claimed to be God (John 8:28,58). Furthermore, if Jesus is not God then millions upon millions of people have been foolishly misled into idolatry for Christ has been worshipped. Only God is worthy of worship. Athanasius defended the worshipping of Christ in a famous book entitled On the Incarnation of the Word of God.

The debate concerning the deity of Christ was monumental in importance. Man's salvation was at stake for Christ's Person and work are inseparably united. At His birth an angel had announced, "Thou shalt call His name Jesus; for He shall save His people from their sin" (Matt. 1:21). In the year AD 325, the views of Arius were condemned as heresy. A statement of the true doctrine of the Person and work of Christ was finally adopted and articulated in the Nicene Creed.

### **THE NICENE CREED**

***WE believe** in one God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible:*

*And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God; begotten of His Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God; begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father; by whom all things were made;*

*who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary, and was made man; and crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate;*

*He suffered and was buried, and the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures; and ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of the Father; And He shall come again with glory to judge both the quick and the dead; Whose kingdom shall have no end.*

***And we believe** in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of life, who proceedeth from the Father and the Son; who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified; who spoke by the prophets.*

***And we believe** in one catholic and apostolic Church; we acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins; and we look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.*

## ATHANASIUS AGAINST THE WORLD

As the Nicene Creed exalts Christ by declaring Him to be God, it also serves to remind the Church to be grateful for faithful men such as Athanasius (c. 295 - 373), Bishop of Alexandria, Egypt. Who would want to forget his famous saying, “Athanasius contra mundum,” which means, “Athanasius against the world.” The point was made that even if he were the only person in the whole world defending the truth of the deity of Christ he would defend it still against all opponents. Athanasius was responsible more than anyone else for the defeat of Arianism in 325 during the debates at the Council Of Nicea (near Constantinople, now Istanbul in modern Turkey). One of the three Ecumenical Creeds is associated with his name (the other two being the Apostles' and the Nicene).

## THE ATHANASIAN CREED

*Whosoever will be saved: before all things it is necessary that he hold the universal Faith: Which Faith except every one do keep whole and undefiled: without doubt he shall perish everlastingly.*

*And the universal Faith is this: That we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity; Neither confounding the Persons: nor dividing the Substance [Essence]. For there is one Person of the Father: another of the Son: and another of the Holy Ghost.*

*But the Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, is all one: the Glory equal, the Majesty co-eternal. Such as the Father is: such is the Son: and such is the Holy Ghost. The Father uncreated: the Son uncreated: and the Holy Ghost uncreated.*

*The Father incomprehensible [unlimited]: the Son incomprehensible [unlimited]: and the Holy Ghost incomprehensible [unlimited, or infinite].*

*The Father eternal: the Son eternal: and the Holy Ghost eternal. And yet they are not three eternals: but one eternal. As also there are not three uncreated: nor three incomprehensible [infinities], but one uncreated: and one incomprehensible [infinite]. So likewise the Father is Almighty: the Son Almighty: and the Holy Ghost Almighty. So the Father is God: the Son is God: and the Holy Ghost is God. And yet they are not three Gods: but one God.*

*So likewise the Father is Lord: the Son Lord: and the Holy Ghost Lord. And yet not three Lords: but one Lord. For like as we are compelled by the Christian verity: to acknowledge every Person by himself to be God and Lord: So are we forbidden by the universal religion: to say, There be [are] three Gods, or three Lords.*

*The Father is made of none: neither created, nor begotten. The Son is of the Father alone: not made, nor created: but begotten. The Holy Ghost is of the Father and of the Son: neither made, nor created, nor begotten: but proceeding.*



*So there is one Father, not three Fathers: one Son, not three Sons: one Holy Ghost, not three Holy Ghosts. And in this Trinity none is afore, or after another: none is greater, or less than another [there is nothing before, or after: nothing greater or less.] But the whole three Persons are co-eternal, and coequal.*

*So that in all things, as aforesaid: the Unity in Trinity, and the Trinity in Unity, is to be worshipped. He therefore that will be saved, must [let him] thus think of the Trinity. Furthermore it is necessary to everlasting salvation: that he also believe rightly [faithfully] the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

*For the right Faith is, that we believe and confess: that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is God and Man; God, of the Substance [Essence] of the Father; begotten before the worlds: and Man, of the Substance [Essence] of his Mother, born in the world. Perfect God: and perfect Man, of a reasonable soul and human flesh subsisting.*

*Equal to the Father, as touching his Godhead: and inferior to the Father as touching his Manhood. Who although He be [is] God and Man: yet He is not two but one Christ. One; not by conversion of the Godhead into flesh: but by taking [assumption] of the Manhood into God.*

*One altogether: not by confusion of Substance [Essence]: but by unity of Person. For as the reasonable soul and flesh is one man: so God and man is one Christ; who suffered for our salvation: descended into hell [Hades, the sphere of the dead]: rose again the third day from the dead.*

*He ascended into heaven, he sitteth on the right hand of the Father God [God the Father] Almighty. From whence [thence] He shall come to judge the quick and the dead.*

*At whose coming all men shall rise again with their bodies; And shall give account for their own works.*

*And they that have done good shall go into life everlasting: and they that have done evil, into everlasting fire. This is the universal Faith: which except a man believe faithfully [truly and firmly], he can not be saved.*

## DOCTRINE OF THE DEITY OF CHRIST

1. The Gospel of John declares that Jesus is the eternal divine Word (Logos), and the source of life and light (John 1:1 cf. 1:14; 1:1-5, 9).
2. Through becoming flesh, the Word was revealed as the Son of God and the source of "grace and truth," as "the only begotten of the Father," (1:14, 18).
3. The Lord used the divine name (cf. Ex. 3:14) for Himself seven times. The claims to deity are explicit.
  - The bread of life                      John 6:35, 48, 51
  - The light of the world                John 8:12; 9:5
  - The door for the sheep                John 10:7,9
  - The good shepherd                    John 10:11, 14
  - The resurrection and the life        John 14:6
  - The Way, Truth, and Life             John 14:6
  - The true vine                            John 15:1,5
4. Thomas worshipped Jesus declaring Him to be, "My Lord and my God" (John 20:28). The Lord pronounced a blessing on all that share the faith of Thomas (John 20:29-31).
5. Paul declares that in Christ "dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily" (Col. 2:9; cf. 1:19).
6. Jesus is the Father's image and His agent in creating and upholding all things (Col. 1:15-17).
7. All who would be saved must call upon Christ for salvation just as one calls upon Jehovah (Joel 2:32; Rom. 10:9-13).
8. Jesus is "God over all" (Rom. 9:5), our "God and Saviour" (Titus 2:13), and the source of divine grace (2 Cor. 12:8, 9 cf. 2 Cor. 13:14).
9. In Hebrews, the perfection of Christ's high priesthood is presented declaring Him to have full deity and unique dignity as the eternal Son of God (Heb. 1:3,6,8-12).
10. There are many other passages that teach the deity of Christ.
  - In the Old Testament study: Psa. 2: 6-12 cf. Heb. 1:5; Psa. 45:6,7 cf. Heb. 1:8,9; Psa. 110:1 cf. Heb. 1:13; Isa. 9:6; Jer. 23:6; Dan. 7:13; Mic. 5:2; Zech. 13:7; Mal. 3:1.
  - In the New Testament study: John 1:1-3,14,18; 2:24,25; 3:16-18, 35, 36; 4:4,15; 5:18, 20, 21, 22, 25-27; 11:41-44; 20:28; 1 John 1:3; 2:23; 4:14, 15; 5:5, 10-13, 20; Rom. 1:7; 9:5; 1 Cor. 1:1-3; 2:8; 2 Cor. 5:10; Gal. 2:20; 4:4; Phil. 2:6; Col. 2:9; 1 Tim. 3:16; Heb. 1:1-3,5,8; 4:14; 5:8.

## **THE COUNCIL OF CONSTANTINOPLE**

Unfortunately the Nicene Council did not put an end to the Arian controversy. Falsehood does not die easily. There were still many in the Church who agreed with Arius. Until the day of his death, Athanasius had to contend for the doctrine of the deity of Christ as expressed in the Nicene Creed. Following the death of Athanasius (c. 373) other champions of orthodoxy or historic Christian truth emerged. Three men from the province of Cappadocia in Asia Minor were among the most capable. They were Basil of Caesarea, Gregory of Nazianzus, and Gregory of Nyssa.

**BASIL OF CAESAREA (born c. 330)**, came from a very famous Church family, and studied at Athens. In 356 he started a monastic community in Pontus. In 370 Basil became Bishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia which put him in the middle of the Trinitarian controversy. He was influential in the eventual triumph of orthodoxy, and worked to heal the schism at Antioch. He died in AD 379.

**GREGORY OF NAZIANZUS (c. 330-389)**, was a friend of Basil of Caesarea. He was a notable eastern theologian and leader in the monastic movement. In 379 Gregory was called to become the orthodox bishop in Constantinople. He was faithfully preached the doctrines of grace and presided at the start of the Council of Constantinople in 381. After being persecuted for his faith, Gregory resigned as bishop in 381 and devoted the rest of his life to study and meditation.

**GREGORY OF NYSSA (c. 330-395)**, was the younger brother of Basil of Caesarea. He was a champion of orthodox doctrine during the years of the Trinitarian controversy. He was a great preacher and a faithful theologian.

When the Council of Constantinople was called in 381 to reaffirm the Nicene Creed and to articulate the beliefs of the Church in the deity of the Holy Spirit, the influence of these three great Cappadocians was felt. Because of their strong defense of the teachings of Scripture Arianism was completely and finally rejected by the Church.

## **THE COUNCIL OF CHALCEDON**

As there had been a variety of views in the Church concerning the deity of Christ, so there was diversity regarding His humanity and His two natures in their relation to each other. How could Jesus be both God and man? Was He two persons or one? Did Jesus cease to be God during the days of His humiliation? Was there ever a moment when He was not God?

Nestorius (late fourth century, c. AD 451), Bishop of Constantinople, was one of those who saw the two natures of Christ in a loose mechanical co-existence so that neither nature partook in the properties of the other. According to Nestorius, the divine did not have a part in the sufferings of the human nature of Christ. This teaching needed to be contested for if Nestorius was right, a

sinner would be redeemed by the suffering sacrifices of a mere man. But a mere man could accomplish no eternal redemption. In 431 a Third Ecumenical Council was called which condemned Nestorius and his followers. When the Nestorians arrived at Ephesus to defend their position they were not welcomed so they established a rival council. When the controversy continued to rage the Emperor finally decided the matter against the Nestorians. Nestorius himself entered into a monastery.

Following the Council of Ephesus there was a great deal of dissatisfaction on the part of many. Eutyches, abbot of a monastery near Constantinople, in an effort to demonstrate the unity of the person of Christ, began to teach that after the incarnation of Christ the two natures fused into one so that the one nature partook of the properties of the other. Distinctions between the two natures were obliterated. This teaching heightened the controversy considerably.

Complete confusion reigns if Eutyches was right. Omniscience is an attribute of Deity only; according to the flesh Christ grew in wisdom and knowledge and favor with God and men. Omnipresence is an attribute of Deity only; one of the characteristics of the human body is that it is confined to a specific locality. If Christ is already physically omnipresent, how can He come a second time from Heaven?

Because of these considerations the stage was set for another Church council. In the year 451 a Fourth Ecumenical Council was held in Chalcedon near Nicea. Over six hundred bishops were present. Finally, after much debate a creed was formulated which stands equal in importance as the Creed of Nicea. Once again the Church affirmed its belief in the full deity of Christ but also confessed its belief in His full and complete humanity without the surrender of His divine attributes or diminishing His true humanity. The Church confessed the mystery of the existence of the two natures in the unique Person of Christ: the human and the divine. The Church maintained that they exist in Christ without confusion, change, division, or separation. While Christ has two natures, He is one person, not two persons.

## **THE CREED OF CHALCEDON**

*We, then, following the holy Fathers, all with one consent, teach men to confess one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, the same perfect in Godhead and also perfect in manhood; truly God and truly man, of a reasonable [rational] soul and body; consubstantial [co-essential] with the Father according to the Godhead, and con-substantial with us according to the Manhood;*

*in all things like unto us, without sin; begotten before all ages of the Father according to the Godhead, and in these latter days, for us and for our salvation, born of the Virgin Mary, the Mother of God, according to the Manhood; one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, Only begotten, to be acknowledged in two natures, inconfusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly, inseparably;*

*the distinction of natures being by no means taken away by the union, but rather the property of each nature being preserved, and concurring in one Person and one Subsistence, not parted or divided into two persons, but one and the same Son, and only begotten, God the Word, the Lord Jesus Christ, as the prophets from the beginning [have declared] concerning him, and the Lord Jesus Christ himself has taught us, and the Creed of the holy Fathers has handed down to us.*

## **THE LATIN CHURCH FATHERS**

The passing of the Apostolic Fathers who were taught by the Apostles the Christian faith brought forth the earlier and later Church fathers. These men were ordained by God to keep on defending the truth of the scriptures against heretical teachers. In their writings we find the history, doctrines, and traditions of the Church. Three of the Latin Fathers were Ambrose, Jerome, and Augustine.

**AMBROSE (AD 339 -397)**, the son of a Roman governor in Gaul (France) became the Bishop of Milan. Educated in the law in Rome, he became a faithful defender of the faith against Arianism for the Western Church. Ambrose wrote extensively. More than half of his many writings were commentaries on Scriptures. In his interpretation of the Bible, Ambrose used the allegorical-mystical method. He admits to a literal sense of the text but sought a deeper mystic meaning. A lover of music, Ambrose wrote many songs. A lover of souls, he sought to bring people to Christ. To him Augustine owed his conversion. When he died, many mourned his passing for he was greatly loved. People remembered that he remained firm in the face of intense opposition. For one event in particular Ambrose should always be remembered. It concerned the atrocious behavior of the Emperor Theodosius who, despite a confession of faith, had murdered 7,000 of the city of Thessalonica as punishment for a rebellion in which Roman officers had been killed. Ambrose wrote a letter to the Emperor but received no reply. When the Emperor presented himself at the Lord's Table, the Bishop met him at the door to the Church and turned him away by saying, "How will you lift up in prayer the hands still dripping with the blood of the murdered? How will you, with such hands, receive and bring to your mouth the body and blood of the Lord? Get out of here, and do not dare to add another crime to the one you have already committed!" This bold move caused the Emperor, eight months later, to make a public confession of his sins and seek forgiveness.

**JEROME (AD 341 - 420)**, was born in Eastern Europe but was converted in Rome. He labored for thirty four years in a monastery at Bethlehem (AD 386 - 420) and gave to the Church the Vulgate, the Latin translation of the Bible from the Hebrew of the Old Testament, and the Greek of the New Testament. For over 1,000 years the Vulgate became the only form in which the Bible was known to Western Europe. It remains to this day the authorized version of the Church of Rome. He was careful about his sources of information and used extensively early manuscripts of the Bible no longer extant. Jerome did much to promote asceticism and celibacy.

**AUGUSTINE (AD 354 - 430)**, was born in the province of Numidia, North Africa, near ancient Carthage. Little did anyone realize that he would one day become the Bishop of Hippo, North Africa. Patricius, his father was a pagan, but his saintly mother Monica prayed earnestly for many years that her son might be converted. A good bishop living near her home assured her that, "A son of so many prayers and tears would not be finally lost." By the grace of God, Augustine did come to faith and helped to change the world. His conversion happened in a very dramatic way.

At the age of thirty-one Augustine was in a garden in Milan, weeping and pleading with God to deliver him from sin. In despair he suddenly heard the voice of a boy or a girl from a house nearby repeating in a kind of chant, 'Take and read; take and read'. Augustine immediately took up a New Testament and read Romans 13:13-14. The first words on which his eyes fell: 'Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ and make not provision for the flesh to fulfill the lusts thereof.' At once, all shadows of doubt were removed from Augustine. In a moment of time he passed from death into life.

His journey from moral darkness and philosophical speculation to a spiritual crisis of the soul and conversion is told in two volumes. His Confessions tells of his moral change while his Revisions describe the changes in his intellectual thought over the years.

Following his salvation, Augustine gave his life to the Church and defending the faith. As a student of the Bible, Augustine stands pre-eminent among the theologians of all time. His influence upon all faiths has been notable. His teaching that the millennium (Rev. 20:1-6) referred to the period between the Lord's first and second comings, during which time the Church would conquer the world, has influenced amillennial and post-millennial writers of past and present.

A prolific writer, about 250 volumes, Augustine's greatest book might be The City Of God, which he took fourteen years to write. In this work, Augustine traces the development of the city of earth and the city of God through two cities: the former to eternal judgment and the latter to eternal happiness. The sovereignty of God in the affairs of men and the ultimate triumph of good over evil is set forth despite the fact that the reverse is more often true. Much of Augustine's pastoral time and energy were spent contending with the Manicheans, the Donatists, and the Pelagians.

## **THE MANICHEANS**

This religion had its origin in Southern Babylon having been founded by Mani in the third century AD (c. 240). It spread rapidly through Persia, India, China, Egypt, North Africa and Italy. It became the official religion of Turkey. Like Gnosticism, Manicheism was a dualistic system. According to Mani, the internal conflict of good and evil that is found in humans is there because of the presence in each person of two principles. One principle called "light," is spiritual. The other principle of "darkness" is matter. Throughout the universe there are these

two principles, both eternal: light and darkness. Somehow the two have mingled and the present human condition of good and evil is a result of that mixture. Salvation consists in separating the two elements, and in preparing the spirit for its return to the realm of pure light, in which it will be absorbed. Since any new mingling of the principles is evil, true believers must avoid such things as the sexual act of procreation. According to Mani, what he taught had been revealed in various fashions to a long series of prophets, including Buddha, Zoroaster, Jesus and Mani himself.

For a short period, as a young man, Augustine embraced Manicheism because the system seemed to offer an answer to some of his perplexing concerns about the Scriptures and the origin of evil. As Augustine considered the problem of evil in particular, he wondered where it came from. He had been taught by his Christian mother Monica that all things were created by the Divine who was Supreme and Good. However, if God did not create evil, who did? How did it come into existence? Perhaps God was not altogether good or wise. Augustine wanted to know and Manicheism offered an answer.

The Bible, taught Mani, was not in truth the word of the eternal principle of light. Nor was evil a creation of that principle, but of its opposite, the principle of darkness. What does all of this metaphysical verbiage mean? Who really knows!

Because Augustine was not satisfied with such speculative teaching he continued to search until he found the Saviour, the true Light of the World. His heart returned to trusting the Bible which reveals the true origin of sin in the rebellion of Satan (Isa. 14) and in the fall of man (Gen. 3).

The results of the teaching of Mani had far reaching repercussions for the Church because it was divisive. In the system of Manicheism there were two classes: the elect and the auditors. The elect were ascetic and concerned themselves with religious activity. The auditors participated in the holiness of the elect in return for supplying the elect with the necessities of life. Manicheism encouraged an ascetic spirit in the churches while dividing Church members into clergy and laity. It also promoted the concept that the primary function of the priest was to be an intermediary between God and man. The priest was believed to have extraordinary power with God.

## **THE DONATISTS**

The Donatists received their name from their leader, Donatus. It was his position that professing Christians who denied the faith during the days of persecution in the reign of Diocletian (284-305) should not be readmitted to the Church. Because some bishops had given their copies of the Scriptures to the government officials to be burned, Donatus did not believe that were worthy to minister the sacraments or ordain others as bishops. The Donatists withdrew and started their own churches.

## **THE PELAGIANS**

Far more seriously were the teachings of the Pelagians. Pelagius was a British monk who denied the doctrine of original sin or that the human race had fallen in Adam. Pelagius argued that man was not born corrupt, he was not totally depraved, and he was not predestined to heaven or hell. Babies he said are innocent. They become bad when they grow up and are influenced by others. Each person has a free will that determines his eternal destiny.

Augustine taught every man is conceived and born in sin and can be saved only through the grace of God according to His divine pleasure. The General Council of Ephesus in 431 officially condemned the teachings of Pelagius. Later, in 529 the Synod of Orange condemned the teachings of Semi-Pelagianism which teaches that it is up to the individual to accept or refuse the gift of God's grace. The Church contended for free grace, not free will.

## **THE ECUMENICAL COUNCILS**

1. In AD 325 the First Council of Nicea was held. It condemned Arianism by saying that the Son is of one substance with the Father and that Christ is Divine. The Nicene Creed was adopted.
2. In AD 381 the First Council of Constantinople took place. It restated the decisions embraced at Nicea, established the divinity of the Holy Spirit, and condemned Apollinaris.
3. In AD 431 at Ephesus the Church council condemned Nestorianism and upheld the doctrine of the natural depravity of man.
4. In AD 451 at the Council of Chalcedon Eutyches was condemned while the divine and human natures of Christ were contended for.
5. In AD 553 the Second Council at Constantinople was held. Theodore of Mopsuestia as were Theodoret and Ibas of Edessa. The Council also settled the Monophysites controversy.
6. From AD 680 to AD 681, the Third Council of Constantinople took place. This Council condemned monotheism and Pope Honorius.
7. In AD 787 the Second Council of Nicea was held. It officially condemned iconoclasts but allowed that some images were worthy of veneration though they were not to be worshipped.
8. From AD 869 to AD 870 the Fourth Council at Constantinople was in session. This Council ended the schism of Photius.
9. In AD 1123 the First Lateran Council met to confirmed the Concordat of Worms between the Papacy and the Empire. It was decided that the Pope would appoint Bishops.



10. In AD 1139 the Second Lateran Council met. Celibacy was made compulsory. It also tried to heal the schism between East and West.
11. In AD 1179 the Third Lateran Council took place. It determined the method of papal election.
12. In AD 1215 the Fourth Lateran Council convened to embrace the terrible doctrine of transubstantiation while condemning Joachim of Fiore, Waldensians, and the Albigensians. It was determined that the Inquisition would be regulated.
13. In AD 1245 the First Council of Lyons met. It declared Emperor Frederick II to be deposed thus settling the quarrel of Pope and Emperor.
14. In AD 1274 The Second Council of Lyons came together. New regulations for papal elections were adopted.
15. From AD 1311 to AD 1312 met in Vienne. Here, the Templars were suppressed.
16. From AD 1414 to AD 1418 at Constance another Church Council met to put an end to The Great Schism. This Council condemned John Huss condemned. The Council also decided that the Pope was to be subject to Church Councils. Plans were made for reformation and future councils.
17. From AD 1431 to AD 1435, another Church Council met at Basel/Ferrara, Florence. There was a token effort to be reunited with Constantinople, Armenia, and with the Jacobites.
18. From AD 1512 to 1517, the Fifth Lateran Council met. It condemned the schismatic Council of Pisa.
19. From AD 1545 to AD 1563 the important Council of Trent was in session. This Council condemned the Protestants. It officially established the authority of Scripture and tradition.
20. From AD 1869 to AD 1870, the First Vatican Council met to established papal infallibility.
21. From AD 1962 to AD 1965, the Second Vatican Council met to renew Catholic liturgy and to respond to modern concerns such as nuclear war, religious freedom, and openness to other Christians.

## WHEN THE CHURCH WAS YOUNG

### Leader's Study Guide

#### CHAPTER 5

#### AD 325- 451

#### RESPONSE

1. What did each of the four great councils mentioned in this chapter accomplish for the Church? What was the date of each Council?
  - **Nicea.** The Arian controversy raged for a long time resulting in deep division in the Church. Finally, Constantine (c. 285 -337) called a general council to settle the dispute. More than three hundred bishops made their way to Nicea, located on the shores of the Bosphorus, forty-five miles from Constantinople.
  - **Constantinople.** The Council of Constantinople was called in 381 to reaffirm the Nicene Creed and to articulate the beliefs of the Church in the deity of the Holy Spirit. The teachings of Arianism were completely and finally rejected by the Church.
  - **Ephesus.** The Council of Ephesus was held in Ephesus, Asia Minor in 431 under Emperor Theodosius II, grandson of Theodosius the Great. The General Council of Ephesus in 431 officially condemned the teachings of Pelagius.
  - **Chalcedon.** In the year 451 a Fourth Ecumenical Council was held in Chalcedon near Nicea. The Church affirmed its belief in the full deity of Christ but also confessed its belief in His full and complete humanity without the surrender of His divine attributes or diminishing His true humanity. The Church confessed the mystery of the existence of the two natures in the unique Person of Christ: the human and the divine. The Church maintained that they exist in Christ without confusion, change, division, or separation. While Christ has two natures, He is one person, not two persons.
2. Defend the doctrine of the deity of Christ with scriptural quotations.

*Answer.*

## DOCTRINE OF THE DEITY OF CHRIST

1. The Gospel of John declares that Jesus is the eternal divine Word (Logos), and the source of life and light (John 1:1 cf. 1:14; 1:1-5, 9).
2. Through becoming flesh, the Word was revealed as the Son of God and the source of "grace and truth," as "the only begotten of the Father," (1:14, 18).
3. The Lord used the divine name (cf. Ex. 3:14) for Himself seven times. The claims to deity are explicit.
  - The bread of life                      John 6:35, 48, 51
  - The light of the world                John 8:12; 9:5
  - The door for the sheep                John 10:7,9
  - The good shepherd                    John 10:11, 14
  - The resurrection and the life        John 14:6
  - The Way, Truth, and Life             John 14:6
  - The true vine                            John 15:1,5
4. Thomas worshipped Jesus declaring Him to be, "My Lord and my God" (John 20:28). The Lord pronounced a blessing on all that share the faith of Thomas (John 20:29-31).
5. Paul declares that in Christ "dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily" (Col. 2:9; cf. 1:19).
6. Jesus is the Father's image and His agent in creating and upholding all things (Col. 1:15-17).
7. All who would be saved must call upon Christ for salvation just as one calls upon Jehovah (Joel 2:32; Rom. 10:9-13).
8. Jesus is "God over all" (Rom. 9:5), our "God and Saviour" (Titus 2:13), and the source of divine grace (2 Cor. 12:8,9 cf. 2 Cor. 13:14).
9. In Hebrews, the perfection of Christ's high priesthood is presented declaring Him to have full deity and unique dignity as the eternal Son of God (Heb. 1:3,6,8-12).
10. There are many other passages that teach the deity of Christ.
  - In the Old Testament study: Psa. 2: 6-12 cf. Heb. 1:5; Psa. 45:6,7 cf. Heb. 1:8,9; Psa. 110:1 cf. Heb. 1:13; Isa. 9:6; Jer. 23:6; Dan. 7:13; Mic. 5:2; Zech. 13:7; Mal. 3:1.

- In the New Testament study: John 1:1-3,14,18; 2:24,25; 3:16-18, 35, 36; 4:4,15; 5:18, 20, 21, 22, 25-27; 11:41-44; 20:28; 1 John 1:3; 2:23; 4:14, 15; 5:5, 10-13, 20; Rom. 1:7; 9:5; 1 Cor. 1:1-3; 2:8; 2 Cor. 5:10; Gal. 2:20; 4:4; Phil. 2:6; Col. 2:9; 1 Tim. 3:16; Heb. 1:1-3,5,8; 4:14; 5:8.

3. Of all the people discussed in this chapter, whom do you think the most of and why?

*Answer.* Note. Responses will vary.

4. What perplexed Augustine about the origin of evil?

*Answer.* As Augustine considered the problem of evil in particular, he wondered where it came from. He had been taught by his Christian mother Monica that all things were created by the Divine who was Supreme and Good. However, if God did not create evil, who did? How did it come into existence? Perhaps God was not altogether good or wise. Augustine wanted to know

5. Comment on the position of Donatus?

*Answer.* The Donatists received their name from their leader, Donatus. It was his position that professing Christians who denied the faith during the days of persecution in the reign of Diocletian (284-305) should not be readmitted to the Church.

How much grace and mercy should be shown to people who deny Christ in times of persecution? Support your position with Scripture.

*Answer.* Note. Responses will vary.

## REFLECTION

1. What is the true nature of man?
2. If the Church could call an Ecumenical Council today, what topics should be discussed?
3. Eight months after he was denied communion, by Ambrose, the Bishop of Milan, the Emperor Theodosius made a public confession. Write out an imaginary account of what his public confession and seeking of forgiveness might have sounded like.
4. Scripturally, should the Church seek public confessions from people?

## ACCOUNTABILITY

1. Would you refuse to serve someone communion as Ambrose denied the Emperor Theodosius communion? If so, explain the scriptural basis for your position and then list the practical steps that would need to be taken to enforce this decision.

2. Would you be willing to be denied communion by Church officials? Explain your position.

## WHEN THE CHURCH WAS YOUNG

### CHAPTER 6

#### SOWING SEEDS OF SELF DESTRUCTION

AD 100-461

##### THE SINS OF THE SAINTS

The study of Church history is the study of men and women of great faith and courage. Those who have known so little of physical suffering for the cause of Christ have to be humbled by the testimony of the blood of the martyrs. The Church has a rich spiritual heritage to look back upon and to be thankful.

However, there is a tendency to idealize the past and to think that somehow it was better than the present. We are inclined to believe that the early Christians were more godly, more spiritual, and less sinful than the Church today. That is not the case. From the very start, the Church struggled against a hostile society without and personal sins of the saints within the sanctuary. In Acts 6 the story is told of inner conflict among the brethren: "And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration."

As the New Testament narrative continues, a host of problems are set forth including the most heinous sins against nature (1 Cor. 5:1-6). In the letters to the seven churches in Asia which Christ Himself dictated to John on the isle of Patmos, direct references are made to spiritual deterioration.

Following the close of the Apostolic Age (c. AD 100), the spiritual climate of the Church did not improve. By the end of the fifth century a number of unscriptural doctrines and practices had become deeply rooted in the Church.

**DEMONISM.** As demonic activity was part of the evil which the Lord had to face, so the demons of darkness plagued the Church as people opened themselves up to the Wicked One. Exorcism, the expelling of an evil spirit, was practiced by the Church leaders.

**PRAYERS FOR THE DEAD.** While it is normal to remember loved ones, it is not right to pray for the dead or to the dead as if their state of existence could be changed or they have influence in human affairs.

**PURGATORY.** In the name of humility, the teaching was introduced to the Church that no person was good enough to go directly into the presence of the Lord. It seemed "logical" to some to believe that an intermediate state existed between heaven and earth where purification takes

place. In essence, what this doctrine really teaches is that all men go to a form of hell. Apparently, the hell of purgatory does not last forever because individuals will move from there into heaven, but only after having helped to redeem themselves through suffering. The whole concept of purgatory is an abhorrent teaching for it diminishes the glorious work of redemption Christ accomplished at Calvary on behalf of His own (Matt. 1:21). Worst of all, purgatory makes man his own partial saviour (cf. Eph. 2:8-9).

**THE FORTY DAY LENTEN SEASON.** The emphasis is again placed upon man doing something for salvation and for sanctification. Set aside is the biblical doctrine that the just shall live by faith (Rom. 1:17).

**MASS.** The Lord's Supper was transformed from a memorial service, "Do this in remembrance of me," (1 Cor. 11:24) into a daily sacrifice of the body and blood of Christ.

**VENERATION.** Adoration was encouraged of martyrs, the saints, the apostles, and above all others, Mary. The old heathen gods of Rome were being replaced by the new "gods" of the Church.

**RELICS.** Miraculous powers were attributed to pieces of wood said to be part of the Cross of Christ. There were so many pieces in Europe that the Church taught the wood was reproducing itself. As silly as that concept is, healing powers were ascribed to the relics of the saints and martyrs such as bones, and hair and fragments of clothing. The Church became the object of ridicule. Emperor Julian the Apostate called Christians bone worshipers.

**ICONOCLASTS.** Pictures, images, and altars in the churches were endorsed, not as aids of worship but as objects of spiritual power.

**VESTMENTS.** Gorgeous garments began to be worn by the clergy as the trappings of regal power found expression in the kingdom of God.

**RITUAL.** Rather than pray and preach spontaneously in natural acts of worship, formal ritual services were encouraged.

**MONASTICISM.** In an effort to be truly spiritual some Christians began to withdraw from society to become monks and nuns. The word "monk" is derived from the Greek monachos, which means "solitary."

## **THE RISE OF MONASTICISM**

Christian monasticism began in Egypt when men like Anthony of Thebes took up the life of a monk. The year was AD 270. According to Athanasius, Anthony was born in a small village on the left shore of the Nile River, the son of well to do parents. When they died, Anthony was able to live off of his inheritance. One day in Church the text was read of the story of the rich young

ruler. Anthony took the words of Matthew 19:21 literally. He disposed of his property and gave the proceeds to the poor. After placing his sister under the care of the virgins of the Church he left for the desert. After about fifteen years, Anthony went to live alone in a tomb in an abandoned cemetery.

Others followed the example of Anthony such as Pachomius. Pachomius was born around AD 286, in a small village in the southern portion of Egypt. As a young man he was drafted into the army. Finding himself far from home and lonely, Pachomius was impressed by a group of Christians who came to console him. He decided to devote himself to the serve others. The opportunity came when he was allowed to leave the army. He sought someone to instruct him in the Christian faith, and to baptize him. Years later he decided to go to the desert where he was able to establish a monastery. There was one basic rule and that was the rule of service. By the time he died, Pachomius had founded nine communities. Meanwhile Mary, his sister, founded similar communities for women. While many Christians in the Church sought to be holy by joining monasteries and engaging in good works, it was often very unholy in its attitude towards other Christians. Persecution replaced Christian love far too often. Because of Theophilus, a bishop of Alexandria, John Chrysostom, was banished to a miserable little village.

## **CHRYSOSTOM**

Chrysostom (c. 347 - 407), patriarch of Constantinople, was a preacher of great ability. His name means golden mouth. This name was given to him because of his eloquence. Born in Antioch into a wealthy Christian family, Chrysostom was a natural and brilliant student. He studied philosophy, logic, and rhetoric with a view to becoming a lawyer. However, being a religious man, Chrysostom desired to join a monastic order but was unable to do so because of responsibilities to his family. But even at home, he lived an austere life. Finally, in AD 373 he retired to the mountains where he stayed for about ten years. His health broke under the physical stress. Returning to Antioch, Chrysostom studied under the bishop Melitius, who ordained him a deacon in 381. Five years later he became a priest.

As a gifted preacher, Chrysostom attracted a wide following. When the patriarch of Constantinople died in 397, Chrysostom was appointed to replace him. Reluctantly he was made a bishop. In the years to follow, Chrysostom preached boldly against the vices of the congregation and corruption in high places of government. He even criticized the empress Eudoxia and the immorality of the imperial court. Outraged, Eudoxia enlisted the support of the bishop of Alexandria to remove Chrysostom from office based upon frivolous charges. Exiled in 403, he was recalled, but soon offended the empress again and was banished once more to Pontus. Forced to march through the hot sand without any covering on his head, he died on the way. Such unnecessary sufferings bore bitter fruit in the years to come.



# WHEN THE CHURCH WAS YOUNG

## Leader's Study Guide

### CHAPTER 6

#### Sowing Seeds of Self Destruction – AD 100 - 461

#### RESPONSES

1. Please comment on the following statement: *"No man will be more holy than he wants to be."*

*Answer.* Note. Responses will vary.

2. What would you consider to be the major sins of the Church today?

*Answer.* Note. Responses will vary.

3. List five major unscriptural doctrines and practices of the early Church.

*Answer.*

- **DEMONISM.** As demonic activity was part of the evil which the Lord had to face, so the demons of darkness plagued the Church as people opened themselves up to the Wicked One. Exorcism, the expelling of an evil spirit, was practiced by the Church leaders.
- **PRAYERS FOR THE DEAD.** While it is normal to remember loved ones, it is not right to pray for the dead or to the dead as if their state of existence could be changed or they have influence in human affairs.
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- **RITUAL.** Rather than pray and preach spontaneously in natural acts of worship, formal ritual services were encouraged.
- **MONASTICISM.** In an effort to be truly spiritual some Christians began to withdraw from society to become monks and nuns. The word "monk" is derived from the Greek *monachos*, which means "solitary."

4. How can Christians remain in the world and yet not be part of it?

*Answer.* Note. Responses will vary.

5. Define monasticism.

*Answer.* **Monasticism** (from Greek *monachos*—a solitary person) is the religious practice of renouncing all worldly pursuits in order to fully devote one's life to spiritual work.

Does monasticism have a valid place in the life of the Church?

*Answer.* Note. Responses will vary.

## **REFLECTION**

Should Christians ever use force to bring people into the Church or keep them there?

## **ACCOUNTABILITY**

James 4:1-7 explains the origin of warfare in the Church. Have you ever been caught up in such experiences? If so, what has the Lord taught you about your spirit in such times?

## **WHEN THE CHURCH WAS YOUNG**

### **CHAPTER 7**

#### **NEW TRIALS AND GREAT TRIUMPHS**

**AD 376-754**

By the fifth century AD the Church had grown in power, wealth, and numerical strength. The army of Christ had marched victoriously through many lands: Greece, Italy, Gaul, Egypt, and North Africa. In many cities the gospel had taken many hearts captive for Christ. Christians could be found in Jerusalem, Samaria, Caesarea, Antioch, Smyrna, Nicea, Chalcedon, Constantinople, Rome, Milan, Bethlehem, Lyons, Alexandria, Carthage, Tagaste, and Hippo.

Disciples of Christ could also be found in remote and dangerous places. They lived in caves and dwelt in the desert. They confined themselves to small cells as monks and served in dark dungeons. Christian men and women and young people went bravely to a martyr's death as wild beasts devoured them in public arenas. The saints prayed and worshipped among the dead in damp catacombs. However, overall, the Church militant had become the Church triumphant despite all that the world, the flesh, and the devil could do to destroy and discredit her. While the empires of this world crumbled, the kingdom of Christ grew stronger and stronger moving from one spiritual victory to another.

#### **GERMAN TRIBES INVADE THE EMPIRE**

The success of the Church can only be explained according to sovereign grace. God the Father had promised many souls for the labors of His Son at Calvary (Heb. 2:10). Without the Divine undergirding, the kingdoms of this world will always collapse illustrated in the Roman Empire. That mighty empire did not trust in the true God. Her spiritual strength was placed in myths and pagan gods. Her moral strength existed only in the form of a social contract which her subjects grew weary of trying to implement. No man can be more moral than his nature. The nature of man apart from Christ is depraved.

It was inevitable that the social contract which bound Roman society together not be honored. The culture of Rome collapsed as men did that which was right in their own sight. The Roman Empire, for all of its military might, was but a shadow that passed on the dial of time. In the dusty pages of the history books, people can still read at their leisure about the rise, decline and fall of the Roman Empire. The fall of Rome was all the sadder because of the glory that she once held in the eyes of this world.

In an initial advance to glory and greatness, the city of Rome had extended power over Italy, Sicily, North Africa, and Spain. Its legions of warriors turned east and conquered many of the territories of Greece, Asia Minor, Syria, Palestine and Egypt. Later Rome stormed the

strongholds of Gaul (France), and what is now Belgium, the Netherlands, and Britain. When it had reached its zenith, the Roman Empire was bounded by the Sahara Desert on the south, by the Atlantic Ocean on the West, by the Rhine and Danube rivers on the north, and by the Euphrates River on the east.

It was on the northern frontier of the Empire that Rome would find new and terrible forces to fight. East of the Rhine and north of the Danube were two great German tribes. the Ostrogoths [bright Goths] in the Ukraine, and the Visigoths [wise Goths] in the area that is now called Rumania.

Warring against the German tribes were the Mongolian Huns. These fierce horsemen instilled fear into the hearts of German tribes. As a result, in 376, two hundred thousand Visigoths crossed the lower Danube fleeing before the Huns. It was the first tribe of barbarians to enter into the Roman Empire.

At first they were allowed to settle in a peaceful manner. But then the Visigothic settlers protested that they were being exploited and oppressed by the east Roman administration. Open revolt resulted. Under the leadership of their chieftain Fritigern, the Visigoths ravaged the Balkan Peninsula. At the same time, new waves of German invaders moved across the Danube.

Valens (ruler, AD 364 - 378), the Roman Emperor of the East, hastened from Asia to engage in battle with the Visigoths near the city of Hadrianopolis. The year was 378. In the battle that followed, the Roman army was severely defeated. Valens was killed but his body was never found. Saint Ambrose (c. 339-397), the Bishop of Milan in northern Italy viewed the catastrophic battle as "the massacre of all humanity, the end of the world." Ambrose was not far from being right. The world was changing but it was the western, not the eastern part of the Empire that was destined for destruction.

The conflict with the barbarians was not to be halted until the days of Theodosius I, who ruled AD 379 - 395. Unable to continually battle against the Visigoths or expel them, Theodosius instead, in 382, concluded a treaty with their leaders, accepting them en bloc as federates within the imperial borders. By virtue of this new arrangement they were given lands in Thrace and permitted to live under their own laws and rules on the condition that they provide soldiers and farm workers to the Roman government.

While relative peace came to the eastern part of the Roman Empire, the Goths, together with other German tribes, attacked the western part. Years of constant conflict depleted Rome of her strength to the point that she was ready to collapse. During these last and dark days of the Roman Empire lived Ambrose, Jerome, and Augustine.

As the barbarians slashed their way through the various parts of the Empire, a bloody trail was left. Virgins, bishops, and priests were ridiculed, raped, insulted and killed. Churches were destroyed or turned into stables for animals. The relics of the martyrs were dug up and destroyed.

Monasteries were torn down. Rivers ran red with the blood of innocent people. Men and women and young people were dragged into slavery as captives of conflict. The world of the Roman Empire was moving towards utter destruction.

### **THE FALL OF ROME: AD 410**

In 410 Rome was finally attacked by the Goths under Alaric. For six days and nights the barbarians ravaged the city. The streets were wet with blood and tears. The palace of the emperors and the residences of the wealthy citizens were looted of their costly furniture, expensive vessels and valuable jewelry. Silken and velvet hangings and beautiful objects of art were plundered.

The defilement of the "Mistress of the World" shocked both pagans and Christians. Jerome (c. 345 - c. 419) sitting in a cave in Bethlehem, was writing his Commentary on the Prophecies of Ezekiel, when he heard the news. He became distraught with anguish and grief. Believing that the Antichrist was nearby he said, "The world is rushing to ruin. The glorious city, the capital of the Roman Empire, has been swallowed up in one conflagration. Churches once hallowed have sunk into ashes. Virgins of God have been seized, maltreated, and murdered."

It was in the midst of this mass destruction and loss of all that was beautiful and holy that Augustine began his work on "The City of God." Augustine wanted to prove in part that the Church was not to be blamed for the fall of Rome. Rome had fallen because her own pride and sins. When the Goths were through plundering Rome, the Vandals came. After occupying Spain and North Africa, they crossed the Mediterranean Sea and took Rome in the year 455.

Not to be left out, the Huns moved towards Rome. While they had previously been victorious in their warfare against the Goths, in 451, the Huns were defeated at the Battle of Chalons by an alliance of Romans, Visigoths, and Franks led by the Roman Aetius. The next year their leader, Attila (died 453), known to Christians as the "Scourge of God," made a move to attack Rome but the political arbitrating intervention of Pope Leo I spared the city from certain destruction (died 461; Pope, 440-461). In the providence of God, Attila died within a year and thereafter the Huns ceased to be a threat to the empire. Eventually the barbarians did conquer every province of the western part of the Roman Empire: Italy, North Africa, Spain, Gaul, including the Netherlands and Britain. Despite all of the political chaos and a world in upheaval, the Church remained steadfast.

## **A DIVIDED PEOPLE**

While Rome was given over to the barbarians, the eastern part of the Empire survived. It was neither conquered nor occupied. The eastern part of the Empire embraced the Balkan Peninsula, Asia Minor, Syria, Palestine, and Egypt. It is known as the Eastern or Byzantine Empire. Its capital was Constantinople.

The invasion of the western part of the former Roman Empire brought new people to settle the land. After the invasion by the barbarians, the Ostrogoths settled in Italy among the native population. They embraced the established Church having been converted to Christianity before they invaded the Empire. One human instrument of their salvation was Ulfilas (c. 311 - 383). Born in Cappadocia (east Asia Minor), Ulfilas may have been taken captive by Gothic raiders as a youth. As an adult he found his way to Constantinople, the eastern capital of the Roman Empire. It was here that Ulfilas was educated and began his service to the Church. In 341 Eusebius of Nicomedia, bishop of Constantinople consecrated Ulfilas as bishop. Soon afterward the young bishop went to Dacia (north of the Danube River), where he served as a missionary to the western Goths in this region. He was very successful in winning converts to Christ in part because of his translation of the Old and New Testaments into the Goths' vernacular language. As the Ostrogoths settled in Italy, the southern part of Gaul and the northern half of Spain were occupied by the Visigoths. Like their near relatives, the Ostrogoths in Italy, the Visigoths had accepted Christianity.

In addition to the Goths were many other German tribes that settled in the newly conquered territory such as the Burgundians which settled in eastern Gaul. They too were Christians. Then there were the Vandals who conquered southern Spain and North Africa. And they claimed to be Christian. Unfortunately, the Goths, the Burgundian, and the Vandals were Arian Christians.

In Northern Gaul and in Britain the situation was far different. Heathenism still claimed the lives of the Franks who took northern Gaul, Belgium, and the southern Netherlands; the Frisians who lived in the northwestern part of the Netherlands; the Saxons who settled in the eastern part of the Netherlands; and the Anglo-Saxons who conquered Britain.

Then there were the people who lived in countries which had never been part of the Roman Empire such as the Celts in Ireland; the Scandinavians in what is now called Denmark, Norway, and Sweden; the many German tribes east of the Rhine; and beyond them in the east the tribes in what is now called Russia. These vast territories were populated with millions of people who still needed to hear the name of Christ.

## **TWO CHALLENGES FOR THE CHURCH**

With the fall of Rome and the division of the Empire into so many diverse groups, two challenges faced the Church. The people of God had the opportunity to evangelize the barbarians and educate the newly formed nations. How successful the Church was in her task will be discovered as the story of the Church continues.

### **THE PRESERVATION OF A PEOPLE**

In the midst of economic chaos, social unrest, and cultural readjustment caused by the collapse of the Roman Empire, the Church found itself trying to preserve as much of her own culture and heritage as possible. A Dark Age had descended upon a large portion of the earth. The sword seemed to be more powerful than anything else. Still, while strong military arms fought for supremacy, godly men sat in small cells and began to copy the Scriptures. Slowly, laboriously, they copied the Bible and other important books in an effort to keep education and the knowledge of the true God alive. The day would come when men would grow weary of bathing themselves in blood and would want a better way to live. The Church would then be ready to make new disciples of all nations and fulfill the mandates of the Great Commission (Matt. 28:19-20).

### **THE FRANKS FIND CHRIST**

Among the first of the unconverted Germanic warriors to embrace Christianity were the Franks. Their king was a man named Clovis. The story of his conversion is very similar to that of Constantine. In the middle of a desperate battle, Clovis saw the sign of the cross in the sky. He made a pledge that he would become a Christian if he won the battle. The victory was his and Clovis kept his word. He was baptized into the Christian faith together with 3,000 of his warriors on Christmas day in 496 in the city of Rheims.

Rejecting Arianism, Clovis adopted the orthodox Christianity of the Nicene Creed. This set the stage for religious civil warfare against other German tribes who had embraced Arianism and thus were officially heretics.

Something else of significance happened with the conversion of Clovis. Up to this time in history individuals had accepted Christianity. Now, whole tribes technically became Christians when their kings were converted to Christ.

### **BRINGING THE BRITISH ISLES TO THE CROSS**

Prior to the final fall of the Roman Empire in the west, Christianity was introduced into Britain by Christian Roman soldiers. Elsewhere, a British monk named Patrick (c. 390 - c. 461) became the "Apostle of Ireland." Patrick was born to a deacon named Calpurnius at Ailclyde (now Dumbarton). When he was sixteen years old Patrick was captured in a raid by Irish pirates and sold to Milchu, an Antrim chieftain. He was forced to serve as a slave. Six years later Patrick



escaped to Gaul where he became a monk. Following a desire to minister the gospel as a missionary in Ireland, Patrick returned about 431 meeting with great success until his death.

### **THE GOSPEL OF GRACE FOR GERMANY AND THE NETHERLANDS**

Once converted to Christ, the English became great missionaries as they took the gospel to those without the Lord in the northern part of Europe. One of the most effective missionaries was Boniface (680 - 754), "The Apostle of Germany." His real name was Wynfrith. He was an Anglo-Saxon, born in Devonshire. Boniface became a monk while excelling as a preacher and scholar. After ministering successfully in Frisia, Hesse, and Thuringia in the Netherlands (719-722), Boniface went to Rome where he was consecrated a bishop. With that title he crossed the Rhine into Germany to win many converts to Christianity. His initial success came when Boniface cut down a large oak tree which was believed to be sacred to the god of thunder named Thor. When he was not struck down by lightning people were willing to listen to the gospel message and believe. Boniface used the wood of the oak tree in the building of a chapel. When he was 73 years old Boniface returned to minister among the Frisians. In 754 while baptizing some converts, he and fifty three of his fellow laborers were murdered by hostile Frisians.

Another English monk who labored in the Netherlands, from 690 to 739, was Willibrord (c. 658 - 739). A native of Northumbria, Willibrord was educated at the monastery of Ripon near York. As a young man he went to Ireland to the monastery at Rathmelsigi where he remained from 678 -690. He was ordained a priest and began to minister in the cause of Christ. Leaving Ireland in 690 he went to preach the gospel in the Frisian Islands (the Netherlands and northern Germany) where he met with great success. Multitudes of conversions were witnessed in all northwestern Europe. Monasteries and Church buildings sprang up everywhere. The monastery and cathedral Willibrord constructed at Utrecht became the center for the Frisian work from which he emphasized the training of native Church leaders. Little by little, the gospel continued to spread. By the year 1000 Christians could also be found in Denmark, Norway, Sweden, and Russia.

### **GREGORY THE GREAT**

Gregory the Great (c. 540 - 604) was perhaps the most important pope to emerge during the days when the new barbarian kingdoms were being built upon the ruins of the Roman Empire in the West. He was the first monk to become a pope, ruling from 590 to 604. He called himself "the servant of the servants of God." Born in Rome of wealthy parents, Gregory received a comprehensive education. Distinguishing himself in legal studies in 573 he was given the imperial appointment of prefect of Rome. However, deeply religious, he renounced the world, gave up his wealth following the death of his father, and devoted himself to good works. He established seven monasteries in Sicily and one in Rome. With a humble spirit Gregory labored

faithfully to advance the kingdom of God. He moved through the organizational structure of the Church until he was elected pope in 590.

Gregory was the first of the popes to take unto himself broad political powers outside the Church. He had more real power in Italy than did the emperors although legally and in theory Italy still belonged to the Eastern Empire. Gregory appointed heads of cities, raised armies, and enforced peace treaties. He neutralized the effects of the Lombards who had conquered northern Italy. The power and prestige of the Church was further enhanced when the Church took on the responsibilities of education of the population, care of the poor, and the maintaining of justice.

Despite the good that he did, Gregory also brought much harm to the cause of Christ. He taught that the Lord's Supper is a repetition of the sacrifice of Christ, that the saints in heaven can be of help to us, and that there is a purgatory. The end result is that as the Church went forth to conquer and grow, as the Church increased in power and wealth, the Church also underwent radical changes that would challenge her spiritual effectiveness in the centuries to come.

## WHEN THE CHURCH WAS YOUNG

### Leader's Study Guide

#### CHAPTER 7

#### New Trials and Great Triumphs – AD 376 -754

#### RESPONSE

1. From which direction did the Roman Empire find new and terrible forces to fight?

*Answer.* It was on the northern frontier of the Empire that Rome would find new and terrible forces to fight. East of the Rhine and north of the Danube were two great German tribes. the Ostrogoths [bright Goths] in the Ukraine, and the Visigoths [wise Goths] in the area that is now called Rumania.

2. As the German tribes fought the Romans what motivated the Germans to invade the Roman territory?

*Answer.* There was a belief that the Roman Empire was exploiting the Germanic tribes and oppressing them.

3. How did Theodosius I bring peace to the warfare with the barbarians?

*Answer.* Theodosius, in 382, concluded a treaty with their leaders, accepting them en bloc as federates within the imperial borders. By virtue of this new arrangement they were given lands in Thrace and permitted to live under their own laws and rules on the condition that they provide soldiers and farm workers to the Roman government.

4. In what year was Rome attacked by the Goths under Alaric?

*Answer.* In 410 Rome was finally attacked by the Goths under Alaric. For six days and nights the barbarians ravaged the city.

5. In the midst of world change, how did the Church help to preserve her own culture and heritage?

*Answer.* While strong military arms fought for supremacy, godly men sat in small cells and began to copy the Scriptures. Slowly, laboriously, they copied the *Bible* and other important books in an effort to keep education and the knowledge of the true God alive.

## **REFLECTION**

- 1 What is the true explanation for the success of the Church as it grew to be stronger than the Empire of Rome?
- 2 What two spiritual challenges faced the Church after the fall of Rome?
- 3 Though whole tribes technically became Christian when their kings were converted to the Lord, how do people really come to Christ?
- 4 Why might the Church of this time period try and justify baptizing the followers of a king who made a profession of faith?

## **ACCOUNTABILITY**

1. Have you read the course on Church history in its entirety?
2. What recommendations could you make to improve the study of the Church history in this condensed form?

## **WHEN THE CHURCH WAS YOUNG**

### **CHAPTER 8**

#### **DIMINISHING GLORY**

##### **THE ARABS ATTACK THE EASTERN PART OF THE EMPIRE**

Between AD 325-681 six great ecumenical councils were held. These were turbulent times in the political and religious history of the world. The Church was torn apart by theological controversies. However, the controversies did produce great statements of faith. Meanwhile, the barbarians continued to challenge the borders of the Roman Empire, until they finally conquered the whole western portion of it. In the East, the Empire struggled for survival against the German tribes from the north and then against the Persians. A desperate war was fought against the Persians by the Emperor Heraclius (c. 574-641; Ruler of the East 610-641) ending at the Battle Of Nineveh in the year AD 628. The Persian army was destroyed while the Empire in the East survived despite the advances of the Arab army. The Arab warriors were Semitic by race and Muslim or followers of Mohammed in their religion.

##### **A MAN NAMED MOHAMMED**

Inhabiting Arabia, the Arabs were the descendants of Ishmael, the son of Abraham and his wife's handmaiden, Hagar. Therefore, Ishmael was also the half brother of Isaac whose mother was Sarah. With the passing of time many of the Arabs had forsaken the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob to embrace many gods. In this idolatrous country of Arabia there was born in the city of Mecca a boy that was named Mahomet or Mohammed, better known as Mohammed. The year was AD 570. Mohammed claimed descent from the family of Hashem and the tribe of Koreish. During his childhood Mohammed was in poor health because he suffered from epilepsy. Being orphaned when he was very young, he was reared by his uncle, Abu Talib. At the age of 25, Mohammed was employed by Kajijah, a rich widow. He carried on her husband's business and prospered. He also married Kajijah who was fourteen years older than himself. Being a merchant, Mohammed moved with his caravan of camels traveling the traditional trade routes of the Middle East. His journeys brought Mohammed into contact with Jews and Christians. After considering their claims and customs, he rejected both as the basis for religious truth. In his fortieth year Mohammed temporarily retired from society to meditate in a mountain cave near Mecca called the Cave of Hira. He returned to his friends and family to announce that he had received a revelation from an angel which said to him, "Mohammed, of a truth thou art the prophet of God; fear not, I am his angel, Gabriel."

This was the first of many revelations allegedly given by Gabriel who came to teach Mohammed the way of truth. Later, the teachings of the prophet were collected and written in a sacred book called the Koran meaning literally, 'Rehearsal' or 'Readings.' Many of Mohammed's sayings had first been recorded on bones or palm leaves. While the prophet could neither read nor write Arabic, Mohammed claimed that the various sections of the Koran came down to him from heaven during a period of twenty-three years. The Koran teaches that God used prophets to bring reformation to men. Such prophets included Jesus and Moses but Mohammed himself was the greatest of them all and is to be followed above all others (cf. John 16:23; Acts 10:43). Because of this, Mohammedans deny that Jesus is the Son of God (cf. John 5:19-23). They also deny His deity (cf. John 5:17-18) and His resurrection from the dead (cf. 1 Cor. 15: 1-3). They hold the atoning death of Christ in contempt while embracing a system of salvation by good works (cf. Eph. 2:8-9). The main tenets of the Islamic faith are five in number.

1. Confession is made that there is no other God but Allah and that Mohammed is his prophet.
2. Five times each day prayer is offered with the supplicant facing Mecca.
3. Alms are to be given.
4. Fasting is to take place during the month of Ramadan (September), the ninth month of the Mohammed year. The fast is to last from sunrise to sunset.
5. A pilgrimage to Mecca must be made at least once in a person's lifetime.

Going to the city of Mecca, Mohammed began to share his new beliefs that challenged many of the merchants of that city who sold idols. While the Prophet gained a few converts, the opposition to his teachings were so strong that in the year AD 622 he and his followers had to flee to the city of Medina where his thoughts would be received better. This flight which began on July 16 is called the Hegira. In Medina, Mohammed formed his faithful followers into a killing war machine and then went forth to conquer by the sword. In 630 Mohammed returned to Mecca in military triumph and destroyed the 360 idols of the city. Overwhelmed by his success, the inhabitants of Mecca shouted, "There is one God, Allah, and Mohammed is his prophet. This encouraged many others to embrace Islam, which means "Obedience" or "Surrender."

### **THE INFLUENCE OF A FALSE PROPHET**

In AD 632 Mohammed died at the age of 63, leaving no son, and only one daughter Fatima. His body was buried in a grave dug under the bed on which he departed this life. Though Mohammed died his tremendous influence lived on. He taught his followers not to argue or discuss the different religions but to kill with the sword all who refused obedience to the law of the Koran. Those who died in this spiritual battle were promised to receive a glorious reward in paradise. While prayer leads half way to God and fasting leads to the gates of heaven, alms giving opens the door but waging a holy war is what gives actual entrance into heaven.

During the next 100 years, the leaders who succeeded him were known as Caliphs. Four of them founded the Mohammedan or Moslem Empire. The Muslims took their bloody swords and butchered their way over the hot deserts of Arabia to conquer Persia, penetrate India, and defeat the imperial province of Asia Minor. Twice Constantinople was attacked. While the city was able to protect itself, other places such as Syria, Palestine, Egypt, and North Africa fell to Islamic conquest. In the year 637 Caliph Omar took Jerusalem and built on the site of the old Jewish temple the mosque which bears his name to this day. It was Omar who also destroyed the famous library located at Alexandria in Egypt. He believed that no book other than the Koran was needed and so he destroyed some of the greatest pieces of literature of the ancient world. North Africa, where once Augustine and Cyprian had labored for the cause of the Christ, fell to the Arabs. In 711 the Muslims crossed the Straits of Gibraltar to conquer Spain. After Spain, the Islamic forces crossed the Pyrenees to penetrate into the Roman province of Gaul (France). During these many years of bloody violence, thousands of Christian churches were destroyed or converted into mosques.

### **THE BATTLE OF TOURS**

Just when it seemed as if all of Europe might become Mohammedan, Charles Martel (the Hammer) led a great army against the Islamic forces. In the year 732, on a Saturday in October, the battle lines were drawn on the Plain of Tours. The Arab army consisted mainly of cavalry while the Frankish army consisted of foot soldiers. The Franks drew up their army in close order. There was no gap to be found in the ranks. The Arabs charged swooping down headlong and furiously. Bodies began to fall as swords flashed in the sun. It was to be a fight to the finish. The banners of the cross-waved defiantly and in the end, the Arabs retreated from the field of conflict. Accepting defeat on the Plain of Tours the Arabs retreated behind the Pyrenees into Spain where they would remain influential for over 700 years. It was not until 1492 that Ferdinand of Aragon was able to drive the Moors (as the Mohammedans were then called) out of their last stronghold in Granada and forced them back to Africa.

### **THE CROSS AND THE SWORD: THE EXPANSION OF MOHAMMEDANISM**

Though the Islamic conquest had been halted, there were permanent wounds that had been inflicted upon the Church for the Christian Church lost many potential mission fields. India fell under the influence of the Islamic faith. Persia was dominated by the Mohammedans. Lands in the Orient were closed to Christian evangelism. Historical places that once housed believers of the Lord were conquered such as Jerusalem, the cradle of the Church. Other places which went into the dominion of the Islamic sphere of influence included Bethlehem, where Jerome once lived and had given the Church his Latin translation of the Bible. Antioch in Syria, the place that Paul used as the gateway to bring Christianity into the Roman empire was no longer Christian. Alexandria in Egypt which had been the home of Clement, and of Origen the great scholar of the East, and of Athanasius, the champion of the deity of Christ against Arianism went to the Arabs. In Carthage and in Hippo in North Africa where men like Tertullian, Cyprian, and Augustine had

taught, now belonged to the Muslims. In Seville in Spain, Isidore, the leader of the Church of Spain had labored to impart the knowledge of the cultured Greeks and Roman of the ancient world to the German barbarian tribes of the Middle Ages. All these places and more were officially lost to Christianity.

Looking back upon this time period, the question arises as to why the Church suffered such a strategic setback. Several reasons may be discerned from a human point of view.

First, the mindset for world conquest was radically different for the Mohammedans than that of the Christians. The Lord said that He did not come bearing a sword to advance His kingdom by physical violence (John 18:10; John 18:36). Mohammed did. He was ready from the first to kill anyone who did not accept his teachings.

Second, the wild desert life had hardened the Mohammedans which suited them for the vigor's of violent warfare. The Church was more civilized and therefore physically softer.

Third, Mohammedanism promised paradise to those men who fell in battle while fighting for the faith. Fierce Arab horsemen fought with reckless courage without regard for life or limb unto death believing in the special privileges and pleasures in the world to come.

Finally, to a certain extent, the salt of the earth had lost its savor (Matt. 5:13). The Eastern Church had become formal in its religion and failed to continue to evangelize. In the Western part of the Church, attention was turned inward to the point that Christians began to persecute other Christians for a variety of reasons not the least of which was to maintain purity of faith.



# WHEN THE CHURCH WAS YOUNG

## Leader's Study Guide

### CHAPTER 8

#### Diminishing Glory

#### RESPONSES

1. Briefly summarize the life of Mohammed.

*Answer.* Mohammed claimed descent from the family of Hashem and the tribe of Koreish. During his childhood Mohammed was in poor health because he suffered from epilepsy. Being orphaned when he was very young, he was reared by his uncle, Abu Talib. At the age of 25, Mohammed was employed by Kajijah, a rich widow. He carried on her husband's business and prospered. He also married Kajijah who was fourteen years older than himself. Being a merchant, Mohammed moved with his caravan of camels traveling the traditional trade routes of the Middle East.

His journeys brought Mohammed into contact with Jews and Christians. After considering their claims and customs, he rejected both as the basis for religious truth. In his fortieth year Mohammed temporarily retired from society to meditate in a mountain cave near Mecca called the Cave of Hira.

He returned to his friends and family to announce that he had received a revelation from an angel which said to him, "Mohammed, of a truth thou art the prophet of God; fear not, I am his angel, Gabriel." This was the first of many revelations allegedly given by Gabriel who came to teach Mohammed the way of truth. Later, the teachings of the prophet were collected and written in a sacred book called the Koran meaning literally, 'Rehearsal' or 'Readings.'

Many of Mohammed's sayings had first been recorded on bones or palm leaves. While the prophet could neither read nor writes Arabic, Mohammed claimed that the various sections of the Koran came down to him from heaven during a period of twenty-three years. Going to the city of Mecca, Mohammed began to share his new beliefs that challenged many of the merchants of that city who sold idols.

While the Prophet gained a few converts, the opposition to his teachings were so strong that in the year AD 622 he and his followers had to flee to the city of Medina where his thoughts would be received better. This flight which began on July 16 is called the Hegira. In Medina, Mohammed formed his faithful followers into a killing war machine and then went forth to conquer by the sword.

In 630 Mohammed returned to Mecca in military triumph and destroyed the 360 idols of the city. Overwhelmed by his success, the inhabitants of Mecca shouted, "There is one God, Allah, and Mohammed is his prophet. This encouraged many others to embrace Islam, which means "Obedience" or "Surrender."

In AD 632 Mohammed died at the age of 63, leaving no son, and only one daughter Fatima. His body was buried in a grave dug under the bed on which he departed this life.

2. What are the five main pillars of the Islamic faith?

*Answer.*

- Confession is made that there is no other God but Allah and that Mohammed is his prophet.
- Five times each day prayer is offered with the supplicant facing Mecca.
- Alms are to be given.
- Fasting is to take place during the month of Ramadan (September), the ninth month of the Mohammed year. The fast is to last from sunrise to sunset.
- A pilgrimage to Mecca must be made at least once in a person's lifetime.

3. What three basic Christian doctrines does the Koran deny?

*Answer.*

- The Koran denies that Jesus is the Son of God (cf. John 5:19-23).
- The Koran denies the deity of Christ (cf. John 5:17-18).
- The Koran denies the resurrection of Christ from the dead (cf. 1 Cor. 15: 1-3).

4. Describe the major world view difference between the Christian and the followers of Mohammed.

*Answer.* Christ came to conquer hearts by love. Mohammed came to conquer by the sword.

5. From a human point of view, what four reasons might be given for the setback of the Christian faith against the advance of Islam?

*Answer.*

- First, the mindset for world conquest was radically different for the Mohammedans than that of the Christians. The Lord said that He did not come bearing a sword to advance His kingdom by physical violence (John 18:10; John 18:36). Mohammed did. He was ready from the first to kill anyone who did not accept his teachings.
- Second, the wild desert life had hardened the Mohammedans which suited them for the vigor's of violent warfare. The Church was more civilized and therefore physically softer.
- Third, Mohammedanism promised paradise to those men who fell in battle while fighting for the faith.
- Finally, to a certain extent, the salt of the earth had lost its savor (Matt. 5:13).

**REFLECTION**

Do you believe that the Christian Church is influencing the world today and is advancing? What leads you to believe this?

**ACCOUNTABILITY**

Is there a place in Christian theology for religious warfare in order to make converts for the Church? What should the Christian's attitude towards "holy" wars be? If necessary, do you think you would be able to kill in combat?

**PART TWO**  
**THE CHURCH IN THE MIDDLE AGES**  
**AD 754 – 1517**

## THE CHURCH IN THE MIDDLE AGES

*In this second course we will trace the history of the Church of Christ from the days of Mohammed to the dawn of the Reformation. It was during this period, which historians call the Middle Ages, that the Church divided into two parts forming an Eastern Church and a Western Church.*

*Unfortunately, the Church fell under the control of the civil governments despite its great power, tremendous wealth, and organization. Attempts were made through various means to free itself and even to gain control over the State. Popes and Emperors maneuvered for power with first one and then the other bowing in defeat.*

*During these dark days of human depravity, the Crusades were fought. Killing was done in the name of Christ as the Western Church sent volunteer armies against the Turks in the East to regain possession of the Holy Land. Despite the carnage on bloody fields of battle in far away places, Western contact was made afresh with the ancient and rich civilizations of the East which stimulated thought and study.*

*However, the popes became more interested in pagan culture than in Christian truth with the result of a mixture of the two. Individuals who began to question the teachings and practices of the Church were persecuted. A cry for reform could be heard. The time was at hand for a tremendous spiritual renewal in the Church that would in time transform the entire western world.*

# A GLORIOUS INSTITUTION: THE CHURCH IN HISTORY

## THE CHURCH IN THE MIDDLE AGES

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# THE CHURCH IN THE MIDDLE AGES

## CHAPTER 9

### NEW POLITICAL ALLIANCES

AD 754 – 800

#### THE LOMBARDS

In the year AD 568 the Po Valley in the northern part of Italy was taken by force from the ever diminishing Empire. The German tribe that conquered the area was called the Lombards meaning "Longbeards." The remaining part of the Italian peninsula continued as part of the Roman Empire. During their military adventures, the Lombards came into contact with the gospel. Many were converted to Christ. Embracing the teachings of Arius for a while, the Lombards eventually accepted the orthodox Christianity reflected in the Nicene Creed. Anxious to establish friendly relations with the Lombards, Pope Gregory I (c. 540-604; Pope, 590-604), bestowed a crown upon their king, Alboin. It was called The Iron Crown because into it was put what was believed to be a nail from the cross of Christ.

Despite this unhealthy honoring of religious relics, Gregory was a believer in the verbal [word for word], inerrant [without error], plenary [in all parts], inspiration of Scripture. He thought it was fruitless to investigate the authorship of the books of the Bible. He said, "When we are persuaded that the Holy Spirit was its author, in stirring a question about the author, what else do we do than in reading a letter inquire about the pen?" Unfortunately, Gregory went beyond the logical boundaries of his own confession concerning the Bible by teaching things which are not found in the Scriptures. He taught that sin might be forgiven on condition of repentance, which involved contrition, confession, and satisfaction. Satisfaction could be found in penance with the penance being in proportion to the sin. In essence man can earn and deserve not only salvation but sanctification. On this understanding of holiness, a vast and complex penitential system of the Middle Ages was constructed. The fruit of this system was a mechanical theory of penance and indulgences against which Martin Luther and others would one day vigorously protest.

Other doctrines which Gregory developed would also be challenged by the Reformers such as purgatory and transubstantiation which is the belief that in the mass or communion the bread and wine are transformed in a miraculous way to become the veritable body and blood of Christ.

Whatever his failures as a scholar and a theologian, Gregory did manage to enhance the prestige of the Church. He successfully withstood the claim of the Patriarch of Constantinople to the title of Universal Bishop. By the time he died in 604, the pope was viewed as the chief bishop of the Church in the West, the natural arbiter and court of appeal in ecclesiastical [Church] cases, and the one person who could intervene with authority in cases involving serious scandal. One of his best decisions was made in 596 when he sent Augustine (of Canterbury, d. c. 604) on a mission

to convert the English to Christ. In his personal life Gregory was known for his humility as "the servant of the servants of God." As a lover of music Gregory reorganized the Schola cantorum in Rome, a center for singing. The Gregorian Chant is named for him. The Church mourned his death in AD 604.

While Gregory was able to establish a good relation with the Lombards, succeeding popes were never certain of their status for a long time. Civil war with the Lombards was a matter of constant concern that caused the popes to look to the Franks for military and political support.

## **PEPIN THE SHORT**

One notable Frankish monarch was Clovis who converted to Christianity in 496. Clovis was a strong and influential ruler. However, his descendants were not. This fact allowed Pepin III (Pepin the Short, c. 714-768), to rise to power. Pepin was the son of Charles Martel. He deposed Childeric III, the last of the Merovingian dynasty, to establish his own, the Carolingian dynasty. Pepin put Childeric in a monastery and then assumed the throne.

Looking for ecclesiastical approval for all his actions, Pepin received it when he was anointed by Archbishop Boniface in 752 and again by Pope Stephen II in 754. By reviving an Old Testament practice recorded of the Davidic monarchy (1 Samuel 16:13), Pepin symbolically placed the State beneath the authority of the Pope. The precedent was set to believe that the pope had the right to give kingdoms and to take them away. The State had become subservient to the Church.

Within this new religious and political context, Pope Zacharias (d. 752, Last of the Greek Popes, 741-752) did not hesitate to ask Pepin to help bring stability to the Lombards who were still perceived to be a threat to papal power and safety. Pepin agreed to help. He marched against the Lombards and forced them to relinquish much of their territory to the pope thereby beginning the States of the Church. The pope now held not only ecclesiastical power but secular power and would do so until 1870 when the new Kingdom Of Italy was established.

## **CHARLES THE GREAT**

Following the death of Pepin the Short in 768 his two sons, Carloman and Charles succeeded him. When Carloman died in 771, Charles was free to rule alone. On December 25, AD 800, while kneeling in St. Peter's Church in Rome, Charles was crowned king of the Franks by Pope Leo III (d. 816; Pope, 795-816), and became known as Emperor Charlemagne. Born in Rome of humble origins, little is known of Leo until his election to the papacy. During his time in this office, Leo was beset by many conspirators and dissidents. He was also subordinate to the wishes of the emperor Charlemagne.

As king, Charlemagne (742-814), meaning Charles the Great, brought three important things to his reign: law and order, civilization, and Christianity. None of these things came easily for the empire was filled with barbarians, lawlessness, and the encroachment of the Islamic faith.

Charlemagne ruled from 768 to 814 over France, the Netherlands, Belgium, and western Germany. He increased the borders of his empire by military force but kept it by a wise administrative system. Dividing the realm into districts called counties, supervised by appointed officials called counts, Charlemagne was able to keep effective control on what was going on. Border areas were administered by military leaders of operation. New regions were called marks or marches and a "count of the march" (or marquis) was basically unrestrained to govern as he pleased. The counts were overseen by two nomadic officials called missi. One was a layman and one was a minister.

Though he considered himself a Christian, Charlemagne was not always faithful to the morals of the Church which necessitated social and ecclesiastical reforms following his death. However, he did enjoy reading *The City Of God* by Augustine. He liked to think of his empire as the Kingdom of God upon earth.

Also, during his reign, feudalism reached many of its distinctive medieval characteristics. Charlemagne has been regarded as the founder of Europe. When Charlemagne died in 814, there were three great empires in the world. The oldest was that of the Eastern Roman Empire consisting of the Balkans, Asia Minor, and southern Italy. The largest empire was that of the Mohammedan Arabs. It stretched from the border of India through Persia, Syria, Palestine in Asia, and all of north Africa up to the Ebro River in Europe. The newest and strongest of the empires was that of Charlemagne which consisted of the northern half of Italy; the northeast corner of Spain; all of France, Belgium, and the Netherlands; and a large portion of Germany and Austria.

# THE CHURCH IN THE MIDDLE AGES

## Leader's Study Guide

### CHAPTER 9

#### New Political Alliances

AD 754 – 800

#### RESPONSE

1. Who were the Lombards and what does their name mean?

*Answer.* In the year AD 568 the Po Valley in the northern part of Italy was taken by force from the ever diminishing Empire. The German tribe that conquered the area was called the Lombards meaning "Longbeards."

2. What is meant by a belief in the verbal, inerrant, and plenary inspiration of Scripture (2 Tim. 3:16-17)?

*Answer.* Verbal means word for word; inerrant means without error; plenary refers to the Bible being equal in all, inspiration of Scripture.

3. What erroneous belief did Gregory help to promote (Eph. 2:8-9)?

*Answer.* He taught that sin might be forgiven on condition of repentance, which involved contrition, confession, and satisfaction. Satisfaction could be found in penance with the penance being in proportion to the sin. In essence man can earn and deserve not only salvation but sanctification.

4. What is significant about Pepin the Short being recognized as king by the papacy?

*Answer.* Pepin symbolically placed the State beneath the authority of the Pope. The precedent was set to believe that the pope had the right to give kingdoms and to take them away. The State had become subservient to the Church.

5. What was the secret for the success of Charlemagne during his reign as emperor? What does his name mean?

*Answer.* Charlemagne (*Charles the Hammer*) liked to think of his reign as the kingdom of God upon earth. He brought law and order, civilization and Christianity to his people.

6. In three columns, give the three great empires with their borders in existence after the death of Charlemagne.

***Answer.***

- The oldest was that of the Eastern Roman Empire consisting of the Balkans, Asia Minor, and southern Italy.
- The largest empire was that of the Mohammedan Arabs. It stretched from the border of India through Persia, Syria, Palestine in Asia, and all of north Africa up to the Ebro River in Europe.
- The newest and strongest of the empires was that of Charlemagne which consisted of the northern half of Italy; the northeast corner of Spain; all of France, Belgium, and the Netherlands; and a large portion of Germany and Austria.

**REFLECTION**

1. Do you think that even many Protestant churches today still embrace a system of salvation and sanctification by works? Provide examples as possible.
2. Will the time come again when the kingdoms of this earth are subordinate to the Kingdom of God (study Matt. 28:19-20; Rev. 11:15)?
3. Did Pepin the Short help or harm the cause of Christ by seeking ecclesiastical sanction for his actions? Why?
4. How can the Church influence the kingdoms of this world today? Consider in your answer John 13:15; 1 Tim. 4:12; 1 Pet. 2:1.

**ACCOUNTABILITY**

Write out a prayer for the political leaders of your nation as per 1 Timothy 2:1-2.

# **THE CHURCH IN THE MIDDLE AGES**

## **CHAPTER 10**

### **THE GROWING POWER OF THE PAPACY**

**AD 461 – 1073**

#### **THROUGH ORGANIZATION**

As the Church grew larger and more complex it was necessary for efficient administration to take place for both practical and doctrinal reasons. One practical need for a strong centralized voice to help solve concerns was manifested in the actions of Novatian, Bishop of Rome (251-253). Novatian was a very zealous Christian. When individuals who had renounced their faith during days of persecution wanted to be re-admitted to the Church, Novatian denied the right of the Church to restore such people. He advocated a position of absolute fidelity to the cause of Christ at all times. The result was a schism that extended over the Empire and lasted until the sixth century. Many of the clergy thought that only a strong authoritative voice could keep the Church from continuing to fragment into splinter groups over non essential elements and so they supported a strong papacy.

Doctrinally the Church felt a strong voice was needed to combat heresy. One of the earliest errors, found in the second century, was Ebonism [Heb. "poor"] which insisted on law-keeping as a way of life. Many who embraced Ebonism denied the deity of Christ, His virgin birth, and the efficacy of His sufferings.

Another early heresy was Manachianism which struggled with the unity of the Godhead in the face of Trinitarianism. It stressed the unity [i.e. monarchia] of the divine nature as opposed to personal distinctions within the Godhead. It was believed by some that the Father alone possessed true personality; the Word [Logos] and the Holy Spirit were merely impersonal attributes of the Godhead. Thus, the power of God came upon the man Jesus Christ and gradually saturated His soul until His humanity became deity. The Manachians said that Jesus must not be considered God in a pure and absolute sense.

Other Manicheans believed the three persons of the Godhead were merely modes of expression or ways of describing God. They were not distinct divine persons at all. Later, this modalistic type of Manachianism became known as Sabellianism and Nestorianism after two of its leading exponents.

Sabellius, who lived in the third century, affirmed that there is but one Divine essence which became operative in three temporally successive manifestations: as Creator and Lawgiver in the Father, as Redeemer in the Son, and as Life Giver in the Holy Spirit.

## **DECEPTION**

In addition to practical problems and doctrinal disturbances, the power of the papacy grew because of political intrigue in the secular world and social unrest. The rivalries and uncertainties of political rulers were in plain contrast to the steadiness and uniformity of the government of the Church. Rules came and went. When the Empire fell in the fifth century, Europe was in constant chaos until the ninth century when the Empire of Charlemagne was established. People cried out for an extensive enduring authority and found it in the papacy.

It is unfortunate that the men who held the office of the papacy did not realize just how powerful the Church was becoming. Foolishly a number of "pious frauds" were committed to ensure popular and widespread support for the authority of Rome. One of these "pious frauds" was the forged documents called the "Donation of Constantine." These bogus papers were circulated purporting to show that Constantine, the first Christian emperor, had legally given to the bishop of Rome, Sylvester I (AD 314-335), ultimate authority over all the European provinces of the empire. The documents proclaimed the bishop of Rome to be the true ruler of the western empire, even above the emperors.

While secular rulers probably smiled at such scurrilous documents, they took seriously the Decretals of Isidore, published about AD 830. These false documents pretended to be decisions handed down by the early bishops of Rome, beginning with the apostles, declaring the absolute supremacy of the pope of Rome over the Church universal and the independence of the Church to the State. In practical terms this meant that in matters pertaining to the clergy or the Church no secular court could act as judge.

## **FANTASTIC CLAIMS**

In addition to using these false documents, other fantastic claims were made by such men as Pope Gelasius (Pope, 492-496) who instituted the concept of moral supervision over political rulers on the part of the pope. The thinking was that while there are two spheres of rule, the spiritual and the temporal, it is the Church that must one day give an account to God for the deeds of kings. Therefore, the kings should submit to the Church in spiritual matters. Symmachus (Pope, 498-514) added the axiom that no civil tribunal could compel the appearance of a pope or sentence him in his absence.

Pope Nicholas I (d. 867, Pope, 858-867) embraced these thoughts and embellished upon them to gain even more power for the papacy. He was the son of an aristocratic Roman family. Receiving an excellent education, Nicholas was well suited for service in the papal court which

he entered in 844. During the fourteen years that followed, Nicholas held various important offices which well prepared him for his election to the papacy.

His tenure as pope was controversial and stormy as he strove to consolidate the power of the papacy in Rome even over the Eastern Church. The great issue was control of the office of the bishop at Constantinople which was the second most important place in the Church. When Emperor Michael III replaced Ignatius the duly elected bishop, with his own person, Photius, as head of the Church of Constantinople, Nicholas vigorously opposed the appointment by excommunicating Photius at the Synod of Rome in AD 863.

In retaliation, Photius excommunicated Nicholas in AD 867. Then he took the situation a step further by accusing the Western church of "heresy" for accepting the Filioque doctrine, a true dogma which contends that the Holy Spirit proceeds from both the Father and the Son.

In this bid for papal power, Nicholas set the stage for a full break between Eastern Orthodoxy and Roman Catholicism in the 1000's. Nicholas would have better success in the other major controversy of his tenure in office which concerned the control of the bishop's office at Soissons (northwest Gaul). In 861, Rothad, bishop of Soissons, was deposed by Hincmar, the leading Church figure of Gaul. Rothad appealed this decision to Nicholas who ruled in his favor. Hincmar accepted the papal decision so that in this and other matters Nicholas enhanced the power of the papacy.



# THE CHURCH IN THE MIDDLE AGES

## Leader's Study Guide

### CHAPTER 10

#### The Growing Power of the Papacy

AD 461 - 1073

#### RESPONSE

1. Who was Novatian and what did he contend for?

*Answer.* Novatian, a Bishop of Rome (251-253) believed that Christians should have absolute fidelity to the cause of Christ at all times. When individuals had renounced their faith during days of persecution wanted to be re-admitted to the Church, Novatian denied the right of the Church to restore such people.

*Answer.* Note. Responses will vary.

2. What did Ebonism [Heb. poor] teach?

*Answer.* As a system of theology Ebonism insisted on law-keeping as a way of life. Many who embraced Ebonism denied the deity of Christ, His virgin birth, and the efficacy of His sufferings.

3. What did the Manachians believe about the Trinity?

*Answer.* Manachianism struggled with the unity of the Godhead in the face of Trinitarianism. It stressed the unity [i.e. monarchia] of the divine nature as opposed to personal distinctions within the Godhead. It was believed by some that the Father alone possessed true personality; the Word [Logos] and the Holy Spirit were merely impersonal attributes of the Godhead. Thus, the power of God came upon the man Jesus Christ and gradually saturated His soul until His humanity became deity. The Manachians said that Jesus must not be considered God in a pure and absolute sense. Other Manachians believed the three persons of the Godhead were merely modes of expression or ways of describing God. They were not distinct divine persons at all.

4. Give an illustration for each of the five ways the papacy was able to increase its power.

**Answer.**

- Practical. By making wise political decisions.
- Doctrinal. By rightly accepting the “*filioque doctrine*”
- Political Intrigue. By making political appointments and excommunicating any opposition to the papacy.
- Deceit. By forging the documents called the *Donation of Constantine*.
- Fantastic Claims By asserting the power of the papacy over the state and insisting that no civil tribunal could compel the appearance of a pope or sentence him in his absence.

5. Name the two popes who excommunicated each other?

**Answer.** Pope Nicholas I (d. 867, Pope, 858-867) excommunicated Photius at the Synod of Rome in AD 863. Photius in turn excommunicated Nicholas in AD 867.

## **REFLECTION**

1. Do you think that the Church today should be involved in politics and if so to what extent? If you are familiar with Liberation Theology please comment on that (cf. Rom. 13:1-7).

NOTE: Liberation Theology contends that it is the right and the responsibility of Christians to violently overthrow oppressive political systems such as Communism. Is it?

2. If the Church were allowed sweeping political power in the world today, what should it do on a practical basis?
3. Is there any room in the Christian's life for "pious deceit"? What about Rahab? (Josh. 2:1-3; 6:17-25 cf. Heb. 11:31)
4. What type of authority do you recognize in your Church? (note 1Tim. 5:17; Heb. 13:7; 1 Pet. 5:5).

## **ACCOUNTABILITY**

Do you have spiritual authority over others? How do you handle it? If not, have you ever longed for power over others? If so, did the Holy Spirit confirm that desire (1 Tim. 3:1) or bring conviction of it (James 4:7; 1 Pet. 2:13; Eph. 5:21).

## **THE CHURCH IN THE MIDDLE AGES**

### **CHAPTER 11**

#### **THE CHURCH IN THE WORLD; THE WORLD IN THE CHURCH**

**AD 885 – 1049**

##### **FEUDALISM**

Following the death of Charlemagne in 843, the Empire fell to his son Louis "The Pious." Though he tried to be a conscientious ruler, he was not the strong ruler his father had been. Louis did the best he could by endorsing the reformation of monasteries under the leadership of Benedict of Aniane and ordering that two thirds of the money received as tithes be given to the poor. He encouraged the bishops to be elected by the people and the clergy. Unfortunately, the last years of his reign saw the outbreak of civil wars in which Louis's own sons fought him. When Louis died, the Empire was divided among his three sons.

One of them obtained the land east of the Rhine known in history as the East Frankish Kingdom; this was the beginning of Germany. Another son received the land west of the Meuse and the Rhone; this was known as the West Frankish Kingdom and included what is now France, Belgium, and the Netherlands. The third son took the long strip of land in between the other two territories. It included Italy and was called the Middle Kingdom.

To the inner divisions and internecine warfare, the Empire was attacked from the East by the Slavs and the Hungarians who used fast horses. From Scandinavia in the North came rugged Norsemen sailing speedy ships up the rivers where they made landings in the Netherlands and France. Without mercy the Norsemen plundered and burned churches and monasteries while murdering many of the inhabitants. For three hundred years the people of God cried in Europe, "Lord, deliver us from the Norsemen!"

Also, there was the presence of the Arabs. Prior to the Islamic conquests, there was widespread commerce along the Mediterranean and the Orient. Because of military success, the Arabs were able to curtail trade with the Orient and rule the southern and eastern shores of the Mediterranean. Money in Europe almost ceased to circulate. Gold coins were rare. To deal with the chaos of constant conflict and the shortage of money, a way of life emerged called feudalism whereby land became the main source of wealth. Feudalism was a hierarchical system based on the holdings of lands. The system began when the kings of various kingdoms divided their territory among leading warriors provided they granted military aid upon request. Using this pattern, each of the subsequent princes divided his estate among lesser nobles who in turn granted sections of land to still lesser tenants called vassals who then contracted with fiefs. Initially, grants of land were for a lifetime but eventually became hereditary.

The Church became part of this system when pious people left land to churches or monasteries. In this way bishops, archbishops, heads of monasteries [abbot] and popes became landowners. Unfortunately, the emperors looked upon the popes as their vassals.

At the top of the feudal system were the lords who answered to no-one. At the bottom of the system were vassals who were not lords over anyone. In the middle were individuals who were both lords and vassals. Each part of the system was designed to render mutual aid to the other. One result of feudalism was the decentralization of power and the loss of nationalism.

## **DEPENDENCY ON EMPERORS**

The development of feudalism had a direct bearing on the stability of the Church. Between the death of Stephen VI in 891 and the accession of John XII in 955 there were no less than twenty popes who sat on the papal throne. Pope succeeded pope in breathtaking rapidity. Some were strangled, or died of starvation in the dungeons where they had been cast by their successors. To offer one example of the horrors of this period, there was the action of Stephen VI. In 897 he presided over what came to be called the "Cadaveric Council." One of his predecessors, Formosus, was dug up from his grave, dressed in his papal robes, and paraded on the streets. Then, Formosus was tried, found guilty of a multitude of crimes, and mutilated. What remained of the body was thrown into the Tiber.

The Church had to endure this long period of shame and disgrace because the Church was in bondage to the secular rulers. As one nobleman in Italy won a strategic victory, he would put the man of his choosing on the papal seat in Rome. Finally, John XII had enough and called for outside aid from Otto I, a strong ruler in Germany. Otto I, had been able to consolidate his land holdings while bringing the dukes of Germany under his will. Once in power, Otto I was able to control the appointment of bishops and abbots through a process called lay investiture.

Lay investiture took place when a non authorized Church person, such as an emperor, bestowed a Church office upon a person and invested the recipient with the three symbols of spiritual authority: ring, staff, and keys. Between 1059-1122 a tremendous conflict emerged over this practice.

From the reign of Nicholas II (Pope, 1059-1061), the popes made every effort to reform the Church by freeing it from this plague which led to simony and sexual licentiousness. The struggle reached its climax in 1075 when Gregory VII (Hildebrand) delivered an ultimatum to the emperor Henry IV who resisted only to be excommunicated. The conflict was finally resolved by a compromise, the Concordat of Worms in 1122, between Henry V and Callistus II. All this was yet to come.

When Otto I came to the assistance of John XII the pope expressed his appreciation by crowning Otto emperor on February 2, 962. In this action the Empire in the west was restored and was called the Holy Roman Empire. It continued to exist in association with Germany until 1806

when Napoleon brought that which was neither holy, nor Roman, nor an Empire, to a decisive end.

By recognizing Otto I, as king of Germany, John XII wrote a new chapter in the history of the papacy. An old tradition of having only Italian popes was broken. Otto III placed his tutor, Gerbert of Aurillac, archbishop of Rheims, upon the papal throne in 999. Changing his name to Sylvester II, he was the first French pope and one of the most educated men of his time. He made a courageous but unsuccessful attempt to reform the papacy as well as the whole Church. Gregory V, who had preceded him, was the first German pope.

### **SIMONY: THE SELLING OF THE PAPAL OFFICE**

The depths of human depravity being manifested in the highest Church office came to pass when the Italian noble family made Benedict IX pope in 1033. He was only twelve years old. As the years passed his undisciplined behavior moved the Crescenzo family, rivals of the Tuscom party, to drive him from Rome in 1045. In his place they appointed Sylvester III pope. However, Benedict returned to Rome to resume the pontificate only to become bored with it to the point that he literally sold the office for one thousand pounds of silver to the man known as Gregory VI. News of this act of simony, the selling of a Church office for money, created a backlash of protest which made Benedict decide to refuse to surrender the papal office after all! As a result, three men now claimed to be pope: Benedict IX, Sylvester III, and Gregory VI. This matter was finally settled by Henry III of Germany. After an interview with Gregory VI he gathered a council that deposed all three popes and named Clement II. The same council also passed ecclesiastical legislation against corrupt practices, particularly simony. Still, it was plain for all to see that the Church had gone into the world and the world had come into the Church.

# THE CHURCH IN THE MIDDLE AGES

## Leader's Study Guide

### CHAPTER 11

#### The Church in the World; the World in the Church

AD 885 – 1049

#### RESPONSE

1. Define and describe feudalism.

*Answer.* A hierarchical system based on the holding of lands. Kings gave lands to lords, who in return provided military support. Each lord further divided the lands on down to fiefs, who worked the land in return for military protection.

2. How did feudalism affect the Church?

*Answer.* The Church became part of the system when it inherited lands from wealthy donors. Kings then looked at the Church as one of their tenants!

3. What was the lay investiture conflict?

*Answer.* Investiture was the bestowal of a church office. The new office-holder would be loyal to the one who bestowed the office. Therefore both the secular rulers and the Church wanted the right to do so. *Lay investiture* was the non-ecclesiastical, or secular, bestowal of a Church office.

4. How did the recognition of Otto I as emperor of Germany come to affect the papacy?

*Answer.* It established the German Empire with close ties to the papacy, coming to be known as the *Holy Roman Empire*. The descendants of Otto I introduced the first non-Italian popes to the papacy, both French and German.

5. Define simony.

*Answer.* Simony is the selling of a Church office for money.

#### REFLECTION

Are there any ways in which the principle of simony is still practiced in the Church today? If so, what can be done to correct the abuses?

## ACCOUNTABILITY

Read Acts 8:9-24.

*“But there was a certain man, called Simon, which beforetime in the same city used sorcery, and bewitched the people of Samaria, giving out that himself was some great one: 10 To whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, This man is the great power of God. 11 And to him they had regard, because that of long time he had bewitched them with sorceries. 12 But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. 13 Then Simon himself believed also: and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done. 14 Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: 15 Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost: 16 (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.) 17 Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost. 18 And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, 19 Saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost. 20 But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. 21 Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God. 22 Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee. 23 For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity. 24 Then answered Simon, and said, Pray ye to the Lord for me, that none of these things which ye have spoken come upon me”.*

# **THE CHURCH IN THE MIDDLE AGES**

## **CHAPTER 12**

### **A HOUSE DIVIDED**

**AD 1054**

#### **THE EASTERN CHURCH**

In the year 1054 the Church of Jesus Christ was formally and forever divided. The Pope of Rome sent his messenger to lay upon the altar of St. Sophia in Constantinople the decree of excommunication. In retaliation the patriarch of the East issued his own decree excommunicating Rome and the churches submitting to the pope. In this manner, the Greek Eastern part of the Church, and the Latin Western part, with the majority of its members belonging to the Germanic race, separated from each other. Several things had brought about this great division.

#### **THE ICONOCLASTIC CONTROVERSY**

An iconoclast is a person who destroys religious images or opposes their veneration. In the East, Byzantine Ruler Leo III (c. 680-741; ruled, 717-741), had issued in 726 the first iconoclastic decree, largely because the Mohammedan's were charging Christianity with being polytheistic. Leo was supported by the Patriarch of Constantinople and the higher clergy. However, many of the monks and common people opposed this decree. At Rome, Pope Gregory II denounced this imperial interference because the charges of idolatry did not really affect the Western Church and because he believed that the secular political powers had no right to interfere in the affairs of the Church.

The controversy continued during the reign of Byzantine Emperor Constantine V (741-774), but during the reign of the Empress Irene concluded with the victory for image worship. Irene was born of a humble family in Athens. In 769 she married Emperor Leo IV (750-780). After her husband's death she ruled as regent for her minor son, Constantine VI (771?-797). However, when Constantine did come of age to rule, Irene contested him for the throne. In the struggle she had her own son imprisoned and blinded (797).

Irene's rule was not contested seriously again until 802 when the patricians revolted and forced her into exile to the island of Lesbos. Still, while she reigned, Irene was able to influence the Church. A devoted worshiper of images, she called the Second Council of Nicaea which was the Seventh Ecumenical Council. Held in 787, it was decreed by this Council that images should be venerated but not worshipped.



During the reign of Leo V (813-820) the controversy broke out again as the effort was again made to impose iconoclasm upon the Church. This time, the chief defender of iconodulism or the usage of images, was Theodore of Studion (759-826) who was born in Antioch, and educated there along with his friend and fellow-student, John Chrysostom.

The attempt to remove images from the Church failed once more in the reign of Theodora. Empress Theodora (810-862) was the second wife of Emperor Theophilus (829); on his death in 842, she was made regent for their son Michael III. As a devoted iconodule, Theodora called a Church Council in 843 which restored the worship of images and drove from office the iconoclasts. In the Greek Orthodox Church, this event is still celebrated in The Festive of Orthodoxy. In 858, the Empress herself was forced to retire to a convent. These constant attempts to rid the Church of images produced a deep and lasting rupture between Rome and Constantinople.

### **THE FILIOQUE CONTROVERSY**

This doctrinal issue was also instrumental in separating the Church in the West from the Church in the East. The Latins or Western theologians argued that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father AND the Son--in Latin, "filioque." The Greeks or Eastern theologians said that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father, leaving out the word "filioque." Over that one word countless debates have been held, a multitude of books have been written, blood has been shed, and the Church has divided.

### **THE AUTHORITY CONTROVERSY**

As the power of Rome grew so did the authority of the office of bishop in Constantinople. Finally, there was an unwillingness on the part of the patriarch of Constantinople and the pope at Rome to be subservient to each other, and the Church divided.

### **TERRITORIAL DISPUTE**

Because there was no sharp definition of the boundaries of the territories to be ruled by Rome and Constantinople, frequent struggles arose over administration of border areas, and the Church divided.

### **CULTURAL DIFFERENCES**

In the ceremonies of the Church, different practices became the custom in the East and in the West, and these customs were formulated into Church laws. For example, the marriage of priests in the western church became forbidden while sanctioned in the eastern. In the western church, the adoration of images was practiced while in the Greek churches there were pictures as well as statues. In the communion service of the Western churches the wafer of unleavened bread was

distributed while common bread was used in the Greek communion. These cultural differences are still honored today and the Church is still divided over them.

### **POLITICAL DIFFERENCES**

In the East, the Church had no real concerns with being subservient to the emperor while the Western Church insisted upon independence from the state and the right of moral supervision of rulers of state. And so the Church divided.

### **THE WESTERN CHURCH**

Following the great ecclesiastical division in 1054, the Church in the West was to be found in Italy, France, the Netherlands, England, Germany, Austria, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Ireland, Scotland, and Russia. In these nations the papacy would seek unity, peace and stability. Unfortunately, this was not to be. The Church in the West would continue to experience constant upheaval as religious reformers met firm opposition from secular rulers who did not want to recognize any authority over them by the Church.

# THE CHURCH IN THE MIDDLE AGES

## Leader's Study Guide

### CHAPTER 12

#### AD 1054

#### RESPONSE

1. In what year did the Church officially divide into the Western and Eastern Church?

*Answer.* 1054.

Do you think this division was necessary and can be justified?

Note. Response will vary. Personal answer, but we should recognize the necessity to divide when confronted with a lack of repentance in turning from errors regarding essential doctrines.

2. Briefly describe six of the factors which fostered the Church division.

*Answer.*

- Iconoclast Controversy: the Eastern Emperor forbade the worship of images in the Eastern Church, but this was opposed by the Roman pope because the decision was made by a secular ruler over the Church.
- Filioque Controversy: The Roman Church said the Holy Spirit proceeded from the Father AND (filioque) the Son; whereas the Eastern Church said from the Father only.
- Authority Controversy: both the pope in Rome and the bishop of Constantinople held significant power, and each was unwilling to submit to the other.
- Territorial dispute: there was struggle over the administration of areas along the ill-defined border between East and West.
- Cultural differences: which led to different customs and practices, which neither side was willing to give up.
- Political differences: the West insisted upon independence from the State, which the East did not make an issue.

## **REFLECTION**

Do you think there is a valid distinction between the veneration of images and the worship of images? Explain.

## **ACCOUNTABILITY**

Read John 17 and initial here when that has been done. When Jesus prayed for unity in John 17, do you think He had organizational unity in mind, spiritual unity in mind, or both? What are you doing to promote unity within the body of Christ? What can others do?

# THE CHURCH IN THE MIDDLE AGES

## CHAPTER 13

### MONASTICISM AND THE CLUNY REFORM

#### ASCETICISM

As the struggle for Church unity and papal authority was constant so was the struggle for spiritual reality. In the quest for personal integrity many Christians embraced asceticism which refers to extreme acts of self denial. In the western Church the \*cloister life developed inside the monasteries. The cloister life is the life that is designed to be hidden in God. To that end monks and nuns renounced all possession of earthly goods. They did not eat or drink more than was necessary. Many monks ate only bread and drank only water. Rigorous periods of fasting were followed. Monks would flagellate themselves with whips or cords in a vain attempt to rid themselves of unworthy thoughts. Monks and nuns did not marry but devoted themselves to good works, prayer, reading of religious books, and meditation.

Unfortunately, the record reveals that the very place which was designed to become a sanctuary from sin instead became a breeding place of debauchery. All forms of immorality found freedom to express itself because of the isolation of the monasteries, the silence of those committing sin, and the inherent trust allowed between men and women who had come together in the name of Christ.

Not all monks and nuns practiced asceticism or were hypocritical. There have always been faithful servants of the Lord who were sincere in their religious zeal such as Abbot Berno and his immediate successors who founded a monastery in Cluny in eastern France in 910. At Cluny the Benedictine rules of asceticism were diligently enforced. For the next two hundred years the Cluny reform movement spread to other monasteries as a means of genuine spiritual awakening and social reform. Reform was need in part because the monasteries had become a convenient place to promote sexual misconduct. Church leaders abused their spiritual authority over others while enjoying a lavish lifestyle incompatible with their vows of poverty. With the new reforms, emphasis was one more placed upon true religion, scholarship, and the cultivation of the arts. Over two thousand monastic establishments grew out of this effort. It was the Cluny movement which produced men such as noteworthy as Hildebrand who as pope became known as Gregory VII.

# THE CHURCH IN THE MIDDLE AGES

## Leader's Study Guide

### CHAPTER 13

#### Monasticism and the Cluny Reforms

#### RESPONSE

1. Define the following.
  - Monasticism. The gathering together of like-minded men or women into a set-apart quiet place, by renouncing all worldly possessions, for the purpose of consecration to God in study, good works, prayer, worship, meditation, and copying the Scriptures.
  - Asceticism. Extreme acts of self-denial: including long periods of fasting, denying all physical comforts (like heating in the winter), and even purposeful infliction of pain.
  - Cluny Movement. It began at the new monastery at Cluny, France in 910, where reforms were developed for monastic life and the Church practice as a whole, from a base of true reverence in practice at the monastery itself, following the Benedictine rules strictly.
2. Describe the cloistered life.

#### REFLECTION

1. Do you believe that Christians should fast today? Why or why not?
2. If love for Christ and a desire for holiness are pure motives for becoming involved in asceticism, what false motives might also be present that would produce the same behavior? Consider for example pride, love for the praise of man, misguided teaching as to what the will of God is, guilt, and masochism. Incorporate Colossians 2:16-23 and Matthew 16:24 into your answer.
3. It seems that one basic belief for monasticism and asceticism is fundamental conviction that Christians who separate themselves from the world and suffer for righteousness sake are more holy. Is this a true or false foundational belief?

#### ACCOUNTABILITY

Have you ever given up anything for Christ or stopped a certain practice that you believed displeased Him? What are some standards that you adhere to even though other Christians may not?

## DOCTRINE OF FASTING

1. Fasting refers to the voluntary abstaining from food for religious purposes (Est. 4:3; Dan. 6:18; Matt. 15:32; Luke 2:37; Acts 14:23; 2 Cor. 6:5).
2. Fasting was common among God's people. While much fasting became ineffectual (Isa 58:3-9), a solemn fast could elicit the grace and mercy of God (Est. 4:15).
3. Fasting was commonly accompanied by the refusal to drink wine water or both. Fasting was also accompanied by:
  - abstaining from work (Lev. 16:29)
  - not using a razor or touching the dead (Num. 6:1ff)
  - assembling (Num. 29:7; Neh. 9:1)
  - pulling the hair on the head (Ezra 9:3)
  - weeping (Judges. 20:26) and mourning (2 Sam. 1:12)
  - presenting of an offering (Lev. 23:27; Judges. 20:26; Jer.14:12),
  - pouring out water (1 Sam. 7:6)
  - tearing of the clothes (2 Sam. 1:11)
  - putting on sackcloth (1 Kings 21:27)
  - covering oneself with ashes (Dan. 9:3)
  - refusing to talk (2 Sam. 12:16f).
4. In the early Church, The Didache (1:3) urged fasting for one's enemies as a means of showing grace towards them (cf. Psa. 35:13).
5. People in the Bible fasted for a variety of reasons:
  - when they were dedicated or separated unto the Lord (Num. 6:1ff) for special service
  - in an act of worship (Jer. 14:12)
  - as an expression of sorrow (1 Chron. 10:12)
  - as a sign of repentance (1 Kings 21:27-29)
  - in order to seek the Lord's grace (Est. 4:15).
6. Fasting, prayer, and the giving of alms were three acts of devotion that were highly respected in the early Church. They are often mentioned together (cf. Luke 5:33; Luke 18:12; Acts 10:31).
7. For a while, the early Church may have observed the fast on the Day of Atonement as the Law required (Lev. 16:29ff). In the Didache (8:1) Christians were instructed to fast on Wednesdays and Fridays.

8. Though the Law of Moses commanded only one fast on the Day of Atonement (Lev. 16:29ff), other fasts were added to commemorate traumatic moments in Hebrew history such as the siege of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar and the murder of Gedaliah.

**CLOISTER.** Latin: claustra, bar, bolt, bound; refers to an open court in a monastery or cathedral surrounded by an arched walkway. This secluded area was intended primarily as a place for monks and clergy to walk in.

**DIDACHE.** The Didache, The Teachings of the Apostles, or The Teaching of the Lord through the Twelve Apostles, refers to a short manual of Church life and morals, written c. AD 150. The first part provides a series of prohibitions and warnings. The second part provides instructions as to baptism, fasts, prayer, and the Lord's Supper. It was discovered in 1873 and published in 1883.



# **THE CHURCH IN THE MIDDLE AGES**

## **CHAPTER 14**

### **THE CHURCH CRIES OUT FOR SPIRITUAL REFORM**

**AD 1049 – 1073**

#### **THE CLUNY REFORMS**

As a reaction to the appalling spiritual conditions in the Church during the tenth century, there took place a religious renewal. This time of spiritual awakening began with the founding of the monastery at Cluny. The objective was to bring spiritual vitality back to the clergy, the monk and the papacy.

To help reform and stabilize the papacy, the Cluny reformers enlisted the aid of German Emperor Henry III who the political leader of the Holy Roman Empire. Being a devout man, Henry III was willing to help advance the cause of Christ and bring about spiritual reform. In time he was able to place on the papal set Clement II. Unfortunately, Clement, and the next pope, died very soon after taking office. Henry III then appointed his cousin Bruno, bishop of Toul, to be the pope. He would become known as Leo IX.

#### **POPE LEO IX**

Leo IX (Pope, 1049-1054) was a strong supporter of the Cluny spiritual renewal reflected in the great change he made in the College of Cardinals. From the inception of the papacy there had been in Rome leading or cardinal bishops. These men served as special personal assistants and advisers to the popes. When Leo IX became pope he realized that this spiritual advisory cabinet consisted entirely of Rome's representing noble families who really controlled the papacy. These same families also contributed to the corruption of the papacy and were not sympathetic to the Cluny reform movement. So the first change Leo IX made was to find men who were spiritually minded. The new cardinals came from various parts of the Church which meant that Leo had individuals whom he could trust and who had the best interest of others around him.

In other ways Leo IX promoted spiritual renewal. He traveled through France and Germany holding synods and stressing three things. First, the priests were not to marry. Second, they were not to practice simony. Third, no one should obtain a Church office apart from the consensus of the clergy and the people.

Despite these positive improvements, the administration of Leo IX was not without stress for it was during his tenure that the two parts of the Church separated from each other. It was Leo IX who excommunicated the patriarch of Constantinople, Michael Cerularius, thereby creating the Greek Eastern Church, and the Latin [Roman] Western Church.

Following the death of Leo IX in 1054, Emperor Henry III, appointed another German to the papacy who took the name of Victor II. He would hold the office of the papacy for only two years, from 1055-1057. In 1056 Henry III died unexpectedly which created a political opportunity for Victor II. He immediately moved to have Henry's son, a child of six, established as successor to the imperial throne. His mother Agnes, would rule as empress until Henry IV came of age.

By involving himself in this political strategy, Victor II had created a dilemma for the Church. Whereas it had been successful in freeing itself from the Roman nobility due to the Cluny reform it was in danger of subjecting itself to the imperial favors of Germany. And now at the head of the Holy Roman Empire was not a strong ruler like Henry III who could protect the papacy, but a weak woman regent named Agnes. For thinking men in Rome it seemed that the stage was set for breaking the imperial bonds with all earthly rulers. Perhaps a climate could be created in which the papacy would protect itself without being unduly influenced or submissive to either the nobility or imperial rulers.

### **POPE STEPHEN X**

With these thoughts in mind and without consulting the Empress Agnes, the reformed party in control in Rome elected as their new pope, Stephen X. Stephen wanted to be a strong and capable religious leader. To that end, he insisted that appointments to Church office must be made by the Church and not by lay investitures. By declaring this policy, Pope Stephen X was in effect weakening the power of the German emperor who had been enhancing his own political prestige by appointing bishops favorable to himself.

Had Stephen tried to carry out the new policy he had announced, it would have resulted in a great conflict between pope and emperor for no ruler would give up the right of lay investiture without strong opposition. But Stephen X did not bring the impending conflict to an issue. Instead, he asked the regent mother, the empress Agnes, to approve his ascension to the papal office. Her approval was granted. Soon thereafter Stephen died.

Following the death of this pope, the Roman nobility perceived a renewed opportunity to reassert their power over the papacy. Within a week of the death of Stephen X the nobility elected one of their own kind, a pope with the title Benedict X. Suddenly thrown into panic, the reform minded cardinals fled Rome. It seemed as if the dark days of Benedict IX had returned. The Church needed help and it was to come, but from an unusual source.

### **HILDEBRAND: THE POWER BEHIND THE THRONE**

Within the Church structure was a capable man named Hildebrand who had once served Pope Leo IX as a subdeacon in charge of the financial affairs of the papacy. In this hour of crisis, with the nobility of Rome trying to unduly influence the papacy, Hildebrand decided to challenge their movements.

He did this by seeking out a man who was sympathetic to the Cluny reforms. Hildebrand selected as his candidate the bishop of Florence. Enlisting the support of the Duke of Tuscany and a part of the people of Rome, Hildebrand appealed to the empress Agnes to recognize his candidate as opposed to the one selected by the nobility. The Empress agreed. Her support allowed the reform minded cardinals to come back to Rome from their flight to safety. When the cardinals met to select the next pope, Hildebrand's candidate was elected. He assumed the title Pope Nicholas II. While Nicholas II occupied the papal seat, the real power behind the throne was Hildebrand.

Hildebrand had been born about the year 1020 in Italy the son of poor parents. Though his early years are obscure, it is known that as a young Benedictine in the monastery of Santa Maria on the Aventine, Hildebrand was deeply affected by the Cluny reforms. He was respected for personal integrity, steadfastness to principle and common sense. Hildebrand's monastic life ended when his administrative abilities were recognized by higher Church officials. By 1046 he was an assistant to Pope Gregory VI.

During his years of service at the center of papal power, Hildebrand saw the desperate need for religious reform. He discovered that secular rulers made regular appointments to ecclesiastical offices of individuals who were not morally or spiritually qualified but who were willing to pay a high price for a place within the Church. Hildebrand began working for change. His efforts would continue during the papal administrations of Leo IX, Victor II, Nicholas II, and Alexander II. Finally, upon the death of Alexander II in 1073, Hildebrand himself received the unanimous support of the cardinals and was elected to the papacy as Gregory VII (Pope, 1073-1085).

An ambitious and strong leader, Hildebrand, whose name literally means "brilliant flame", published a document outlining his vision of uniting all of the main elements of western Europe under Church control. He next moved to institute clerical reforms. No longer would Church offices be sold, and the rules of celibacy would be enforced.

To ensure these things, Hildebrand issued two other general decrees: the reaffirmation of the supreme authority of papal proclamations, and a final dissolution of all non ecclesiastical investiture of Church office. Despite initial opposition to his actions, spiritually concerned members of the Church could hope that in Hildebrand more reforms were to follow.

## **MOVEMENT TOWARD MATURITY**

**AD 1059 – 1073**

### **A NEW METHOD FOR ELECTING A POPE**

Part of the success of Hildebrand to bring about religious reform in the Church is rooted in the fact that the power of the papacy as an office had already been increased by the way the pope was selected. A new method for electing a pope had been introduced during the papal administration of Nicholas II (Pope, 1058-1061) who was originally Gerard of Burgundy. Formulating the process were those who attended the Second Lateran Council (1059). At this Synod, it was decided that the power of election of the pope was to rest with the cardinals who also held the title of bishop. The intent of this new method was to remove the election of popes, and thus the control of the papacy, out of the hands of the Italian nobility, out of the hands of the emperors, and out of the hands of other religious leaders who were not reform minded. In a predictable manner, the bishops in Germany and in Lombardy, the nobility of Italy, and select government rulers did not like this new method. It would be challenged.

The first person duly elected under this new process was Alexander II known also as Anselm of Lucca (d. 1073; Pope, 1061-1073). Because Alexander was a reformer, he was initially opposed by the German bishops who set up an anti-pope in Honorius II. In the religious contest that ensued Honorius came close to being victorious. However, in the providence of God, the Cluny reforms would stand due to an incident in Germany in 1062.

An archbishop of Cologne named Anno kidnapped the young Henry IV and was made his guardian in the place of his mother, the empress Agnes. Being an ambitious man, Anno believed that his own interests could be advanced by the Cluny reformed party and so he recognized Alexander II as the rightful pope. This recognition meant that the new powers of the papacy would stand. Still, the old temptations to move from spiritual to worldly matters would return.

Very much interested in politics, Alexander II engaged in voluminous diplomatic correspondence and support of military activity. For example, when Duke William of Normandy was planning his conquest of England, Alexander gave his approval. He also sanctioned military action against the Muslims.

### **THE HOPE OF HILDEBRAND**

However, when he did engage in more pastoral matters, Alexander II was able to make two of the most powerful arch-bishops in Germany do penance after confessing to the sin of simony. He also refused the request of King Henry IV to get a divorce from his Queen thereby upholding the sanctity of marriage. By making and enforcing spiritual decisions consistent with the cause of Christ, Alexander II strengthened the power of papacy thereby making it possible in the future for men like Hildebrand to do other good things if they so choose. When he became pope, Hildebrand wanted to do good.

How Hildebrand became pope is itself an interesting story for it circumvented the new methods that had been instituted and almost did what the opponents of the Cluny reformers could not do. While conducting the funeral services of Alexander II in the Basilica of St. John the crowd suddenly and unexpectedly began to shout and demand that Hildebrand be recognized as the next pope. Amidst scenes of the wildest enthusiasm the people literally carried him to the Church of St. Peter. There, Hildebrand was consecrated and placed upon the papal throne. Though the cardinals had no part in this spontaneous selection, according to the decree of 1059, they later did legalize Hildebrand's exaltation by formally electing him pope in a more traditional manner.

# THE CHURCH IN THE MIDDLE AGES

## Leader's Study Guide

### CHAPTER 14

#### AD 1049 – 1073

#### RESPONSE

1. What basic method of reforming the papacy did Leo IX introduce?

*Answer.* He appointed new cardinals who were not representatives of wealthy Italian families, but rather were spiritually-minded, representing various parts of the Church.

2. Why would select members of the clergy, nobility, and emperor's oppose the claim of the Church to have the right to elect bishops?

*Answer.* Note. Responses may vary but the thought of a power struggle between the church and noble families must not be neglected.

3. Explain the role of Henry III in the Cluny reform movement.

*Answer.* He appointed Leo IX, who was sympathetic to the reformers. (*An acceptable alternative answer is Clement II.*)

4. List three ways Pope Leo IX freed the Church from the influence of Italian nobility.

*Answer.*

- Leo IX sought to find men who were spiritually minded.
- Priests were not to marry.
- There was to be no lay investiture.

5. Who was the real power behind the papal throne beginning with Leo IX?

*Answer.*

- Hildebrand.

6. What important issue was decided at the Second Lateran Council held in 1059? Note: There were five Ecumenical Councils held at the Lateran Palace of the popes in Rome. These councils were so called because in history the Laterani Family once occupied the site.

*Answer.* The method for the election of the pope was to be by the cardinals, and not by the secular rulers, wealthy families, or non-reform minded clergy.

7. How did Alexander II uphold the Church's stand against simony and divorce?

*Answer.* He made two powerful archbishops in Germany do penance for committing simony, and refused the request of Henry IV to divorce his queen.

8. How did Hildebrand become pope?

*Answer.* At the funeral service for Pope Alexander II, the crowd spontaneously swept him away to St. Peter's and placed him upon the papal throne. Thereafter he was elected in the official way by the cardinals.

9 What was Hildebrand's concept of the papacy?

*Answer.* He saw all elements of society as under papal control. He also believed reforms were essential: including the cessation of simony and lay investiture.

## **REFLECTION**

1. What great worldly influences do you think are hurting the Church today?
2. What do you think of the political maneuvering of Hildebrand in getting his candidate elected to the papacy?
3. Do you believe that Church leaders should sanction warfare?
4. What do you believe Jesus taught about war?
5. How do you think Church officers should be chosen?
6. What would constitute a “just” war?
7. List six things which the believer is told to fight against.

## **ACCOUNTABILITY**

Have you ever been involved in or witness to a Church situation that mandated political maneuvering? What was the outcome and what did you learn? Do you hold any office in the Church? Why or why not? Evaluate your motive for wanting to hold an office in the Church or not wanting to hold an office in the Church. What do you do in your Church for the cause of Christ and the work of the ministry? What spiritual lessons did you learn from that experience?

# **THE CHURCH IN THE MIDDLE AGES**

## **CHAPTER 15**

### **THE STRUGGLE FOR INDEPENDENCE FROM THE STATE**

**AD 1073 - 1122**

#### **THE FIGHT FOR THE RIGHT OF INVESTITURE**

For both pope and emperor the right of investiture was critical. Ultimate power was at stake. If an emperor gave up the right to make Church appointments, he was seriously undermining and weakening his political position. If the pope did not have this right exclusively there could be no hope for clerical reform and no holding of individuals accountable in an ecclesiastical court for their attitudes and actions within the body of Christ. The great conflict came to a head in the person of Pope Gregory VII (Hildebrand) and Henry IV.

#### **HENRY IV CHALLENGES THE CHURCH**

The opening move in this great debate began in 1075 when Henry IV of Germany was believed by Pope Gregory VII to be at his weakest. In a bold move Gregory VII forbade investiture by layman. While Henry was angered by the decision he waited before responding. When he felt politically strong a few months later, Henry defied Gregory by conferring investiture upon three bishops. The world waited to see what Gregory would do next. In December, 1075, the answer came in a letter which began, "Bishop Gregory, servant of the servants of God, to King Henry, greeting and apostolic benediction, that is if he be obedient to the Apostolic Chair as beseems a Christian king. Considering and carefully weighing with what strict judgment we shall have to render account for the ministry entrusted to us by St. Peter, chief of the apostles, it is with hesitation that we have sent unto thee the apostolic benediction."

The pope continued by listing the many sins of the emperor. He then reminded Henry IV that he was under the authority of Peter and his successors. Furthermore, Gregory argued that Henry deserved excommunication which meant that he should be cut off from membership in the Church and thus face a certain damnation. Henry was young, proud, determined and fresh with military victory. The more he read what Gregory had written the more angry he became. In this state of fury, Henry called a council of bishops which met in Worms on January 24, 1076. Upon orders from the king, the council declared that it no longer recognized Gregory VII as pope and sent a letter to that effect. The letter began, "Henry, king not through usurpation but through the ordination of God, to Hildebrand, at present not pope but false monk." Implied in the letter is that Pope Gregory VII had taken the office by force and not by proper means (cf. 1 Pet.5:2). The letter from the emperor continued: "Thou, therefore, condemned by the judgment of all our bishops and by our own, descend and relinquish the Apostolic Chair, which thou hast usurped.



Let another ascend the throne of St. Peter who shall not practice violence under the cloak of religion, but shall teach the sound doctrine of St. Peter."

Not to be surpassed in pride, power, or a show of strength, Gregory chose February 14, 1076 as the date on which he would issue a solemn sentence deposing the emperor and excommunicating him. Said the pope, "Blessed Peter, prince of the apostles, lend me, I pray thee, a favoring ear.

It is because I am thy representative that thy grace has descended upon me, and this grace is the power granted to God to bind and loose in heaven and in earth. Strong in this faith, for the honor and defense of the Church, on behalf of Almighty God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, by virtue of thy power and authority I deprive Henry son of the emperor Henry [Henry III], who has opposed thy Church with un-heard-of insolence, of the government of the whole kingdom of Germany and of Italy; I release all Christians from the oath which they have made to him or that they shall make to him. I forbid everyone to obey him as king."

The next move was up to Henry and he wasted no time in making it. Henry chose to appeal to the people of Rome and to that end sent a message urging the citizens in the strongest language to banish the "monk Hildebrand" from their city. In like manner, Gregory sent a letter to the people of Germany telling them to choose someone else as their king unless Henry repented.

The outcome of this exchange of correspondence was that the people of Rome ignored the appeal of Henry while the lords of Germany decided to honor the request of the Pope. The feudal lords were all too happy to have papal sanction for continuing their disobedience to Henry who had been ruling them in an oppressive manner.

In October, 1076, the German nobility held a meeting. Some wanted to dispose the king, all wanted to humble him. The nobles decided that they would meet again in Augsburg on February 2, 1077, under the presidency of the pope. At that meeting Henry would be given a chance to clear himself of the many sins of which he was accused and to repent. If Henry had not freed himself from the papal ban of excommunication by that time, he was to forfeit the throne.

Henry knew that his situation was desperate and he had to do something drastic. He was willing to agree to anything to save it. He would even repent. To the pope Henry finally wrote saying. "In accordance with the advice of my subjects, I hereby promise to show henceforth fitting reverence and obedience to the apostolic office and to you, Pope Gregory. And since I have been accused of certain grave crimes, I will either clear myself by presenting proof of my innocence or by undergoing the ordeal, or else I will do such penance as you may decide to be adequate for my fault."

While Henry was openly offering his public apologies, in private he was preparing to regain his former position. But first he had to get out from under the ban (decree) of excommunication and be restored to full Church membership by receiving absolution of his sins. Before all this could happen a person had to do penance and give proof of repentance. So it was that on the morning

of January 25, 1077, Henry climbed the hill to the castle of Canossa where Pope Gregory VII had come, and knocked at the outer gate. The gate was opened and Henry was allowed to pass through the gates of the first and second walls. There he was stopped to stand before the closed third gate.

All day long Henry fasted. Over his kingly garments he wore the garb of a penitent which was a coarse woolen robe. He was bareheaded and barefooted. In this manner he stood in the courtyard in the cold and snow. Darkness descended and still the inner gate remained closed. The next morning Henry appeared again only to be forced to stand all the day long barefoot in the snow. By nightfall the gate remained shut and Henry returned to his lodging. The third morning dawned. Henry arose and went to stand as a penitent in the courtyard of Canossa. The hours slowly moved by. Noon time came and nothing happened. Then the afternoon arrived. Finally, on the eve of January 27, 1077, the inner gate slowly opened and Henry was told to enter. As Henry made his way into a large room, there sat at one end Hilderbrand, an old man, once a poor boy, but now powerful enough to humble a king. Before him stood the young and strong king dressed in the clothing of a penitent. With tears in his eyes, the emperor prostrated himself to the ground. He kissed the foot of the pope and begged for his forgiveness. The absolution was granted and the ban of excommunication was lifted.

As dramatic as this encounter was, it would not be the end of the story nor of the struggle, for the people in Germany and Italy were confused and divided into warring camps. The opponents of Henry in Germany in 1077 went on to elect Rudolph of Swabia to be king. From 1078 to 1080 civil war ensued until Rudolph was wounded in battle and bled to death.

Pope Gregory had tried to resolve the conflict but was told not to interfere. Rather than do that, in 1080, Gregory VII again put Henry under the ban. However, this time there would be no acts of repentance. Powerful cardinals had finally turned against the pope to support the king. This time it would be Henry who would humble the pope. In fact, he would drive Gregory from the papal chair. Henry did this by marching his army into Italy and placing on the papal throne the anti-pope Guibert [Clement III, 1084].

When Gregory heard the approaching hoof beats of Henry's army, he fled into the castle of St. Angelo on the left bank of the Tiber and called for help to the Normans in southern Italy. They came to his aid and Henry was forced to retreat. However, the Normans stayed in Rome to plunder it. The people blamed Gregory and drove him from the city and into exile. In Salerno, Gregory died in 1085, a broken man. His last words were: "I have loved righteousness and hated iniquity; therefore I died in exile."

## **THE CONCORDAT OF WORMS**

Despite all that Gregory VII was able to accomplish as pope, the struggle over investiture continued for thirty-five years until the Concordat Of Worms resolved the issue in 1122. According to the terms reached between Emperor Henry V and Pope Calixtus II on September

23, Henry V would relinquish investiture by ring and staff while permitting the free election of bishops. Calixtus agreed that all elections would be conducted before the emperor who would retain the right to invest the elected ecclesiastic with the temporal prerogatives of the office.

# THE CHURCH IN THE MIDDLE AGES

## Leader's Study Guide

### CHAPTER 15

#### AD 1073 - 1122

#### RESPONSE

1. Identify the following:

*Answer.*

- Canossa. The place where King Henry sought forgiveness from the Gregory VII in January, 1077.
- Concordat of Worms. The place where in 1122 terms were reached between Emperor Henry V and Pope Calixtus II on September 23. Henry V would relinquish investiture by ring and staff while permitting the free election of bishops. Calixtus agreed that all elections would be conducted before the emperor who would retain the right to invest the elected ecclesiastic with the temporal prerogatives of the office.
- Ban of excommunication. A papal decree whereby a person is not allowed communion and is placed outside the church and thus outside the sphere of saving grace.

2. What was Hildebrand's concept of the papacy?

*Answer.* He saw all elements of society as under papal control. He also believed reforms were essential: including the cessation of simony and lay investiture.

3. Why was the conflict over lay investiture so important to both the emperor and the pope?

*Answer.* Without investiture, the pope could not hope for reforms, and could not hold church officials accountable. Without lay investiture, the emperor would be seriously undermining his own power and authority.

4. What did excommunication mean to any person in the Church at this time in history?

*Answer.* They would face certain damnation eternally!

5. Why did Hildebrand excommunicate Henry IV?

*Answer.* Because Hildebrand had forbidden lay investiture, Henry had then appointed several bishops, Hildebrand then sent a strong warning, and in response, Henry called a council of "his" bishops and declared that they no longer recognized Hildebrand as pope!

## **REFLECTION**

1. Hildebrand used wrong methods at times to accomplish his ends. Does the ends justify the means in the work of Christ?
2. Do you think that the repentance of Henry IV at Canossa was sincere? What constitutes genuine repentance?
3. Should the Church today accept the profession of faith or the confession of sin of all who comes to her?

## **ACCOUNTABILITY**

Study the Doctrine Of Repentance. After you have examined all the Scripture passages, indicate that on your answer sheet.

## **DOCTRINE OF REPENTANCE**

### **Extracted With Modification From The Writings Of A.W. Pink**

1. Gospel repentance does not belong to a Jewish dispensation in the past but is for men today as per Acts 17:30. "But God NOW commandeth all men everywhere to repent."
2. There is nothing meritorious in a sinner's compliance with the righteous demand of God to repent.
3. It is the gospel duty of man to repent (Prov. 28:13; Isa. 55:7).
4. The NECESSITY for gospel repentance is rooted in the fact and consequences that the Law of God has been broken, for "by the Law is the knowledge of sin" (Rom. 3:20).

Here in part may lie a practical reason as to why repentance is no longer preached, practiced, or even understood by a large part of society today or the Church. A new generation has arisen believing that the Law of God has no place in this age of grace. Can there be any wonder that our country and the nations of the Western world are in moral and spiritual chaos. A particular teaching in the Church has united with Communism and anarchy in a common contempt for the Law of God. Why should men have respect for human laws if they are taught that the Law of God has no rule and reign over their lives today?

In contrast to popular theology of recent origin, the Apostle Paul plainly affirms, "I had not known sin, but by the Law" (Rom. 7:7). The exceeding sinfulness of sin (Rom. 7:13) is only exposed or made manifest when the Holy Spirit turns the light of God's Law upon our conscience and heart.

"Practical godliness consists in conformity of our heart and life to the Law of God and in a sincere compliance with the Gospel of Christ" (A.W. Pink). This is not legalism. It is the antidote for anti-nomianism or lawlessness which pervades our society and our churches.

The requirements of the Law are summed up in the Word of Christ, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might" (Deut. 6:5 and Matt. 22:37). Man is required to love God. The ground or reason for this love is because He is the Lord our God. The extent of this duty is to love God with all the heart.

Sin is failure to love God in this manner. Sin is saying, 'I renounce God who made me; I disallow His right to govern me. I care not what He says to me, what commandments He has given, nor how He explains His Word: I prefer self-indulgence to His approval. I am indifferent to all He has done to and for me; His blessings and gifts move me not: I am going to be lord of myself.' Sin is rebellion against the Majesty of Heaven. It is to treat the Almighty with contempt.

5. In contrast to sin, repentance results from a realization in the heart, wrought therein by the Holy Spirit, of the sinfulness of sin, of the awfulness of ignoring the claims of God and defying His authority. It is therefore a holy horror and hatred of sin, a deep sorrow for it, an acknowledgment of it before God, and a complete heart forsaking of it. Not until this is done will God pardon us (cf. Lev. 23:29; 1 Kings 8:47-50). No change in dispensation has wrought any change in the character of the thrice holy God. His claims are ever the same.
6. The Prophets taught repentance (Psa. 32:3-5; Prov. 29:13; Jer. 4:4; Ezek. 18:30-32; Hosea 5:15; Joel 2:12-18).
7. John the Baptist preached repentance (Matt. 3:2; Luke 1:16, 17).
8. The Lord Jesus preached and illustrated repentance (Mark 1:15; Matt. 5:3; Luke 4:18; 5:32; 13:3, 5; 15:17-20).
9. When risen from the dead, Christ commissioned His servants "that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations" (Luke 24:47), and Acts 5:31 tells us that it was. Repentance was given to spiritual Israel and forgiveness of sins.
10. On the Day Of Pentecost Peter did not say that the people were to do nothing but rest upon the finished work of Christ. Rather, he preached repentance saying, "Repent ye therefore and be converted that your sins may be blotted out!" (Acts 3:19).
11. When Paul was converted and sent to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles, it was to "open their eyes and to turn them from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God, that they might receive forgiveness of sins" (Acts 26:20; cf. 20:21).
12. Only to those who shut their eyes, stopped their ears, hardened their hearts, and were given up to destruction in the days of the Prophets (Isa. 6:10), of Christ (Matt. 13:15), and of the Apostles (Acts 28:27), would the sentence be, "Lest they should see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts, and be converted, and I should heal them," (Mark 4:12).

13. The NATURE of repentance should be clearly understood (Luke 13:3).

- Trembling beneath the preaching of God's Word is not repentance. Felix "trembled" (Acts 24:25) but he was not converted.
- Being "almost persuaded" is not repentance. Agrippa (Acts 26:28) illustrates this (see also Matt. 13:20,21). A person may be conscious of his evil doing and acknowledge the same without being converted as Pharaoh confessed his sins (Ex.10:16).
- Humbling ourselves beneath the mighty hand of God is not repentance. A solemn example of this is Ahab who was sorry he had killed Naboth (1 Kings 21:27-29). Yet in the next chapter he is rebelling against God again.
- Confessing sins is not repentance. Thousands have gone foreword to the "altar" or "mourners bench" and then backwards into the same sin.
- A person may even do works meet for repentance and yet remain impenitent as Judas confessed his sins to the priest returned the money and then committed soul murder (Matt. 27:3-5).
- Repentance is more than conviction of sin or terror of wrath to come. In Acts 2:37,38 men were already under such terrors when they were still commanded to repent. Their legal terror did not produce saving repentance in which there is an evangelical judging of self, a mourning over sin out of a sense of God's grace and goodness.

14. What then is repentance? In the words of A. W. Pink, we would say that: Repentance is a supernatural and inward revelation from God, giving deep consciousness of what I am in HIS sight, which causes me to loathe and condemn myself, resulting in a bitter sorrow for sin, a holy horror and hatred for sin, a turning away from or forsaking of sin. It is the discovery of God's high and righteous claims upon me, and of my lifelong failure to meet those claims. It is the recognition of the holiness and goodness of His Law, and my defiant insubordination thereto. It is the perception that God has the right to rule and govern me, and of my refusal to submit unto Him. It is the apprehension that He has dealt in goodness and kindness with me, and that I have evilly repaid Him by having no concern for His honor and glory. It is the realization of His gracious patience with me, and how that instead of this melting my heart and causing me to yield loving obedience to Him, I have abused His forbearance by continuing a course of self will.

Evangelical repentance is a heart apprehension of the exceeding sinfulness of sin. It is the recognition of the chief thing wherein I am blameworthy, namely, in having so miserably failed to render unto God that which is His rightful due.



True repentance is always accompanied by a deep longing and a sincere determination to forsake that course which is displeasing to God. With what honesty could any man seek God's pardon while he continued to defy Him and would not part with that which He forbids? Would any king pardon a traitor, though he seemed never so humble, if he saw that he would be a traitor still? True, God is infinitely more merciful than any human king, yet in the very passage where He first formally proclaimed His mercy, He at once added "that will by no means clear the guilty" (Ex. 34:5-7), i.e. guilty hearted, those with false and disloyal hearts toward Himself, who would not be subject to Him in all things, and declined to have their every thought brought into captivity to obedience unto Him (2 Cor. 10:5).

God's mercy (Psa. 130:4) is never exercised as the expense of His holiness. God never displays one of His attributes so as to dishonor another. To pity a thief, while continuing a thief, would be folly, not wisdom. Well did the Puritan Thomas Goodwin say, "Resolve either to leave every known sin and to submit to every known duty, or else never look to find mercy and favor with God" (cf. Deut. 28:19, 20).

15. Biblical repentance presupposes several things.

- It presupposes a recognition and acknowledgment of God's claims upon us as our Creator, Governor, Provider, and Protector. Thus repentance does presuppose that a supernatural enlightenment has been given (1 John 5:20).
- Biblical repentance presupposes a hearty approval of God's Law and a full consent to its righteous requirements. "The Law is holy, and the commandment is holy, and just, and good" (Rom. 7:12). It cannot be otherwise for God is its Author.
- Biblical repentance presupposes that the Law was never repealed.
  - ❖ Jesus said, "Think not that I am come to earth to destroy the Law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill (Matt. 5:17,18).
  - ❖ Jesus condemned the Pharisee because they pretended that their rules and regulations surpassed the Law (Matt. 5:20).
  - ❖ That the Law of God was never to be repealed is taught in the Psalms. (Psa. 119:142, 144, 152, 160).
  - ❖ Christ did not die to disannul the Law so that now it wholly ceases to be a rule of life to believers but rather to recover His people unto a conformity thereto as per Titus 2:11-13. Though men love their corruptions, God sitteth as king for ever (Psa. 29:10) and will assert His crown rights (Luke 19:27).

- ❖ Only a regenerated man can delight in the Law of God after the inward man (Rom. 7:22).
- ❖ By righteousness we establish the Law (Rom. 3:31) that all the world might become guilty before God (1:18 cf. 3:19).
- ❖ Without God's Law, there is no sin (Rom. 5:13).
- ❖ If the Law were repealed, what is the need to argue as Paul does that "by deeds of the Law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight"? (Rom. 3:20). It would have been sufficient to say that a repealed Law could neither justify nor condemn anyone. Instead, the Apostle shows that the Law requires a "patient continuance in well doing" and threatens "tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that doeth evil" (Rom. 2:5,7).
- ❖ The New Testament speaks in a uniform manner teaching that those who have no saving interests in Christ's righteousness by faith are under the wrath of God and the curse of the Law as though He had never died.
- ❖ Christless sinners are really awakened by the Holy Spirit to see and feel what a dreadful state they are in, they are under the wrath of God and the curse of His Law (see Rom. 7:9-11) because they have broken it! But this argument could not be made if the Law had been repealed.
- ❖ God the Father, as the Governor of the world, gave the Law. God the Son magnified it (Isa. 42:21) by expounding its purity, by obeying its precepts, and by enduring its penalty. God the Holy Spirit honors the Law by pressing upon the sinner its holy demands and using it as a Schoolmaster to bring the soul to Christ (Gal. 3:24).

It is the special, secret, sovereign work of the Holy Spirit to impress upon the hearts of the elect the Law of God (Heb. 8:10) so that it is their very nature to love God with all their hearts so that might serve Him without servile fear in holiness and righteousness all the days of their lives (Luke 1:74,75).

- ❖ True repentance presupposes a honest and broken hearted acknowledgment of our wicked failure to keep God's righteous Law.

16. Unfortunately, it is this enforcing of the infinite glory of God, of His governmental supremacy, of His holy Law, of His righteous claims, of His demand for loving obedience that is left out of much of the professing Church even today due in large part to dispensational teaching.

17. There are three kinds of repentance spoken of in Scripture.

- The Repentance of Desperation illustrated in the lives of Esau, Pharaoh, Ahithophel, and Judas.
- The Repentance of Reformation such as Ahab manifested and the people of Nineveh under the preaching of Jonah.
- The Repentance of Salvation (Acts 11:18; 2 Cor. 7:10) based upon an evangelical conviction of sin.
  - ❖ A legal conviction fears hell, evangelical repentance reveres God.
  - ❖ A legal conviction dreads punishment while evangelical repentance hates sin.
  - ❖ Legal conviction informs the mind, while evangelical repentance melts the heart.
  - ❖ Legal conviction excuses itself and claims the finished work of Christ as a basis to continue in sin while evangelical repentance makes no excuses and has no reserves but cries, "I have dishonored Thy name, grieved Thy Spirit, and abused Thy patience."

18. There is discernable fruit when repentance is genuine.

- There is a real hatred of sin as sin, not merely its consequences (Ezek. 14:6; 20:43; Psa. 119:104).
- There is a deep sorrow for sin (2 Cor. 7:9-10; Matt. 26:75; Lev. 16:29; Joel 2:12,13; Gal. 5:24).
- There is a confessing of sin (Prov. 28:13; Psa. 32:3,4)
- There is an actual turning away from sin.

## CHARLES SPURGEON ON REPENTANCE

### Turn or Burn

#### Psalm 7:12

*Repentance to be sure must be entire. Many will say, 'Sir, I will renounce this sin and the other, but there are certain darling lusts which I must keep. O sirs, in God's name let me entreat you: it is not the giving up of any one sin, nor fifty sins, which is true repentance; it is the solemn renunciation of every sin. If thou dost harbor one of these accursed vipers in thy heart, thy repentance is but a sham; if thou doest indulge in but one lust and dost give up every other, that one lust, like one leak in a ship, will sink thy soul. Think it not sufficient to give up thy outward vices, fancy it not enough to cut off the more corrupt sins of thy life: it is all or none which God demands. 'Repent,' says He and He bids you repent, He means repent of all thy sins, otherwise He can never accept thy repentance as being real. He says, 'Guild thee as thou wilt, O sinner, I abhor thee! Aye, make thyself gaudy, like the snake in its azure scales, I hate thee still, for I know thy venom, and I will flee from thee when thou comest to Me in thy most specious garb.' All sin must be given up, or else you shall never have Christ: all transgression must be renounced, or else the gates of heaven must be barred against thee. Let us remember this, that repentance to be sincere, must be entire.*

*True repentance is a turning of the heart, as well as the life; it is the giving up of the whole soul to God to be His for ever; it is a renunciation of the sins of the heart, as well as of the crimes of the life. Ah, dear hearers, let none of us fancy we have repented when we have only a false and fictitious repentance; let none of us take that to be the work of the Spirit which is only the work of poor human nature; let us not dream that we have savingly turned unto God, when perhaps we have only turned to ourselves; let us not think it is enough to have turned from vice to virtue; let us remember it must be a turning of the whole soul to God, so as to be made anew in Christ Jesus; otherwise we have not met the requirements of the text.*

*Lastly, upon this point, true repentance must be perpetual. It is not my turning to God during today that will be a proof that I am a true convert; it is forsaking my sins throughout the whole course of my life, until I sleep in the grave. You must not fancy that to be upright for a week will be a proof that you are saved, it is a perpetual abhorrence of evil. The change which God works is neither a transitory nor superficial one; not a cutting off the top of the weed, but an eradication of it; not the sweeping away of the dust of one day, but the taking away of that which is the cause of the dust.*

*You may today go home and pretend to pray, you may today be serious, tomorrow honest, and the next day you may pretend to be devout; but yet, if you return--as Scripture has it, like the dog to its vomit and like the sow to its wallowing in the mire--your repentance shall but sink you deeper into hell, instead of being a proof of Divine grace in your heart (New Park Street Pulpit, Vol. 2. Sermon 106, Page 417).*

**Self Delusion**  
**Luke 13:24**

*To learn by heart that which others say from the heart--to get the outline of a believer's own experience--this is a thing so simple that instead of wondering there are hypocrites, I often marvel that there are not ten times more. And then again, the graces--the real graces within--are very easy to counterfeit. There is a repentance that needs to be repented of, and yet approaches near as possible to true repentance. Does repentance make men hate sin? They who have a false repentance may detest some crimes. Does repentance make men resolve that they will not sin? so will this false repentance, for Balaam said. 'If Balak would give me this house full of silver and gold, I will not go beyond the word of the Lord.'*

*Does true repentance make men humble themselves? So does false repentance, for Ahab humbled himself before God, and yet perished. There is a line of distinction so fine that an eagle's eye hath not seen it; and only God Himself, and the soul that is enlightened by His Spirit, can tell whether our repentance be real or no (Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit, Vol. 8. Sermon 475, Page 577).*

# **THE CHURCH IN THE MIDDLE AGES**

## **CHAPTER 16**

### **KILLING IN THE NAME OF CHRIST: THE CRUSADES**

**AD 1096 – 1291**

#### **RAISING AN ARMY OF GOD**

The history of the Church has its origin in the East where, during the first centuries of its existence, the Church formulated the great foundational documents in the Creeds of the Ecumenical Councils. From the East the Church moved west to proclaim the good news of redeeming grace.

For more than a thousand years all orthodox Christians were united in one Church embracing the doctrines of common a faith. Though the Church was not without corruption and chaos and in need of cleaning and spiritual renewal, it was still essentially one.

Then in 1054 the Church divided into the Greek Eastern and the Latin Western Church. From that point on the dream for many was to see the Church reunited. People Gregory VII (Hildebrand) in particular longed to see the Church whole. But it would not be easy because many of its members were now under the rule of Mohammedism (Islam).

Like Christianity, the faith of Islam had its origin in the East. With violent and bloody hands the Mohomedan Arabs drew their swords to hack their way through all opposition to become the religious masters and political rulers of the East. They took from the old Roman Eastern Empire the provinces of Syria, Palestine, Egypt, and North Africa. From Africa they moved through Spain and into the center of France. Only at Tours was the bloodthirsty appetite and quest for power of the Mohammedans stopped by Charles Martel (The Hammer). The year was 732.

As time moved forward and the centuries passed, the Arabs lost their political and military strength. They were supplanted by the Turks who also followed the Islamic faith. By 1070 the Turks had seized from the Arabs Palestine and Syria. They had invaded Asia Minor and were at the doorsteps of Constantinople. What was left of the Easter Empire and the Christian Church was about to be conquered. The Church in the East needed help and found it in Gregory VII.

In 1073 Gregory VII became pope. Anxious to bind up the wounds that had separated the Church in 1054, Gregory also wanted to liberate his fellow Christians from the oppression of the Mohammedan Turks. The opportunity to do something came when the Emperor Alexius I, who ruled the Eastern Church, appealed to the pope in Rome for help. The promise was made that if help from the West came, an end would be put to the schism started by Patriarch Michael Cerularius.

Gregory was ready to provide assistance. He believed that a threefold objective could be reached all at once:

- the Eastern Church could be saved from the Mohammedans;
- the Eastern and Western Churches could be reunited;
- and the universal rule of the papacy could be re-established.

Gregory envisioned himself raising an army of Christian soldiers of God and, with himself leading the way, marching to free the captives of the Church for Christ. But the dream would never materialize because Gregory soon found himself involved with the investiture conflict with Henry IV. All of his time and energies had to be spent dealing with domestic issues. Meanwhile, the fate of Christians in the East grew worse.

When the Mohammedans first conquered the Christian lands, they did not mind Christian pilgrims coming to their religious artifacts for the travelers brought money. Tourism was a profitable business. But all this changed when the Seljuk Turks took the Holy Land away from the Arabs. The Seljuk Turks hated Christians because they were Christians. They did not want the money of the Christians nor did they want the followers of Christ visiting any sacred places. Personal insults and injuries followed the Christian pilgrims. When reports of this reached the West, natural resentment set. Hearts were inflamed to go to the East and retake the Holy Land for the Lord.

## **THE FIRST CRUSADE**

Leading the way for military conquest was Pope Urban II (Pope, 1088-1099). In the fall of 1095 this tall, handsome, impressive man of oratorical skills assembled before him in Clermont a large audience of eager warriors from France, the Netherlands, and Italy. He spoke of the life of Christ reconstructing the Lord's birth, public ministry, His arrest, crucifixion, death, and burial. Urban II recreated the travels of the Lord making every place sacred that the Saviour visited. This land, he said, must be reclaimed for Christ. All who were willing to fight would be rewarded. For one thing, their time in purgatory would be reduced.

Purgatory is an imaginary place of suffering where Catholics believe that all souls must first go for purification prior to entrance into heaven. This hideous doctrine teaches that all men go to a "hell" of some sort after which they will move on to heaven (cf. Phil. 1:21-23 John 14:1-4; Luke 23:39-43). Heaven can then be entered because the right has been earned through pain and suffering. The soul is purified. Instead of heaven being a provision of God based upon the free grace of the gospel, embraced by faith in Christ, men have a part in their own salvation.

For those who might die in battle, Urban promised eternal life in heaven immediately. The vast assembly who heard Urban speak went wild with excitement. As one voice the multitude cried out, "GOD WILLS IT! GOD WILLS IT!"

Pleased with this reaction, Urban had red cloth cut up into strips which were sewn together in the forms of crosses. A cross was attached to the sleeve of every one who agreed to belong to the holy "cross" or "crusade." In this manner military expeditions were formed by the Christians of Western Europe for the purpose of taking back by force from the Mohammedans the Holy Land and its sacred places. The vain pursuit of religious conquests for Christ were about to begin.

The First Crusade began in 1096 and met with great success. The Holy City was retaken in 1099 and The Kingdom of Jerusalem was established. Though the Kingdom was to last for eighty eight years, until 1187, it was by no means strong or spiritual.

## **THE SECOND CRUSADE AND MORE**

Subsequent military adventures to Palestine such as the Second Crusade in 1147 were sent forth to strengthen the weak and vacillating Kingdom Of Jerusalem. In the Second Crusade the king of France and the emperor of the Holy Roman Empire led the armies but the expedition was unsuccessful. The City Of Peace was left in greater danger than ever which is why in 1187, Jerusalem was recaptured by Saladin, Sultan of Egypt and Syria.

This led to the Third Crusade (1189-1192), known as the Crusade of the Three Kings. It was founded by Richard I (the Lion Hearted) of England, Philip of France, and the Emperor Frederick Barbarossa. The effort was a disaster. Barbarossa drowned while crossing a river in Cilicia, Philip returned to France leaving Richard I alone. All Richard could achieve after much fighting was to gain a treaty with Saladin that allowed Christians to visit the Holy Sepulcher.

The Fourth Crusade began in 1201, under the leadership of Pope Innocent III (Pope, 1198-1216) who urged the capture of Egypt in order to use it as a base of operations against Palestine. When the army was finally assembled on the beaches, the discovery was made that it was without the shipping which Venice agreed to supply. Another decision was made. The Crusaders would capture Constantinople to pay for provisions and transportation. A battle was fought and won. One Church related result of this victory was that Pope Innocent III had suddenly had control of both the Eastern Orthodox Church and the Eastern Empire. Not until 1261 would the Eastern Empire regain her independence from Rome.

As pope, Innocent III proved to be a powerful personality illustrated in his ability to humble royalty. For example, Innocent humiliated Philip Augustus of France by forcing him to take back the wife he had divorced. His wife had appealed to the papacy for help. Shortly after this, in 1208, Innocent humbled King John of England in a clash of wills over the appointment of a new arch-bishop of Canterbury. To have his way, Innocent used the interdict which meant placing the whole country outside the grace of the Church. No Church service could be officially held. The



next year King John was excommunicated. His subjects were no longer required to obey him and he was deprived of his throne. The pope also invited Philip of France to invade England if John refused to humble himself. In 1213 John submitted to the pope and England became a self acknowledged slave of the papacy.

During this same period Innocent interfered in the affairs of Germany by dictating the imperial succession there. Finally, Innocent convened the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215 to deal with practical concerns one of which was making mandatory confession once a year for all laymen. The Council also considered the doctrinal issue of transubstantiation. This doctrine teaches the belief that the bread and wine become the actual body and blood of Christ. Accordingly, the priests are able to perform an actual sacrifice of Christ every time the mass is said.

### **THE CHILDREN'S CRUSADE**

Of all the major Crusades the most tragic was the attempt of the Children's Crusade. In 1212 a German youth called Nicholas proclaimed that God had ordained him to lead a crusade of children to the Holy Land. The idea captured the imagination of the children. Thirty thousand young people (some girls dressed as boys) averaging twelve years slipped away from their parents to follow Nicholas. As they marched from Cologne, down the Rhine and over the Alps they sang:

*Fair are the meadows,  
Fairer still the woodlands,  
Robed in the pleasant garb of spring;  
Jesus is fairer, Jesus is purer,  
He makes the grieving heart to sing.*

Many died of hunger. Some stragglers were devoured by wolves. Thieves mingled with the marchers and stole money food, and clothing. The survivors reached Genoa in Italy only to discover that no ships would carry them to Palestine. Pope Innocent III told the children as kindly as possible to go home. Some did but many stayed.

In France, in the same year of 1212, a twelve year old shepherd named Stephen came to Philip Augustus and announced that Christ had appeared to him while tending his flock and commanded him to lead a children's crusade to Palestine. The king ordered him to return home. Still, twenty thousand young people gathered to follow wherever Stephen chose to lead them. He chose to lead them across France to Marseille, where, Stephen promised, the ocean would divide in a miraculous manner and they would walk to Palestine on dry ground. The ocean did not open like the Red Sea but two ship owners offered to take as many young people as possible to Palestine without charge. The children crowded into seven ships and sailed forth singing hymns of triumph. On the way two of the ships were wrecked off Sardinia, with the death of all on board. The other children were brought to Tunisia or Egypt where they were sold as slaves. The ship owners were hanged by the order of Frederick II.

## **THE RESULTS OF THE CRUSADES**

The Crusades never did accomplish the original purposes for which they were designed despite two hundred years of conflict. However, the Crusades did change the world. A few results may be noted:

- the rise of towns
- the destruction of feudalism
- the decay of serfdom and the rise of the middle class between lord and serf
- the development of national monarchies
- the rise of romantic literature
- greater interest in international trade and commerce
- increase of heretical teaching
- increase of banking and shipping industry
- increased hostility between Christianity and Islam
- increased power of the papacy
- increase in population and wealth of Palestine
- protection of sacred places
- a blockage of the Moslem aggressions on Europe
- a better acquaintance of nations with one another
- an increase of wealth for the Church which bought lands or loaned money on them as security to the knights who went forth to fight in the name of Christ.
- the slaughter of thousands upon thousands including Turkish women, children, and infants.

By the middle of the 1200's the Crusades were over. The Turks would remain in ultimate control of Palestine until Jerusalem was turned over to the British General Allenby on December 8, 1917, during World War I. While the Crusades may initially have been based upon good motives, no one seemed to be asking if such adventures were the will of God.

## **THE MAJOR CRUSADES**

First Crusade	1095
Second Crusade	1147 - 1149
Third Crusade	1189 - 1192
Fourth Crusade	1201 - 1204
The Children's Crusade	1212
Fifth Crusade	1216 - 1217
Frederick II's Crusade	1228 - 1229
Sixth Crusade	1248 - 1254
Seventh Crusade	1270 - 1272

# THE CHURCH IN THE MIDDLE AGES

## Leader's Study Guide

### CHAPTER 16

#### Killing in the Name of Christ

AD 1096 – 1291

#### RESPONSE

1. What threefold objective did Gregory VII hope to accomplish by encouraging the Crusades?

*Answer.*

- The Eastern Church could be saved from the Mohammedans,
- The Eastern and Western Churches could be reunited,
- The universal rule of the papacy could be re-established.

2. Describe the Children's Crusade.

*Answer.* In 1212, 30,000 children averaging 12 years of age followed a German youth named Nicholas to go to the Holy Lands. Also in 1212, 20,000 French youth followed a French youth named Stephen. The first group suffered tremendously on the way, only to be stranded in Genoa, where many stayed. The second group went on ships from Marseille, only to be sold into slavery in North Africa!

3. Define purgatory and transubstantiation.

*Answer.*

- Purgatory is a doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church: a place of suffering that all souls must first go to for purification before entering heaven.
- Transubstantiation also a doctrine of Roman Catholicism, is the belief that the communion bread and wine are not symbolic, but are physically changed into the body and blood of Christ, thus enabling the priest to perform a repeated and real sacrifice of Christ in each mass.

4. List at least ten results of the Crusades.

*Answer.*

- rise of towns
- the destruction of feudalism

- the decay of serfdom, and the rise of the middle class between lord and serf
- the development of national monarchies
- the rise of romantic literature
- greater interest in international trade and commerce
- increase of heretical teaching
- increase of banking and shipping industry
- increased hostility between Christianity and Islam
- increased power of the papacy
- increase in population and wealth of Palestine
- protection of sacred places
- a blockage of the Moslem aggressions on Europe
- a better acquaintance of nations with one another
- an increase of wealth for the Church
- the slaughter of thousands upon thousands.

5. Who were the Seljuk Turks and how did they differ in their treatment of Christians from other followers of Mohammed?

*Answer.* Whereas the Arabs welcomed Christian pilgrims to the Holy Land, to benefit from their spending while there, the Turks hated the Christians because they were *infidels*. Therefore, the Turks treated Christians badly.

## **REFLECTION**

1. In light of such passages as 2 Corinthians 10:4 and John 18:36 can the concept of the Crusades be justified?
2. Would you have gone on one of the Crusades if given the chance? Why or why not?
3. Did the Crusades hinder or help advance the cause of Christ's kingdom?
4. Can the doctrine of transubstantiation be confirmed by the Bible?
5. Can the doctrine of purgatory be proven by Scripture?
6. Where do you believe Christians go when they die?

## **ACCOUNTABILITY**

Do you believe that Christians should confess their sins to one another? If so, to whom should confession of sins be made, when, and where? Include in your answer Matthew 18:15-20 and James 5:16 and 1 John 1:9.

# THE CHURCH IN THE MIDDLE AGES

## CHAPTER 17

### THE HEIGHT OF EARTHLY POWER

AD 1198 - 1216

#### INNOCENT III

The Church of Jesus Christ rose to the height of earthly prestige and power under Innocent III. His papal administration lasted from 1198 to 1216. Well educated, Innocent had studied the languages in Paris and law in Bologna. He was an eloquent speaker and singer. At the young age of twenty nine he was made a cardinal and at age thirty seven was elected to the papacy. Innocent had exalted ideas about the office he held. Five factors guided his beliefs and behavior.

**THE EXAMPLE OF POPE GREGORY VII.** Even though Gregory's attempt to establish the power of the Church over the State ended in failure his example was established for others to follow.

**THE "DONATION OF CONSTANTINE."** These false documents were accepted for over a century as genuine and were used in that way to furnish Innocent with a strong legal basis for claiming great papal power.

**THE CRUSADES.** These military adventures were inspired by the popes who encouraged the kings and emperors to lead the soldiers into combat while obeying the pope. In this manner the pope gave the appearance of being the head of all Christendom.

**THE PRINCIPLE OF RATIONE PECCATI.** This Latin term means "by reason of sin." The popes tended to reckon the political authority of the rulers but they maintained that they, the popes, were supreme in the areas of religion and morality. However, since every political action has a moral side, the principle of racione peccati gave the pope ultimate authority also in political matters. In this way the popes became dictators over kings and emperors.

**POLITICAL ACUMEN.** Being politically astute, Innocent knew how to assert his authority. In individual confrontations with rulers he knew how to win. For example, when the emperor Frederick Barbarossa challenged the pope's authority in 1177, it was Frederick who finally knelt before the pope under the porch of the Cathedral of St. Mark in Venice. Spreading his cloak upon the pavement, Frederick knelt upon it and kissed the pope's foot. When Frederick arose, the pope gave him the kiss of peace. It was not Frederick alone who became a vassal of the Church. One after another of the emperors and all the kings, lords, and princes of Europe acknowledged the pope as spiritual lord.

In addition to his political acumen Innocent flexed his political power by reclaiming the patrimony of St. Peter, as the Papal States were called. This territory, located in the middle of the Italian peninsula, had been gradually diminished as succeeding popes made sacrifices of the land to the Holy Roman Emperor in exchange for protection. Now back under papal control the boundaries would remain for the next six hundred years what Pope Innocent III made them.

## **THE CONINUAL NEED FOR REFORM**

Beyond political acumen and the exercise of papal power Innocent III attempted to bring about spiritual reform. In 1215 he held an ecumenical council in the Lateran Church in Rome. In summoning this council Innocent declared, "Two things I have especially at heart, the reconquest of the Holy Land, and the reform of the Church universal."

Over fifteen hundred persons attended the Lateran Council including the highest ranking clergy in Christendom. The patriarchs of Constantinople and Jerusalem were present as were emissaries from Emperor Frederick, the kings of France, England, Aragon, Hungary, Jerusalem, and Cyprus. Representatives of the Italian cities came. A number of decisions were made.

1. A new Crusade should be conducted. Pope Innocent III offered to lead this one in person.
2. The teachings of the Waldensian and the Albigensian were condemned.
3. Punishment of all unrepentant heretics was prescribed.
4. The granting of indulgences should be restricted.
5. Bishops were instructed to appoint competent men to preach the gospel and provide free education for scholars too poor to pay.
6. It was ordered that Jews and Saracens [nomadic people of the deserts between Syria and Arabia] should wear distinctive clothing.
7. No Jews were to be allowed to hold public office which would give them any authority over Christians. The year following the council Innocent III died.

## **THE MENDICANT ORDERS**

The continual need for reform in the Church was universally recognized. The spiritual condition of many of the clergy was abominable. A clerk in Paris said, "I can believe everything, but I cannot believe that any German bishop can be saved." Pope Innocent himself had written that, "The prelates in southern France are the laughing stock of the laity." [A prelate refers to a Church leader of superior rank such as a bishop or abbot]. In addition the Church had amassed enormous

wealth. For many people the Church was nothing but an easy and enjoyable way to live. Not all who were identified with the Church abused the system. There were many devout individuals such as Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153) who wrote lovely hymns that are still sung today. "O Sacred Head, Now Wounded" was written by this devout monk. His motto has been embraced by countless Christians: "To know Jesus and Jesus Crucified." Bernard challenged popes and political princes about the depth of their Christian lives and challenged all of Christendom to seek mystical devotion. To the pope, Bernard once wrote, "Who will permit me to see before I die the Church of God so ordered as it was in the old days, when the apostles cast their nets to fish for souls and not for gold and silver?"

As monks and nuns took the efforts of spiritual renewal seriously they attracted others. Peter the Venerable, abbot of Cluny, said, "The innumerable multitude of monks covers almost all the lands. It fills the cities, castles, and fortified places. What a variety of garbs and customs in this army of the Lord which has taken an oath to live according to the rule, in the name of faith and charity!"

In Palestine three military monastic orders were established to care for the sick and to protect Christian pilgrims on their journeys to the sacred shrines. There were the Templars, the Hospitalers, and the Teutonic Knights. The Teutonic Knights had their headquarters in Acre until it fell in 1291. By 1226 they were found in Hungary and Prussia where they battled the Slavs and Tartars as they brought Christ to the Baltic lands. The order was dissolved when the Grand Master, Albert of Brandenburg became a Protestant during the Reformation.

Another important order of this time was the Dominican order. Dominic was a monk who had been born and schooled in Spain. His special burden seemed to be a desire to preach the gospel in order to bring back into the Church those who had withdrawn and were teaching other doctrines. At the Lateran Council of 1215 he received formal recognition for his order from Pope Innocent III. The Dominicans adopted the name of "Preaching Friars." The name speaks of their ideals. They were to preach as friars, a name derived from the word *frater*, or brother. However, these men were not monks. They were not to live in a cloister but in the midst of society. In just four years time, this movement saw the establishment of sixty convents in eight provinces. The Dominicans adopted the vow of poverty for they were a mendicant order which means they begged for their needs.

Another important order of this time period was established by Francis of Assisi who was born in Italy in 1182. The son of a rich merchant, Francis abandoned himself to a life of licentiousness in his youth. At the age of twenty he became violently ill and was gloriously converted. Recovering his health, Francis devoted himself to a life of poverty and charity. Following his example, others joined him.

At the Lateran Council of 1215, Francis and his followers appealed to the pope for formal recognition of their order. The request was granted and the Minorites or Friars Minor (lesser) began their work. Francis insisted upon absolute poverty. If he saw anyone poorer than himself,

he would try to give what he could. The brethren were to labor with their hands but were not allowed to receive any wages for what they did. They were to take no thought for the morrow.

A man with a tender heart, Francis loved all of creation and was even known to preach to the birds. With his eloquence in preaching he persuaded many people to follow Christ. One result of the mendicant orders is that people were attracted to the Church because of the simplicity and sincerity of its followers who did good and not evil to men. Loving actions and attitudes conquered hearts. In the midst of good deeds, the mental life of the Church was also being stimulated. Many universities sprang up in Italy, Germany, France, and England. There were great teachers who emerged.

**ANSELM** (1033-1109). Born in Aosta, Italy, of a noble family, Anselm was educated at the abbey of St. Leger. His father wanted him to train to have a career in politics but Anselm wanted to become a monk. In 1057 he left home and wandered in Burgundy, France and Normandy before taking up residence in a Benedictine monastery at Bec, Normandy. There he took the monastic vows and began to teach. He later became abbot of Bec (1078-1093) and later, the Archbishop of Canterbury.

As a teacher he showed wisdom and compassion. Once, when a visiting abbot complained that he could not get the students to learn no matter how much he beat them, Anselm replied gently, "Have you tried not beating them?" A man of spiritual sensitivity, Anselm prayed, "Grant that I may taste by love what I apprehend by knowledge, that I may feel in my heart what I touch through the Spirit."

As a scholar, Anselm returned to the works of Augustine. As a theologian he wanted to prove and demonstrate the existence and attributes of God by an appeal to reason alone. With this objective in view Anselm set forth the Ontological Argument which contends that the existence of the idea of God necessarily implies the objective existence of God. However, Anselm always insisted that faith must precede reason: "I do not seek to understand in order that I may believe, but I believe in order to understand."

Anselm is also credited with the "Satisfaction Theory" of the atonement which views God as the offended party and man as the offender. Only the One who is the God-man can make the satisfaction to the infinite God which justice demands because of the penalty of sin. Anselm did reject the Ransom Theory of the atonement whereby a lawsuit was settled between God and the devil. Because of his appeal to reason based upon faith rather than the traditions of men, Anselm is described as the founder of Scholasticism.

**PETER ABELARD** (1079-1142) became a medieval French philosopher, teacher, and theologian. Born in Brittany, Abelard studied with some of the great teachers of his day and then taught at Melun, Corbeil, and later at Paris. While in Paris, Abelard lived at the house of Fulbert, who was the canon at Notre Dame. [Note: a canon refers to a clergyman who is on staff of a cathedral or collegiate church]. While living with Fulbert, Abelard fell deeply in love with his



niece, Heloise. A son was born to her though the couple was not married. Abelard offered to marry Heloise but Fulber was furious. He ordered Abelard castrated. Heloise entered into a convent believing it was better to do this than to hamper Abelard's career in the Church. Abelard himself retired to the monastery of St. Denis. Despite these decisions, the couple continued to carry on a lifelong correspondence.

In 1121 Abelard was condemned by the Council of Soissons for heresy and was forced to flee into exile. He found asylum in the distant monastery of St. Gildas in Brittany, where he stayed for ten years and was abbot until forced to leave there by the monks. Returning to Paris, Abelard became popular with the students but again faced new charges of heresy regarding the Trinity from Norbert of Promote and Bernard of Clairvaux. Again Abelard was condemned by the Church this time at the Council of Sens, 1141. Despite his philosophical speculations, Abelard is on record as saying "I do not wish to be philosopher if it means resisting St. Paul; I do not wish to be Aristotle if it must separate me from Christ."

Aristotle (Greek philosopher, 384-322 B.C.), was the master of a world centered philosophy and of a rational scientific method, which dispensed with "God" and faith that was transcendental (i.e., abstract and other worldly). While Abelard did not dispense with God he did give his life to his motto: "I understand so that I might believe [in God]." He gave his life to rationalism. It is to be noted that this motto is the reverse of that embraced by Augustine of Hippo and Anselm of Canterbury.

**PETER THE LOMBARD** (c. 1095-c. 1164), was an Italian theologian, bishop and a disciple of Abelard. Born at Novara which was then in Lombardy, Peter studied at Bologna and afterwards in France. He taught at the cathedral school at Notre Dame in Paris where he became an important figure in scholasticism and spokesperson for the Church. Peter may have been the first to contend that there are seven sacraments. This number was finally accepted by the Council of Florence in 1439. According to Peter, a sacrament is not only a symbol of divine grace but a means of actually conveying divine grace.

A prolific writer, Peter produced commentaries on the Psalms, Job and the Pauline Epistles. His most famous manuscript was *Libri quatuor sententiarum* (Four Books of Sentences) which was written between 1147 and 1150. This work is a summary of Catholic doctrine. Though he was once accused of heresy by his archenemy, Walter St. Victor, Peter was declared to be a faithful Christian by the Fourth Lateran Council, in 1215. When the Protestant Reformation came, the writings of Peter Lombard would not be found by them to be altogether disagreeable to their cause because he had raised a number of important doctrinal questions in his book *Yes and No*.

**ALBERTUS MAGNUS** (1193-1280), was born in Bavaria. In 1223, as an adult he entered the newly established Dominican Order in Padua, Italy. Albertus taught in several Dominican schools in Germany (1228-1245), in Paris (1245-1248), and then at Cologne (1248-1255) where he had Thomas Aquinas as a student. A profound scholar, Albertus mastered the thoughts of Aristotle while reading widely the works of Jewish thinkers such as Gabirol and Maimonides.

He also read the Arab philosophers: Averroes, Avicenna, and Algazel. In all of his reading and extensive writings, twenty one volumes, Albertus was careful to acknowledge that many things could only be determined with certainty by revelations because of the limitations of rational thought. Like other scholastic theologians Albertus believed that human knowledge could be used to discover the divine mysteries and God.

**THOMAS AQUINAS** (1225-1274). This distinguished medieval theologian and philosopher has had a tremendous impact upon the Church to the present hour. Born in the town of Aquino, Italy, about eighty miles southeast of Rome, Aquinas was a large man which caused him to be mocked by his fellow students as a "dumb ox." However, he was not dumb but brilliant. Educated at the Universities of Naples, Paris, and Cologne, he entered the Dominican order of preachers.

Thomas is most criticized by Protestants for his attempt to synthesize Aristotelian philosophy and biblical theology which lead to a compromise of the doctrines of the sovereignty of God and the total depravity of man. In his defense, Thomas insisted that while theology is the "queen of science" philosophy is its servant and can establish what theology assumes, the existence of God and the immortality of the soul. Still, Protestants feared that Thomas leaned too much to the autonomy of natural reason which would disregard or diminish divine revelation.

Despite these things, Thomas Aquinas has contributed to the theological discussion by arguing for a natural theology and a natural law ethic. With respect to ethics, Aquinas made a distinction between eternal law, divine law, natural law, and human law. With respect to the existence of God, he formulated five ways of proving the existence of God though he did reject the ontological argument formulated by Anselm of Canterbury. Nor did Thomas regard the existence of God as being self-evident to human beings who do not initially know enough about God to know that His existence is necessary.

In summary, Thomas argued from universal truths about nature to the cause of nature and its creator, God. His thinking today is still studied. It is prevalent and profound.

**JOHN DUNS SCOTUS** (1266-1308) was a medieval scholastic theologian. Because of his Scottish birth, he acquired the Latin nickname Scotus ("the Scot"). Scotus was educated to be a priest. He became a member of the Franciscan Order. Though he spent most of his career as a teacher at Oxford, Scotus did teach at Paris and Cologne.

Though in many areas Scotus agreed with Thomas Aquinas, he introduced distinct changes into the philosophy and theology that Thomas set forth. Upon evaluating the five proofs that Thomas set forth, Scotus argued that many assertions in theology are not philosophically demonstrable or even probable. He believed that God does not act out of logical necessity nor out of the inner necessity of His own nature. Since God does not act of necessity, God acts as He freely chooses.

In another area, in contrast to the rationalism of Thomas, Scotus suggested a "voluntarist" view of life arguing that a choice by the will determines what a person does. Reason is merely an instrument to that end. Such an emphasis helped to drive a dramatic division between faith and reason, which eventually led to the decline of scholasticism itself.

Another contribution of Scotus was to teach the uniqueness of individuals. Aquinas had taught that a human being consists of a body and soul with the soul comprising the essence of human nature. Scotus insisted on a third component, personal individualism. He believed that God purposely created individuals, not merely a universal human nature that lineage and circumstances have made particular. Each person possesses an eternal individuality which has been granted freedom and value.

Scotus also believed that Christ's incarnation would have occurred even if the Fall had not, a position Aquinas would not have agreed to. Even more disturbing is the fact that Scotus was the first major Catholic theologian to argue for the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary. This doctrine teaches that the mother of Christ was conceived in holiness without the pollution of original sin even though she was born of two human parents. Thomas Aquinas, who died in 1274, had earlier rejected this whole notion. In December, 1854, Pope Pius IX, a Franciscan, declared the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception was to be regarded as a divinely revealed fact and an official Catholic dogma.

## **SUMMARY**

Together, these men and others called Schoolmen, imparted the knowledge known as scholasticism. The emphasis on learning influenced other areas such as architect and art. It was the medieval individuals who built the ornate cathedrals such as those in Milan, Italy, Rheims, France, and Cologne, Germany.

# THE CHURCH IN THE MIDDLE AGES

## Leader's Study Guide

### CHAPTER 17

#### The Height of Earthly Power

AD 1198 - 1216

#### RESPONSE

1. What five factors guided the thinking of Innocent III?

*Answer.*

- The example of Gregory VII for establishing power over the State
- The (fraudulent) *Donation of Constantine* as a legal basis for greater power
- The Crusades, where armies were mobilized under the appearance of papal control
- The principle of *Ratione Pecatti*, where the popes claimed ultimate political authority, since they would have to give spiritual account to God for any rulers actions, "by reason of sin".
- Political acumen, whereby Innocent was able to influence others to submit to him.

2. What seven decisions were made at the Laterna Council in 1215?

*Answer.*

- a new crusade
- condemnation of the Waldensians and the Albigensians
- punishment for unrepentant heretics
- restrictions in the use of indulgences
- competent men to be appointed to preach the Gospel, and scholarships for qualified poor to study
- Jews and nomadic Arabs to wear distinctive clothing
- no Jews in authority over Christians

3. What were the mendicant orders?

*Answer.* Associations of like-minded monks who vowed poverty, begging for their needs while in service among the people, instead of removed from the people in monasteries.

4. Identify the following:

- Anselm was a wise Italian Benedictine scholar/monk (1033-1109) after the thoughts of Augustine, who emphasized both reason, and that faith must precede reason. The founder of *Scholasticism*.
- Peter Abelard (1079 – 1142) was a French scholar/monk and teacher who emphasized rationalism.
- Peter the Lombard (1095-1164) was an Italian student of Abelard, a teacher and spokesman for the Church, the first to argue for seven sacraments.
- Albertus Magnus (1193-1280) was a German Dominican scholar/monk, teacher, philosopher, and prolific writer, emphasized the need for revelation from God in order to learn.
- Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) was an Italian student of Albertus and a Dominican, emphasized integration of Aristotelian philosophy with theology, a profound thinker still studied today.
- John Duns Scotus (1266-1308) was a Scottish Franciscan scholar and teacher, who emphasized man's free will, and the first to argue for the Immaculate Conception.

## **REFLECTION**

1. Why do you think the doctrine of the seven sacraments and the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception even arose?
2. What place does reason and faith have in the Christian's life?

## **ACCOUNTABILITY**

Which position would you embrace and why?

- POSITION ONE. "I believe in order to understand," Anselm
- POSITION TWO "I understand so that I might believe." Abelard

# THE CHURCH IN THE MIDDLE AGES

## CHAPTER 18

### THE PASSING OF POWER

AD 1294 – 1417

#### BONIFACE VIII

Beginning with the reign of Boniface VIII (Pope, 1294-1303), a definite decline took place in the temporal power of the Church. One of the great conflicts that brought about the decline came over the matter of taxation. Philip the Fair, king of France, was determined to tax the clergy in his country. The pope instructed the clergy not to pay their taxes. The king retaliated by forbidding the exportation of gold, silver, and precious stones. In this way he would be able to keep the currency within the country at his discretion and would cut off the pope receiving Church revenues.

Boniface VIII responded to this act by issuing a papal bull which is an official pronouncement or declaration. The bull is so named because such a papal document is affixed a round leaden seal, called in Latin a *bull*. In the bull *Unam sanctam* (One holy) Boniface set forth his argument for ultimate authority in the matter in question and what he proposed to do to King Philip and also to France. Said the pope, "the Church has two swords at its command, the spiritual and the temporal...Each of these is the power of the Church, but the former should be drawn by the Church and by the hand of the Pontiff [or pope]; the latter by the hand of kings and soldiers, but on behalf of the Church, at the command and with the authorization of the Pontiff. One of these swords must be subordinate to the other, that is to say, the temporal power must be subordinate to the spiritual power. It belongs to the spiritual power to establish the temporal power and to judge it if it goes astray...It is necessary for salvation for every human creature to submit to the Roman Pontiff." With these words, the Boniface put King Philip and France under the ban. Appealing to the Scriptures to prove his right to universal dominion the pope quoted Jeremiah 1:10, "Behold, I have set thee over nations and kingdoms."

Many years earlier when Pope Gregory VII had placed the Emperor Henry IV under the ban, it had the desired effect of subduing the king. The same result would not happen with King Philip of France. The times had changed. Feudalism had fallen into decline to be replaced with the rise of nationalism. The papal bull was perceived to be an attack not only on King Philip but upon France herself. Boniface had failed to understand and appreciate this.

Knowing that he had popular support for resisting the ban, Philip decided to send two representatives with a band of soldiers to Anagni in Italy to arrest the pope. This was a mistake on Philip's part for the soldiers did not use wisdom. They treated the Pontiff roughly which caused the citizens of Anagni to come to the defense of the eighty-seven year old pope. Though

Boniface was not arrested, he was badly shaken up and his spirit was broken. A few days after he returned to Rome he died.

Still, Philip had won the victory for the States-General of France, composed of nobles, clergy, and the commons united to officially declare that in civil matters the pope had no authority, and that the king had no superior but God. The Church was learning afresh that it has no more power than what people are willing to give it, according to the flesh.

To further humiliate the papacy, Philip was able to have the seat of power moved from Rome to Avignon in Provence, immediately adjacent to France. The year was 1309. For about seventy years the popes would rule from Avignon as the virtual prisoner of the French king. This period would become known as the Babylonian Captivity (1305-1377) because it lasted about the same length of time as the captivity of the Israelites in Babylon in Old Testament times (c. 586-516 B.C.). In addition to the political impotence caused by the Babylonian Captivity, at least seven other factors contributed to the decline of the power of the Church.

**INTOLERANCE.** Feeling threatened with the rise of nationalism the Church tried to keep its members subservient by the rigid enforcement of doctrine and practice. Heresy was to be rooted out and the faithful were to be encouraged to remain true to the Church. To accomplish these goals the Inquisition was established under the guidance of the Dominican Order which was known for having men of great learning. The harsh methods that were eventually used created tremendous opposition and dissent. The Church brought shame upon herself.

**GREED.** While they were living in Avignon, many of the popes maintained a very luxurious lifestyle which cost a great deal of money. To obtain the money the popes openly resorted to simony and the selling of indulgences or papal forgiveness of sin even prior to the sins being committed. Many people began to say that the pope was the Anti-Christ and the son of Satan.

**BUREAUCRACY.** The increasing cost of maintaining the hierarchy of the Church and the oppressive means of securing money for it also brought shame, loss of respect and loss of power to the Church.

**IMMORALITY.** There was an ever increasing moral laxity among the clergy, especially during the fifteenth century. The lifestyle of monks and nuns and popes was an open scandal to the Saviour.

**SECULARIZATION.** When morality declines in the Church so does spirituality which allows the Church to become more secularized. The world offered an alternative way of thinking and living to the Church in the Renaissance. Captured by the concepts of the Renaissance was Nicholas V (Pope, 1447-1455) who was a great lover of classical literature. He founded the Vatican library.

The Renaissance was not just a re-birth of knowledge as the name implies but a revitalization of the classical spirit with its rationalistic outlook on life. Ethics were once more view as being relativistic. Morality did not follow an unchangeable revealed standard. What was wrong in one culture or for one person might be just fine in another time and place. Also, the Renaissance saw the rise of the middle class with new wealth which it chose to spend, not on the Church, but upon itself and on art, literature, education, pleasure and travel.

**THE CRUSADES.** The military expeditions into foreign lands caused the eyes of many serfs in Europe to be opened. No longer could they be held in bondage through religious superstitions of the time. There were no ideas and new ways of living and thinking to embrace. The East had met the West and changed it by weakening the ties of many to the Church.

**CHURCH DIVISION.** Perhaps the thing that hurt the papacy more than anything else including the Babylonian Captivity was the Papal Schism which was to last from 1378 to 1417.

### **THE PAPAL SCHISM**

This schism resulted when the French and Italian cardinals could not agree on ending the Babylonian Captivity. Because there was a division in the College of Cardinals two popes were elected, one at Rome and one at Avignon. When the Council of Pisa tried to resolve the controversy in 1409, the result was the election of a third pope. Each one of these men anathematized and excommunicated one another so that the Church as a whole was confused and disgusted.

### **THE HEALING OF THE GREAT SCHISM**

Reform parties grew rapidly in the midst of this chaos. Leading the way in the quest for spiritual renewal were men such as John Huss (1369-1415) and John Wycliffe (1320-1384). Huss was a professor of philosophy at the University of Prague who preached with great success in Bohemia as he called upon individuals to repent. Wycliffe gathered around him a group of men, called Lollards, who helped change the Church in England and Scotland by preaching the doctrines of redeeming grace. The voice of the Reformers was being heard. At last, in 1417, the Council Of Constance managed to elect an Italian cardinal pope as Martin V. The other three competing popes, weary with the social and political instability, gave Martin their support so that once more the Church in the West had one spiritual leader. The Great Schism was healed. But the wounds which were inflicted on the papacy were to prove to have far reaching repercussions.



# THE CHURCH IN THE MIDDLE AGES

## Leader's Study Guide

### CHAPTER 18

#### The Passing of Power

AD 1294 – 1417

#### RESPONSE

1. List five of the seven major factors which led to the decline of the power of the Church.

*Answer.*

- Intolerance
  - Greed
  - Bureaucracy
  - Immorality
  - Secularization
  - the Crusades
  - Church division
2. Define:
    - Papal Bull. An official pronouncement from the pope, which carries the weight of his authority.
    - Babylonian Captivity. The period of about 70 years from 1305 to 1377, when the pope ruled from Avignon, France, under the heavy influence of the French king Philip.
    - Papal Schism. The period from 1378 to 1417, when two men claimed to be pope, resulting from when the French and Italian cardinals could not agree, and each elected their own man! The failed council that tried to resolve it only elected a third man, without removing the other two.

#### REFLECTION

1. What is your response to the concept that the Church has two swords to command, the spiritual and the temporal?
2. Record your thoughts as you consider the grasp for power between Church and state.

3. Do you believe that any of the eight major areas of concern that caused the decline of the Church once are present again? If so, what does this say about the state of the Church at the end of the twentieth century?
4. List some specific ways that the Church today could gain greater respect among the non-churched.

### **ACCOUNTABILITY**

To what extent are you as a Christian involved in politics? And to what extent are you involved in helping the Church be spiritually stronger?

## **THE CHURCH IN THE MIDDLE AGES**

### **CHAPTER 19**

#### **THE SEARCH FOR SANCTIFICATION**

**AD 1200 – 1517**

##### **THE ALBIGENSES**

As people returned from the Crusades in the East to their lands in Western Europe, they brought back with them many things including some ancient heresies. One such doctrinal error was that of Manicheism. Though Augustine had effectively combated this teaching driving it from the West, it had lingered on in the East. During the Crusades the Manichean ideas filtered back into Western Europe through Bulgaria along the newly established trade routes. In the town of Albi in southern France, the Manichean ideas flourished. Those who embraced them were called Albigenses or Cathari.

The Cathari were dualists in that they embraced the idea of a good god and a bad god. The visible world is the result of the evil god. In some manner the souls of men have been taken captive by this bad god and are being held in bondage. They must be set free. This is done by emphasizing the spiritual to the material.

Rarely does heresy concentrate itself on only one point. Like an octopus with its many tentacles, heresy reaches out to touch other truths. Some of the Albigenses rejected the Old Testament considering it to be the work of the evil god. Others accepted the Psalms and the prophets. All accepted the New Testament as the work of the good god. However, they did not believe its teachings in every part especially concerning the body of Christ. Since all material things are evil, Christ could not have had a real body and He did not really die a real death. Thus the Cross held no respect or reverence for the Albigenses. In like manner the sacraments were rejected because their elements are material. Church buildings were not allowed because they were built of material things. Feeling themselves superior to other professing Christians because of their spiritual knowledge, some of the Albigenses met resistance by the Church. Feeling this rejection, they turned into a hostile group.

##### **THE WALDENSES**

In contrast to the Albigenses were the followers of Peter Waldo. This wealthy merchant placed great emphasis on the Scripture. Taking the teachings of Christ regarding wealth literally, around 1176 Waldo sold all of his goods and gave his money to the poor. Then he translated portions of the Bible into the language of the people. Peter stressed preaching by laymen to include men and women. Sending out seventy disciples two by two dressed in simple woolen garments and barefoot, Waldo encouraged the gospel to be proclaimed in southern France, Italy, Spain, and the

Rhine Valley. On Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays the Waldensians, as the disciples became known, would fast. They would not take an oath nor serve in the military. Peter taught that the Church was subject to error and so rejected the doctrine of purgatory and the saying of prayers for the dead. The Church was not infallible, he argued. Though Peter Waldo had no intention of breaking with Rome, the pope excommunicated him and his followers.

## **THEN CAME THE INQUISITION**

As the Church found itself powerless against the various movements it considered heretical, the decision was made by several councils to persecute the heretics. As a result of this decision, the Inquisition emerged to be guided by the Dominicans Friars. A person who was suspected or accused of heresy could be brought before this formal Church board. Once assembled, the trial followed established procedures.

Anyone discovered with heretical ideas would be instructed to recant or deny the erroneous beliefs. If this happened there was freedom to leave. If a person did not recant but held to a certain position, he was to be abandoned by the Church and turned over to the affairs of the civil government for the purpose of punishment. Officially, the Church did not shed blood. However, since the state was subject to the will of the Church at this time, the Church was not guiltless when punishment was administered. The most frequent form of chastisement was death by fire. The heretic was burned at the stake. Short of this, an alleged heretic could be tortured until he confessed the error of his ways or died from the wounds inflicted.

Many Albigenses and Waldenses were murdered as a result of the methods and madness of the Inquisition. When the number of people being put to death in southern France grew too large for the Church to handle, the pope resorted to other methods such as calling the nobles to fight a holy war against their own countrymen.

For twenty years blood flowed like water in southern France. The century was ravaged by civil war. The loveliest of France's provinces was turned into a scorched earth as the Albigenses were utterly destroyed much to the delight of Pope Innocent III who had encouraged their annihilation. The Waldenses found refuge in the high valleys of the Alps where some of their descendants still live today. Of all the gatherings who broke away from the Roman Catholic Church during the Medieval Age the Waldenses are the only group to have survived to the present time.

## **JOHN WYCLIFFE**

Despite the torture inflicted upon individuals by the Inquisition, courageous souls still became champions in the search for personal and corporate sanctification. Two of the most important men that God ever raised up to criticize and cleanse the doctrine and government of the Catholic Church were John Wycliffe and John Huss.

Wycliffe was born in England in 1320. After studying at the University of Oxford he later became a professor there. In 1378 he began to openly criticize the Church and the clergy. The Church was called into account for amassing tremendous wealth while the clergy were chastised for their moral corruption. Wycliffe believed that the Church should return to poverty and simplicity and holiness of life.

Moving into other areas, Wycliffe taught that the Bible should be the only rule of faith. It should also be placed into the hands of the common people. With this objective in mind, Wycliffe translated the Bible into the English language. Outraged at his teachings and his audacity to give the common people the Word of God, the Church hunted Wycliffe but could not hurt him as he was protected by the nobles. Wycliffe died in peace on December 31, 1384.

Those who followed the teachings of Wycliffe were called the Lollards. They too denounced the pope, opposed a corrupt clergy, practiced poverty, and acknowledged the Bible as the only standard of faith and practice. For these beliefs, the Lollards were branded as heretics. Many suffered as martyrs in the flames. Still their movement lingered on till the time of the Reformation for in other places other men were taking up the cause of Christ. One such man was named John Huss.

### **JOHN HUSS (b. 1369)**

In Bohemia, John Huss was introduced to the teachings of Wycliffe and embraced them with a passion despite the fact that he had been trained for the priesthood. Huss had become dean of the theological faculty at the University of Prague, in the capitol of Bohemia and later the leader of the institution. Encouraged by the teachings of Wycliffe, John Huss began to preach with great boldness against the corruption of the clergy. He also taught many ideas which were later part of the main teachings of the Reformers in the Reformation.

1. God has predestined souls to salvation.
2. There is a distinction between being in the Church and of the Church.
3. A person can be in the visible Church and yet not be a real member.
4. Jesus Christ is the true leader of the universal Church and not the pope.
5. The pope and cardinals are not necessary to the government of the Church.
6. The selling of indulgences are an abomination to the Lord.

Because of these teachings Pope John XXIII in Avignon excommunicated John Huss. Huss declared his excommunication to be null and void and appealed from the pope to the Church Council. He wanted an ecclesiastical trial. In 1414 Huss taught that his chance to be heard in a

fair trial would be realized when a general council assembled in Constance. The council had been called by the emperor Sigismund (1368-1437) for the purpose of putting to an end the Great Schism. Reforms were to be introduced and reformers would be heard.

Sigismund was emperor of the Holy Roman Empire from 1411-1437; king of Hungary, 1387-1437; and king Bohemia, 1419-1437. Exercising his royal prerogative, Sigismund invited John Huss to attend the Council under a safe conduct pass. Huss made the fatal mistake of trusting the sovereign and accepted his invitation. A few weeks later Huss found himself imprisoned by Pope John XXIII for heresy. Despite an outpouring of public protest Huss was to be burned at the stake after being left to suffer in prison for more than eight months.

Without a chance to defend himself Huss was brought from the dungeon to the cathedral in Constance where on July 6, 1415, he was degraded before bishops and royalty. The Emperor Sigismund did not move to help him. The articles of clothing of Huss were removed piece by piece with an appropriate curse pronounced on each one. Then a paper cone picturing three hideous demons was placed upon his head. The cone bore the inscription:

### **THE HERETIC**

From the cathedral Huss was taken to a place before one of the gates of the city where a high stake had been posted and surrounded with firewood. Huss was tied to the stake with cords which had been soaked in water to make sure he was held securely when the flames rose up around him. A torch was put to the wood and John Huss died for the sake of Jesus Christ. His followers were then hunted down. Bohemia became engulfed in civil war. Despite these efforts of the Catholic Church to silence the voices of those calling for sanctification, the Land of Huss would still know reform.

### **THREE GENERAL CHURCH COUNCILS**

Between the years 1409 and 1449, three general Church councils were held. The first was held in Pisa in 1409. The second in Constance. It met from 1414 to 1418. The third council was held in Basel and met from 1431 to 1449. The purpose for holding these councils was to heal the Great Schism, bring spiritual renewal to the Church, and suppress heresy and heretics.

The Council of Pisa was not able to accomplish very much but the Council of Constance did bring an end to the Great Schism by appointing Martin V to be the legal pope. It was this Council that condemned Huss to death while ordering the writings of John Wycliffe to be burned. In its foolish wisdom the Council of Constance ordered that the body of Wycliffe should be dug up and burned and his ashes poured into a river. This was done.

When the Council of Basel met, one of its objectives was to return unity to the Church in Bohemia where the bloody work of the Inquisition had failed to stop the followers of John Huss from carrying on his work. In 1436 an agreement with the Hussites was reached. There would

be freedom of preaching, better attempts made to reform the clergy, and those Church members of Bohemia who so desired could partake of the bread and the wine in Holy Communion.

The Council of Basel was also able to make an agreement with representatives of the Eastern Church. In exchange for military assistance against the Islamic Turks who were again threatening to destroy the Eastern Empire and Church, the Church in the East would accept the doctrines of the Western Church. Unfortunately for Rome, when reports of this agreement reached the East there was violent opposition to such official recognition. The representatives were denounced. Ten years later the Turks conquered Constantinople. All attempts to reunite the Eastern and Western churches would end.

## **THE RENAISSANCE**

While the Church searched for sanctification and unity, the Renaissance surfaced to change the world. The word "renaissance" means "rebirth" and carries with it both a secular and religious meaning. It denotes an intellectual, esthetic, and spiritual awakening. The Renaissance arrived in force first in Italy with the power of a revolution. Its guiding principle was the need for a philosophy of secular humanism as opposed to a religious revival. The new emphasis was to be on the recognition of human and worldly values. These things were declared to have validity apart from theological considerations or ecclesiastical approval. Sin and grace were no longer to be the focal point of discussion. Rather, attention would be upon the natural man. It was argued that man, by his own powers, could expand the resources of knowledge and have very satisfying personal experiences. The Church was not needed. Formal religion could be relegated to the rubbish of history.

The Renaissance leaders appealed to the literature of classical antiquity to justify this conscious but unashamed new delight in life. They would teach people not to feel guilty nor to be apologetic for what was said or done. Man, not God, and not the Church would be the court of final appeal of what was right and what was wrong. From these philosophical tenets came several more distinctives of the Renaissance revolution.

1. The ideal of liberty was exalted.
2. There was a high degree of individualism both in thought and in the conduct of one's private life.
3. There was a freer exercise of criticism in regard to accepted ideas and existing institutions.
4. There was the development of the spirit of experimentation and exploration.
5. Creativity was stimulated.
6. Sensuous beauty was loved for its own sake and the pleasures it produced.

7. There was a more realistic attitude toward human and natural phenomena so that the miraculous was constantly questioned. Scientific investigation was honored.
8. The Christian moral code of conduct which was considered oppressive and unattainable would be modified or discarded for a new set of rules.
9. The ideal of versatility was considered more admirable than specialization in one field of endeavor. Ideally, the Renaissance man was well rounded in his knowledge, culture, and tastes.

The effects of the Renaissance upon the Church were immediate.

1. The Church lost prestige and control over the masses and especially over the intellectuals even where its authority was not challenged.
2. The corruption of the Church hierarchy was justified. Bishops and cardinals adopted the pagan morality and sensuality of the Renaissance philosophy without adopting the intellectual processes. Apparently free living was easier than free thinking.
3. There developed new techniques of thought and criticism which, when used by wicked men, served to destroy the authority of the faith which was once and for all delivered unto the saints. The Church should have been contending for the Bible, morality, miracles and the divinity of Christ instead of finding ways to explain faith away.

It is no wonder that the Reformers spent much of their time and efforts combating the influences of the Renaissance upon the people of God in particular and society in general.

## **SAVONAROLA**

As the Church began to be affected by the Renaissance a fiery monk named Savonarola stood up to oppose the intellectual and moral corruption he was witnessing. Girolamo Savonarola (1452-1498) became an itinerant preacher ministering in Florence, Italy. There he was able to lead a theocratic reform movement after his prophetic utterance concerning the invasion of Charles VIII of France was fulfilled. Initially, there was great change in outward morality. Encouraged by what he saw, Savonarola found freedom to speak out against the corruption of the Church and the authority of the pope. He preached salvation apart from the Church. A reaction set in. Pope Alexander VI issued a formal condemnation of this Dominican monk. He was captured by a fanatical mob and condemned to be burned at the stake.

He was hanged in 1498 and then his body was burned.



## **THE BRETHERN OF THE COMMON LIFE**

Around 1350 there arose in the Netherlands and Germany another reform minded movement characteristic of this time period. This movement was called The Brethren Of The Holy Life or The Brotherhood Of The Common Life. It was founded by Gerard [Gregory] Groote (1340-1380). At thirty years of age, while still a distinguished professor of theology and philosophy in Cologne, Groote gave up honors and wealth to follow Christ. Though a gifted preacher, he was noted for his strong emphasis on the Christian education of youth. By establishing many Christian schools Groote hoped to bring reform to the Church by means of education. His labors were not in vain for among those who attended one of the schools of this movement in Magdeburg was Martin Luther. Other future luminaries were John of Wessel, Erasmus, and Thomas `a Kempis.

**JOHANN WESSEL** (c. born 1419 - 1498) was one of the leading thinkers of his day. He knew Greek and Hebrew and studied theology at Paris. From 1445 to 1456 he was a professor in the University of Erfurt in Germany. Forty-nine years later Martin Luther would receive his degree of Master of Arts from this same university. Wessel has been called "The Light of the World" for he denounced the doctrine of transubstantiation, attacked indulgences, taught the doctrine of justification by faith alone, and insisted that the elect are saved by grace alone. Declared Wessel, "Whom God wishes to save He would save by giving him grace, if all the priests should wish to damn and excommunicate him." Luther would later say of him, "If I had read the works of Wessel beforehand, it might well have seemed that I derived all my ideas from him."

The Catholic Church did not approve of Wessel's teaching and tried him for heresy before the Arch-bishop of Mainz despite his old age. Wessel recanted only to be cast into prison anyway where he died in October, 1489. One of his most famous students, Erasmus, would fare better despite his own criticisms of the Church.

While Erasmus (1466-1536) never did leave the Catholic structure he was able and willing to use his great learning and agile pen to ridicule the ignorance of the monks and condemn the abuses of the Church which he saw. One of his most famous works is titled In Praise of Folly. It has been said that: "Erasmus laid the egg [of the Reformation] and Luther hatched it."

## **THOMAS `A KEMPIS**

Another man of great influence who followed the spirit of the Brethren Of The Common Life was Thomas a` Kempis. Thomas lived in the Netherlands near the city of Zwolle. He is credited with writing, The Imitation of Christ, which is one of the most famous books of the world. The spiritual counsel of this work is very simple: read the Bible and flee the vanities of this world. Such counsel was needed for the world was about to change once more. Little did anyone realize but the western world was on the doorsteps of true Reformation.

## **ON THE DOORSTEPS OF THE REFORMATION**

For so many years, faithful Christians had pleaded and prayed for a Divine outpouring of the Holy Spirit and a genuine reformation of the Church of Jesus Christ. Such a reformation would come.

1. The Reformation would come in response to the prayers of the saints.
2. The Reformation would come in honor of the blood that had been spilt by the martyrs.
3. The Reformation would come because of the Renaissance.
4. The Reformation would come as an answer to the prayers of the early reformers.
5. The Reformation would come because there was obvious corruption of the clergy.
6. The Reformation would come because the power of the papacy was being diminished.
7. The Reformation would come because of the rise of nationalism.
8. But most of all the Reformation would come because of a gracious and merciful God.

The Lord was about to shake up the world with the great and glorious doctrines of free grace. Millions would be swept into the kingdom of God and the Christian community would be given some of the finest leaders and literature it has ever have.

**Soli Deo Gloria**

# THE CHURCH IN THE MIDDLE AGES

## Leader's Study Guide

### CHAPTER 19

#### The Search for Sanctification

AD 1200 – 1517

#### RESPONSE

1. Who were the Albigenses?

*Answer.* Those who embraced the revived teachings of Manicheism after the Crusades, originating in the French town of Albi. They were *dualists*, holding that there were two gods: one good spiritual god, and one bad god of the material. They denied the humanity of Christ and the efficacy of the Atonement.

2. Who were the Waldenses?

*Answer.* The followers of Peter Waldo, who taught humility, preaching the Word, and fasting. Waldo was among the first to translate portions of scripture into the common language of the people.

3. What was the Inquisition?

*Answer.* The official persecution of those who disagreed with the Church, in order to rid it of "heresy".

Can such an institution ever be justified?

*Answer.* Note. Responses will vary but hopefully the answer will be in the negative.

4. What doctrinal contributions did John Wycliffe and John Huss make to the Reformation?

*Answer.*

- John Wycliffe was English. He emphasized poverty, simplicity, morality, holiness, and translated the Scriptures into the common language for the people.

- John Huss was an effective teacher in Bohemia, and formulated key teachings which became part of the Reformation:
  - ❖ God predestined souls unto salvation
  - ❖ Being *in* the (visible) Church does not constitute being *of* the (invisible) Church
  - ❖ Christ is the Leader of the universal Church, not the pope
  - ❖ the pope and cardinals are not necessary to the government of the Church
  - ❖ selling indulgences is an abomination to the Lord

5. Identify.

- Savonarola (1452-1498) was an Italian monk, who boldly preached against corruption and began a reform movement after 1450.
- The Brethren of the Common Life. A reform movement in The Netherlands, emphasizing education in schools for youth.
- Johann Wessel. (1419-1489) was a leading German thinker of his day, who taught against transubstantiation, indulgences. He spoke for election and justification by faith alone, apart from works or merit.
- Erasmus (1466-1536) was a Dutch student of Wessel, an effective writer to condemn abuses in the Church
- In Praise of Folly. A satire by Erasmus against corruption that stimulated the Reformation
- Thomas a` Kempis. A Dutchman influenced by the Brethren of the Common Life, and credited with writing *The Imitation of Christ*
- The Imitation of Christ. A very influential book, emphasizing the need to read the Bible and flee the vanities of the world.

6. List four main reasons why the Reformation came to western Europe.

**REFLECTION**

1. Should the Church be reformed from within or from without?
2. Why did the early reformers not succeed in changing the Church overall?
3. Are you encouraged or discouraged up to this point in your studies about the Church?

4. Have you discerned any pattern of the Church in history that can lead you to make some general observations about it?

### **ACCOUNTABILITY**

1. In your own search for personal sanctification, how are you progressing? What are you doing to grow in the Lord and in the power of His might?
2. Have you found the ideal Christian life to be as unattainable as the early Renaissance leaders charged? Why?
3. What practical and scriptural counsel could you give to someone struggling with a sinful addiction or a repetitive behavior that causes private humiliation and dishonor to Christ?