Church History III

The Roman Church (500 AD – 1400 AD)

1. **Constantine Moves the Capital City (330 AD) –** 
   1. Old Rome is Weakened as the New Rome is strengthened
      1. May 381 – Emperor Theodosius called for a Council in Constaninople to reaffirm the Nicene Creed, but didn’t invite the West
      2. In 382 Bishop of Rome, Damasus called a council and declared (page 136)
2. **The Western Church Becomes Roman**
   1. Leo the Great – became Pope on Sept 28, 440, and laid the theological foundation for the Pope. *“In the sermon Leo preached on the day of his entrance into office he extolled the "glory of the blessed Apostle Peter... in whose chair his power lives on and his authority shines forth."*

*“The city that had once enjoyed the favor as capital of the empire, the scene of the martyrdom of Peter and Paul, was now granted a powerful new leader. Leo made his entrance into world history as the Supreme Head of all Christendom. Appealing to the threefold Gospel testimony (Matt. 16:13-19; Luke 22:31, 32; and John 21:15-17) the new pope laid the theoretical foundation for papal primacy: Christ promised to build his church on Peter, the rock for all ages, and the bishops of Rome are his successors in that authority.”* **Church History in Plain Language, Bruce Shelly, page 137.**

“The barbarian attacks in Italy made the imperial court at Ravenna desperate for the support of any authority that might help to hold the empire in the West together. Thus, in 445 the commander in Gaul, to compel the attendance at the papal court of any Emperor Valentinian III issued a decree instructing Aetius, the Roman bishop who refused to come voluntarily. The emperor's edict turned Leos claim into law.

The imperial document ran: "As the primacy of the Apostolic See is based on the title of the blessed Peter, prince of the episcopal dignity, on the dignity of the city of Rome, and on the decision of the Holy Synod, no illicit steps may be taken against this See to usurp its authority. For the only way to safeguard peace among the churches everywhere is to acknowledge its leadership universally." Peter's title was clear; the dignity of the city was history.” **Church History in Plain Language, Bruce Shelly, page 138.**

* 1. Attila the Hun – In June 452 Leo the Great rode out of the city and met with the Hun’s invading force. His actions saved the city.
  2. The Vandals – met with Leo the Great 455. The Vandals agreed to sack the city for only two weeks and then they left. We get the word, “vandalism” from their destruction and looting.
  3. Leo, not the emporer, had saved Rome. The Chair of Peter had come to power.
  4. To his credit Leo’s writing shows that he had a genuine concern for the people in his care.

1. **Pope Gregory the Great**

* *Considered by many to be the first real pope*
* *Was born to a wealthy family and was once involved in political work.*
* *He quit public work, gave his money away, and became a monk*
* *In 590 he was elected bishop – or pope – of Rome*
* *He raised an army and directed a war against the Lombards in 592. He then negotiated a peace treaty with the Lombards*
* *He did a lot to help the poor after the war*
* *He not only ruled Rome – but all of Italy*
* *He took some popular RC dogmas of the day and made them official – such as tradition equal to scripture, baptism of infants, use of relics, invocation of saints and martyrs, and doctrine of purgatory.*
* *He sent 40 monks to England where they settled in Cantebury – which is still the “religious capital” of England today*

1. **Icon Veneration –** icon means image. Just as Jesus is the image of the Father, (Col. 1:15), many hold that icons are like windows into heaven. To venerate the icon is to venerate the prototype of that icon.
   1. **Iconoclasts** – those who “destroyed” icons. However, many objected to this name because they did not destroy icons. Rather, they wanted them for didactic reason or for art. They
   2. **Iconophiles** – these were those who fought to keep icon veneration
   3. **Second Council of Nicaea - 787**
   4. See Icons in Addendum
2. **The Rise of Islam**
   * Mohammed(570-632)*From a land largely ignored by Roman an dPersian empires came this new threat*
   * *He was an Arab who was deeply interested in religious things, and felt strongly about the monotheistic God*
   * *He had come in contact with Christians who were not very orthodox. They failed to convert him*
   * *He claimed that the angel Gabriel gave him a message from the one true God*
   * *He started a movement that became very militant for his followers. They conquered Damascus (635), Jerusalem & Iraq (673), Antioch, Caesarea & other costal Mediterranean cities, Persia, Most of Asia Minor, but lost in attempt to take Constantinople*
   * *In 732 Charles Martel gathered an army of Frankish/German army and defeated the Muslims at the Battle of Tours in present day France. If they would have lost all of Europe may have become Muslim*
3. **The Dark Ages**
   1. Feudalism
   * *Due to a weakening Roman Empire the west was frequently invaded*
   * *These invasions brought about a system called feudalism.*
   * *Lords were wealthy land owners who provided protection for the surfs who were the lower working class*
   * *Bishops and monasteries had large land holdings and often became the Lords*
   * *Schooling was*
4. **The Rule of the Harlots (Pornocracy) (880? – 964?)**

* Pope Formoses (891-896) *was considered so bad that after he died his corpse was dug up, dressed in papal clothing and put on trial by Stephen VII. He was found guilty of treachery, and his three fingers used to pronounce blessing were cut off and his corpse dragged through the street before thrown the River Tiber.*
* *From 896-904 there were eight popes*
* Pope Sergius III (904) *became pope. He is the only known pope to have ordered the murder of another pope and to have fathered an illegitimate son who later became pope. His mistress was a teenage girl, Marozia, who later through marriage was able to seize the rule of Rome. She controlled the next two popes as puppets and eventually appointed her illegitimate son as Pope (John XI)*
* Marozia *According to Haley’s Bible Handbook, Marozia, her mother and sister “filled the papal chair with their paramours [illicit lovers] and bastard sons, and filled the papal palace into a den of robbers” (pg. 774)*
* Pop John VII (955) *Pope John VII became pope in 955. It is reported that he turned the Vatican into a brothel and that he died in from wounds he received from the enraged husband who caught him in the act of adultery with his wife. He is said that he occasionally raped female pilgrims who came to St. Peters, and that he and his friends pilfered the collection boxes to finance orgies. His son, Pope John VIII may have died in the same manner.*

**See Pope in Addendum**

1. **The Great Schism (1054 AD)**

* *Since the beginning the Church was seen as one. However, there were cultural and language differences between the East and West.*
* *The two churches were also separated by invading bands of Barbarians*
* *The two churches began differing in some traditions – like communion*
* *The split finally occurred in 1054 when the RC Pope excommunicated the Patriarch of the East, who in turn excommunicated the pope.*
* *This officially begins the Eastern Orthodox Church. Cut off from the west the church moves north and converts Russia – beginning the Russian Orthodox Church.*

1. **The Crusades (1095 – 1270)**
   * First Crusade (1095-1099) *Declared by Pope Urban II in 1095, he ordered armies to free “the holy land” from the Turks. Those who died would receive immediate remission of their sins. Jerusalem was freed.*

* Second Crusade (1147-1149) *Declared in 1147 to resist the recovery of Jerusalem by the Muslims. The crusade ultimately failed*
* Third Crusade (1187-1192) *Proclaimed by Pope Gregory VIII to reclaim Jerusalem from Muslims. Although they failed to capture Jerusalem, they did restore RC power along a string of Mediterranean coastal cities*
* Additional Crusades:*Three more crusades were launched to recover Palestine, but they failed. The final crusade (1228-1229) secured Jerusalem for about ten years. In fell to the Egyptians in 1244 and remained under Muslim control until 1917, when it was captured from the Turks by Britain.*

The people who returned from the Crusades were changed. They recognized that these were not religious wars but political engagements to keep the rich rich. It helped set the stage for Reformation.

1. **The Inquisitions (1184-1230)**  *These were special courts to try heresy.*

* *These were special courts held mostly by Dominican monks to try heresy*
* *Torture was often used to gain a confession*
* *If confession was made one could recant and lose all property and go to prison*
* *If no confession was made the subject was often killed*
* *Principally aimed at heretics, Jews and Muslims were often targeted to make them Christian*
* *Pope Innocent III declared heresy treason, therefore making it a state issue*

1. **The Renaissance**

* *This was a cultural movement that spanned from around 14 to 17th century. Many believe it began in Tuscany, Italy in the 14th century*
* *The word is French for “rebirth”*
* *A new interest in science and art emerged. The church kept it in check, but not like before*
* *An interest in the ancient classics also emerged*
* *People started thinking for themselves*
* *The middle class began to emerge and became more influential*
* **II Where is the Church?**

1. **Cult-Like Reformers**
   1. Paulicians, Bogomils, Cathers (Albigenses)

* *Not a lot is known about these movements*
* *They appear to have some Gnostic tendencaies*
* *They were heavily peresucted by the RC Church*
* *We do know that they rejected the RC Church’s authority, and many other of the things you and I might find objectionable*
* *At the massacre of Beziers in 1209, during the Albigensian Crusade, it is said that a Benedictine Monk, under Innocent III, was asked what to do about the Cathars and Catholics hiking in the churches. He is said to have said, “Kill them all. God will know His own.” Up to 20,000 were massacred.*

1. **Catholic Reformers**
   1. **Monastic Reformers**
   * *Ever since Constantine’s conversion, there were scores of Christians leaving main-line society (and the church) to remote and desert places in order to escape.*
   * *Although this did not bring reform, it did show evidence of a distaste for Church politics*
2. **Protestant-like Reformers**
   1. The Waldensians

* *A movement named after Peter Waldo, a wealthy merchant from Lyons who was converted around 1175*
* *He gave away his possessions and began to preach in poverty. He gathered a following*
* *Initially Pope Alexander III allowed the group but ordered that the local bishop must give them authority to preach in that area*
* *They were forbidden to preach by the archbishop of Lyons and eventually excommunicated by Pope Lucius III*
* *The leaders were required to live in poverty – preaching barefoot, taking nothing with them. The younger followers were not required to live the same life*
* *They were targeted by the Inquisition and fled to France where they set up a church separate from the RC Church*
* *A crusade was launched against them in 1488, and 4,000 were killed*
* *They would influence John Wycliff of England*
  1. John Wycliffe (1330-1384)
* *He was influenced by the reform of the Waldensians*
* *Among other RC beliefs, he challenged the idea of transubstantiation*
* *He believed that scripture belonged to the people, not the institutional church*
* *His efforts led to the translation of the English Bible – known as the Wycliff Bible*
* *His movement scattered seeds of reform across the English landscape*
* *He was at first protected by English nobility, but eventually lost their favor. He died of natural causes and was not martyred.*
* *His followers became known as the Lollards*
* *He is remembered today by the Wycliffe Bible Translators*
  1. Jan Hus
* *Was born about 30 years after Wycliffe’s birth*
* *He was heavily influenced by Wycliffe’s life*
* *He was ordained a priest but believed the pope – as well as any Christian – should submit to the authority of the Bible*
* *These and other views like them caused him to fall out of favor with the RC. He was invited to express his views at a conference and was promised safe traveling. However, the conference proved to be a trial and he was condemned. When he appealed to the promise of safe travel, he was told that promises to heretics do not have to be kept*
* *He was burned at the stake*

Addendum

**Popes**

**Pope Leo VIII** (1894)– “we hold the place of Almighty God on earth.

**Pope Pius XI April 30, 1922**– “you know that I am the holy father, the representative on God on earth; the Vicar of Christ; which means I am God on earth”

***Pope Nicholas V***, 1455 – The Roman pontiff judges all men, but is judged by no one. I have the authority of the King of Kings. I am all in all and above all. Wherefore if the things that I do be said not to be done of man, but of God, what can you **make me but God**? … Wherefore, no marvel if it be in my power to **change time and times**: to **alter and abrogate laws**, to dispense with all things, yea, with the precepts of Christ…”

“The Pope has the power to change times, to abrogate laws, and to dispense with all things, even the precepts of Christ. The Pope has the authority and often exercised it to dispense with the command of Christ” *Decretal, de Tranlatic Episcop. Cap., Ferraris’ Ecclesiastical Dictionary*

*Prompta Bibliotheca*, an official Catholic book, declares:

"The pope is of so great dignity and so exalted that he is not a mere man, but ***as it were God, and the vicar of God***. . . . Moreover the superiority and the power of the Roman Pontiff. . . are even over angels, than whom he is greater. . . The pope is as it were God on earth. . . (and) is of so great authority and power that he can modify, explain, or interpret even divine laws." *Prompa Biblotheca, 1763, Vol. VI, ‘Papa II’, pp. 25-29*

|  |
| --- |
|  |
| “And **God himself is obliged to abide by the judgment of his priest** and either not to pardon or to pardon, according as they refuse to give **absolution**, provided the penitent is capable of it.” *-Liguori, «Duties and Dignities of the Priest», p.27* |
| “The supreme teacher in the Church is the Roman Pontiff. Union of minds, therefore, requires (...) complete submission and obedience of will to the Church and to the Roman Pontiff, as to **God Himself**.” -*Leo VIII, «On the Chief Duties of Christians as Citizens», Encyclical letter, 1890* |
| “God separates those whom the Roman Pontiff, who exercises the functions, not of mere man, but of **the true God** (...) dissolves, not by human but rather by **divine authority***.” -Decretals of Gregory IX», Book 1, Chapter 7.3* |
| “Hence the Pope is crowned with a triple crown, as **king of heaven and of earth** and of the lower regions (infernorum).” *-Lucius Ferraris, «Prompta Bibliotheca», 1763, Volume VI, 'Papa II', p.26* |

**Icons**

1. In a dialogue written by the North African apologist Marcus Minucius Felix (d. c. 250) entitled Octavius, Christians were criticized for lacking images in worship: "Why do they endeavour with such pains to conceal and to cloak whatever they worship?... Why have they no altars, no temples, no acknowledged images?"

In response, Octavius writes, “"The God whom we worship we neither show nor see. Verily for this reason we believe Him to be God”

1. When the pagan critic Celsus attacked Christians for their lack of images, Origen retorted that Christians, "being taught in the school of Jesus Christ, have rejected all images and stat-ues."30 To explain this practice, Origen appealed to the second commandment, commenting that "it is in consideration of these and many other such commands, that [Christians] not only avoid temples, altars, and images, but are ready to suffer death when it is necessary, rather than debase by any such impiety the con-ception which they have of the Most High God." Elsewhere Origen notes Celsus's critique that Christian rejection of altars, statues, and temples is seen as "the badge or distinctive mark of a secret and forbidden society." In response, Origen argues that Christians have their own *kinds* of statues, altars, and temples, using these terms as metaphors for prayer, Christian virtues, and the Christian body.
2. Tertullian writes, “But when the devil introduced into the world artificers of stat ues and of images, and of every kind of likenesses, that former rude business of human disaster attained from idols both a name and a development. Thenceforth every art which in any way produces an idol instantly becomes a fount of idolatry.”

Anathema to the calumniators of the Christians, that is to the image breakers.

Anathema to those who apply the words of Holy Scripture which were spoken against idols, to the venerable images.

Anathema to those who do not salute the holy and venerable images.

Anathema to those who say that Christians have recourse to the images as to gods.

Anathema to those who call the sacred images idols.

Anathema to those who knowingly communicate with those who revile and dishonour the venerable images.

Anathema to those who say that another than Christ our Lord has delivered us from idols.

Anathema to those who spurn the teachings of the holy Fathers and the tradition of the Catholic Church, taking as a pretext and making their own the arguments of Arius, Nestorius, Eutyches, and Dioscorus, that unless we were evidently taught by the Old and New Testaments, we should not follow the teachings of the holy Fathers and of the holy Ecumenical Synods, and the tradition of the Catholic Church.

Anathema to those who dare to say that the Catholic Church has at any time sanctioned idols.

Anathema to those who say that the making of images is a diabolical invention and not a tradition of our holy Fathers.