

Church History: The First 1000 Years *(or pretty close)*

THE AGE OF THE EARLY CHURCH (33-311CE)

This age was marked by 5 aspects:

1. The Spread of Christianity – from Jerusalem to Antioch to Ephesus to Rome

Why did it spread?

- The PASSION of the church
- Their visible LOVE
- Their universal offer of SALVATION
- The perfect moment in HISTORY
- The martyrdom of the FAITHFUL

2. Persecution

Though Rome was normally tolerant to other religions it was not to Christianity.

Why?

3. The Formulation of Truth or Orthodoxy

Because of the arising of error there had to be an official statement of accepted belief.

1. Controversies about Jesus
2. Controversies about Scripture

4. The Arisal of the Episcopasy or the Supremacy of the Bishop

By the second century the pastor became the central “overseer” or “bishop” of the local church. Soon he would be the head of the whole city.

Why?

- A. To answer heresy
- B. For the re-admission of Apostates during the persecutions.

Should they or should they not be re-admitted to the church who denied Christ under torture or temptation?

Cyprian of Carthage said that the church could forgive the sins of Apostates IF a system of penance could be established. Two schools responded to Cyprian:

1. Novatian: He said “No”. The church was a “School of Saints” and Apostates could not be reinstated. Only God can forgive, not the bishop.

2. Cornelius: He said “Yes”. The Church is a “School of Sinners.” The bishop can forgive all.

This gave rise to 3 ideas:

- a. There is no salvation outside the CHURCH.
- b. Forgiveness can be earned by GOOD WORKS.
- c. The bishop has the power to grant FORGIVENESS.

5. A Defense to Intellectuals – the Rise of the Apologist

Christians felt a necessity to speak to their world in its pursuit of truth.

THE AGE OF THE IMPERIAL CHURCH (312-590CE)

This period is marked by the embracing of Christianity as the religion of the Empire.

1. Emperor Constantine became a “Christian” and persecution reversed to superiority.

Constantine immediately:

- Granted TAX exemptions for church leaders
- Abolished many PAGAN practices
- Established SUNDAY as a holiday
- Allowed the Church to have its own BUILDINGS

Certain negatives aspects:

- One man had authority over all the CHURCH LEADERS
- Church began to imitate Roman ORGANIZATION
- Masses of “converts” came and corrupted the PURITY of the church

2. The Orthodox Position on Christ Through the Church Councils

The Arian Controversy – “He is not ETERNAL”

The Apollinarian Controversy – “He is God but has no HUMAN nature”

The Nestorian/Eutichian Controversy – “He is God and man but the man is ABSORBED”

3. The Arising of the Monasteries

Before the Imperial Church, holiness involved suffering but now Christians faced worldliness and luxury, therefore, holiness became “going out” from it – hence, the “hermits”

- By 320 men began to “go out” communally and monestaries began
- Jerome (320-420) He made the monastic life the scholastic life. He wrote The Vulgate.
- Benedict (529) wrote his ‘Rule’ to establish monastic rules of life and discipline.

Why were monasteries important?

- A. They preserved a New Testament sense of piety
- B. As scholars, they preserved knowledge in the coming “dark ages.”

4. Augustine (354-430CE)

- The greatest THEOLOGIAN of the church until the Reformation
- Augustine VS. Pelagius. Who is good? What is grace?
- He set forth a Christian philosophy of history in ‘City of God’
- He wrote the first Christian AUTOBIOGRAPHY, ‘The Confessions of Augustine’

5. Missions to the Barbarian Tribes

The tribes took over Europe, Britain, Ireland and Italy and yet Christianity took them over.

- Ulfilas went to the Visigoths
- Patrick went to Ireland
- Columba to Scotland
- Augustine to England
- Boniface to Germany

6. The Arisal of the Papacy – How was THE Pope established in Rome?

- A. The Prominence of the City – great # of Christians, the Capital, Peter and Paul buried
- B. Pronouncement of Apostolic Succession in 381.
- C. When the barbarians invaded, the western leaders needed a leader to unity all parties. It was a good political move for the emperor to acknowledge Rome’s claim of superiority.

Danger: Not all Christians agreed with Rome’s declaration.

1. A pope conflicts with JESUS’ words on leadership.
2. It conflicts with NT government. The local CHURCH is final authority.
3. The NT is silent on any city as a SPIRITUAL entity.
4. The NT sites all apostles as authoritative, not just ONE.
3. Calling Peter the “Rock” of Mt. 16, rather than JESUS, violates All of Scripture.
- 4.

THE AGE OF CHRISTENDOM / THE MIDDLE AGES (590-1517CE)

1. After the fall of Rome, Christianity had 2 major cities:
 - One SPIRITUAL, Rome
 - One POLITICAL, Constantinople / Byzantium
 - They were divided by distance and language, Latin and Greek.

2. Arabia Alters History

After the Arab conquests, the Eastern church was blocked to the south and east by Islam, and thus its expansion was in a northerly and nwesterly direction. This took the Gospel into what is now Poland, Russia, Czech, Greece, etc.

3. The Height and Corruption of the Papacy

Errors the Roman Catholic Church Founded

- a. Trans-substantiation: In communion, the bread and wine were transformed into Christ's body and blood by the PRIEST.
- b. Sacerdotalism: Man comes to Christ through the priests – their teaching, communion, confessions and prayer
- c. Purgatory: An in-between state of PUNISHMENT after death.
- d. Indulgences/Penance: Shortened time in purgatory can be earned by WORKS
- e. Papal infallibility: In proper 'mode' the Pope's words are on par with SCRIPTURE
- f. The veneration of Mary: Worshipping Jesus' mother as CO-REDEEMER

4. The Crusades

Consulted Resources

The Story of Christianity, Volume 1. Gonzalez, Justo. 1984, HarperSanFrancisco

<http://ecole.evansville.edu/timeline/index.html#-30>

<http://ecole.evansville.edu/glossary/tertullian.html>

<http://www.spurgeon.org/~phil/hall.htm>

<http://bible.christiansunite.com/schindex.shtml>