

# An Overview of Church History

## MOPC Adult Sunday School

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## Part 3

*Middle Ages.*

## The Church in the Middle Ages (476-1517)

- Following the barbarian invasion of the western Empire, the Church helped put together a new order... Europe
  - Church took lead in rule by law, the pursuit of knowledge, and expressions of culture
  - Underlying influential concept was “Christendom”, uniting the church and the empire; began under Charlemagne in 800, vacillated thereafter, and eventually popes assume more power until Innocent III (1198-1216) taught Europe to think of popes as world rulers
  - Church divides into a Eastern and a Western Church
  - Crusades launched to save the Holy land; reconnection with East stimulates thought and study
  - As popes become corrupted by power and pagan influences, reformers begin to cry out for change, setting stage for Reformation
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- Following the Fall of the Roman Empire, the barbarian rulers looked down upon the civilized, learned, and cultured Romans as less than manly; they ruled by strength, violence, ignorance, with frequent tribal wars for next 300 years “Thomas was chosen for Parthia, Andrew for Scythia, John for Asia” (Eusebius, Christian historian)
  - The “Pax Romana” was over, along with all its benefits
  - It was during this time that the monastic movement grew

## Charlemagne

- Franks adopt orthodox Christianity; Charlemagne becomes ruler of Franks and is crowned emperor by Pope Leo III in 800
- Charlemagne emphasized classic Roman Empire values...
  - Law and order- peace and personal safety; made wise laws and enforced them, ending three centuries of disorder
  - Civilization and culture- knowledge, enriched and gracious living; set up new schools to advance learning, “every monastery must have a school”
  - Christianity- the true religion; fought the heathen Saxons and began pushing the Muslim Arabs out of Spain
- Charlemagne conquered most of Europe and divided his kingdom among his three grandsons, but they could not maintain the peace and order
- Viking invasions from the north caused people to surrender their land in exchange for protection by the local nobles, initiating feudalism
  - (Vikings/Norsemen who settle in France become known as Normans; William, duke of Normandy defeats England at Battle of Hastings in 1066)

## Charlemagne (continued...)

- Feudalism brought political decentralization; the empire gets divided up; feudal lords control the abbots and eventually the popes (whoever ruled Rome); early 10th century was low point for the papacy (20 popes between 891-955)
- At this time, Church government was essentially under the control of the secular leaders, who often appointed lay members into church offices (lay investiture); corruption and immorality was prevalent

## Dark Days for Papacy

- German king Otto I consolidates his territory and is crowned emperor in 962, re-establishing the “Holy Roman Empire”, which lasted in name until 1806, when Napoleon ended it
- Otto I names first non-Italian pope, Gregory V in 999; subsequently Gerbert of Rheims follows as first French pope
- In 1033, Benedict IX is made pope, then forcefully replaced by Sylvester III due to bad conduct; then Benedict IX resumes pontificate, eventually tires of being pope and sells papacy for 1000lbs of silver to a man who would become Gregory VI, then refuses to surrender power... Sylvester III, Benedict IX, and Gregory VI all pope at same time... papacy is in disgrace

## Church Revival, 1049-1058

- Monastery at Cluny in eastern France, founded in 910, quickly grew to become influential over many other monasteries and became the force behind church reform (reform focused on separating church government from secular rulers)
- Influenced emperor Henry III to help depose Sylvester III, Gregory VI and Benedict IX; appoints Leo IX
- Leo IX, starts reform...
  - -breaks up College of Cardinals monopoly, bringing in representatives from throughout empire who were in hearty accord with Cluny
  - -forbids priests to marry or practice simony
  - -requires support of clergy and people for church office
  - -breaks with eastern Church
- Cluny educated Hildebrand frees papacy from Roman nobles by getting Nicholas II appointed
- Nicholas II forbids “lay investiture”; cardinals nominate successor, who then seeks support from clergy and people of Rome, thus separating the papacy from the Roman nobles and the emperor
- Hildebrand becomes pope himself (Gregory VII) in 1073

## Church & State

- Three choices: 1) church & state on same level, 2) church above state, 3) state above church
- Eastern Church settled on “state above church”
- Western Church experienced frequent clashes between options 2 & 3, with few wanting option 1
- The Cluny reformers freed the church from being under the state, but now some wanted to put the state in bondage to the church

## Church Power Grows...

- Emperor Henry IV challenges Hildebrand; in 1077 submits under threat of excommunication at Canossa (due to power of the pope over the people)
- Around 1160, Thomas Becket killed by King Henry II of England over state’s ability to punish clerics for civil crimes; becomes a martyr in eyes of people and weakens the throne
- 100 years later, Emperor Frederick Barbarossa kneels before Alexander III in 1177, submitting to papal authority
- Innocent III (1198-1216) established the principle of “ratione peccati” (Latin for “by reason of sin”) as basis for papal intervention with temporal rulers, if political actions were deemed to be morally wrong
- King John (England), signer of the Magna Carta in 1215, commits crown & scepter to Innocent III in 1213, after being under an interdict for opposing the pope
- Innocent III calls Council of Rome in 1215, declares that Jesus not only gave headship of the church to Peter and his successors, but also dominion over the whole world; a majority of the princes of Christendom respond and became vassals of the church thereafter... high point of papal authority

## With Power Comes Trouble...

- Church becomes wealthy, but many of the clergy had become lazy, worldly, and wicked; indulgences become accepted
- Church invests in building huge cathedrals... Milan, Rheims, Cologne, Notre Dame
- New monastic orders begin in response to problems of worldliness and heresy
  - Franciscans- after Francis of Assisi, devoted to poverty, charity & missions
  - Dominicans- for preaching, missionary work & teaching in universities; Thomas Aquinas writes *Summa Theologica*, still influential in Catholic church today; became the force behind the Middle Ages Inquisition, an effort to stamp out heretics
- Bernard of Clairvaux is the “Elijah” of his time, remaining steadfast to the truth of the word of God; trains many who become influential reformers

## Then Begins Decline...

- Poor results of the Crusades weaken the papacy
- 1300, King Phillip of France taxes clergy; Boniface VIII threatens excommunication, but nationalistic sentiment of citizens causes loyalty to Phillip; thus the power of excommunication of rulers was lost
- Corrupt doctrine remains uncorrected

## Split Between Eastern and Western Church

- Emperor Theodisius divides Roman Empire east/west in 395
- Germanic influence in west after 476
- Language and cultural differences emerge
  - Latin/German vs Greek language
  - Occidental vs oriental
  - Turbulent vs staid

## Doctrinal Differences...

<u>Roman Catholic</u>	<u>Eastern Orthodox</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Man justified by penance for sins and restitution in Purgatory</li><li>• Symbols (cross, Bible, bread/ wine) considered holy</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sins diminish man's divine likeness; God restores man through rebirth, re-creation, and transfiguration</li><li>• Icons are windows into divine world and considered holy; to deny Christ's icon was to deny his incarnation</li></ul>

- Bull of excommunication given to Michael Cerulaius, Patriarch of Constantinople, by Pope Leo IX to Church of Holy Wisdom (Hagia Sophia) in 1054; patriarch in turn excommunicates the pope

## The Crusades... Background

- By 1070, Turks (also Muslims) replaced Arabs as rulers of Palestine, Syria, and Asia Minor; now threatening Constantinople
- In 1073, Pope Gregory VII, who wanted to heal schism with Eastern Church, receives plea from eastern emperor for help and conceives idea of a holy crusade, a "war of the cross"; can't act on idea because of trouble with Henry IV
- For the masses, Christianity consisted of learning the Apostle's Creed, 10 Commandments, & Lord's Prayer; few could read and fewer were acquainted with the word of God; characterized by blind faith in the doctrines of the church, whether or not in harmony with Scripture; belief in magical powers of the sacraments, ideal of asceticism, indulgences, veneration of saints and their relics, and pilgrimages to their shrines
- While Arab Muslims tolerated Christian pilgrims, the Turks did not, and began to treat pilgrims with hostility

## The Crusades... continued

- In 1095, Pope Urban II gives speech in Clermont, France about desecration of the Holy Land; whips crowd into frenzy; offers reduced time in Purgatory for soldier volunteers, entrance into heaven for those who die for the cause; the first crusade is launched to free Jerusalem and the tomb of Christ from the Turks in 1096
- **1st Crusade (1096-1099)**- Nicea, Antioch & Jerusalem taken, Turks massacred, including women & children; established Kingdom of Jerusalem
- **2nd Crusade (1147)**- launched to give aid to threatened Kingdom of Jerusalem
- **3rd Crusade (1190)**- launched after Jerusalem was captured by Sultan Saladin in 1187; Richard the Lion-Hearted gains only treaty allowing Christians to visit the Holy Sepulcher
- **Five Other Crusades Follow**- including a Children's Crusade where remnants of 5000 children were sold into slavery to the Muslims; last crusade in 1290, when Acre (last holding) falls
- Palestine ruled by Turks until forced out by British in WWI

## Motives of the Crusades:

- Religious fervor stirred up by church leaders
- Perverted view of the Holy Land similar to veneration of saints
- Lack of Biblical knowledge on the part of the masses weakened religious insight; "Is this right?"
- World-life view issues; concept of "Christendom"
- Political motives

## Results

- Nearly 5 million lives lost
- Every purpose & hope frustrated
- Weakened power of the Papacy
- Church still criticized today for motives and tactics

## Lesson of the Crusades:

- ***Carnal weapons can never accomplish spiritual work***

## Hymns of the Early Church in the Trinity Hymnal

- Unknown (2nd cent.), #736 “Gloria Patri”
- Clement of Alexandria (~200), #160 “Shepherd of Tender Youth”
- Gloria in Excelsis (4th cent.), #102 “All Glory Be to Thee, Most High”
- Gregory of Nazianzus (325-390), #25 “O Light That Knew No Dawn”
- Ambrose of Milan (340-397), #58 “O Splendor of God’s Glory Bright”
- Aurelius Clemens Prudentius (348-413), #162 “Of the Father’s Love Begotten”
- Te Deum (4th cent.), #103 “Holy God, We Praise Your Name”
- #105 “O God, We Praise Thee”
- Patrick (5th cent.), #104 “We Lift Up as Our Shield God’s Name”
- Liturgy of St James (5th cent.), #193 “Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence”

## Hymns of the Middle Ages in the Trinity Hymnal

- Venantius Fortunatus (530-609), #243 “Praise the Savior Now and Ever”
- #268 “Welcome, Happy Morning”
- Gregory the Great (540-604), #174 “O Christ, Our King, Creator, Lord”
- Andrew of Crete (660-732), #574 “Christian, Dost Thou See Them”
- The Venerable Bede (673-735), #289 “A Hymn of Glory Let Us Sing”
- John of Damascus (8th cent.), #265 “Come Ye Faithful, Raise the Strain”
- #267 “The Day of Resurrection”
- Joseph the Hymnographer (800-883), #357 “Let Our Choir New Anthems Raise”
- Theodulph of Orleans (820), #235 “All Glory, Laud and Honor”
- Fulbert of Chartres (975-1028), #271 “Sing, Choirs of New Jerusalem”
- Bernard of Clairvaux (1091-1153), #247 “O Sacred Heat Now Wounded”
- #646 “Jesus Thou Joy of Loving Hearts”
- Bernard of Cluny (12th cent.), #539 “Jerusalem the Golden”
- Heinrich of Laufenberg (15th cent.), #410 “Lord Jesus Christ, Our Lord Most Dear”
- Jean Tisserand (1490), #272 “O Sons and Daughters, Let Us Sing”
- Martin Luther (1523-1535), #92 “A Mighty Fortress I Our God”
- #219 “All Praise to Thee, Eternal Lord”
- #220 “From Heaven High I Come to You”
- #279 “Christ Jesus Lay in Death’s Strong Bands”
- #554 “From Depths of Woe I Raise to Thee”
- Strasburg Psalter (1545), #168 “I Greet Thee, Who My Sure Redeemer Art”

## Literature in the Middle Ages

- Beowulf (c. 700-1000 A.D.) is a heroic epic poem. At 3,182 lines, it is notable for its length in comparison to other Old English poems. It represents about 10% of the extant corpus of Old English poetry. The poem is untitled in the manuscript, but has been known as Beowulf since the early 19th century. In the poem, Beowulf, a hero of a Germanic tribe from southern Sweden called the Geats, travels to Denmark to help defeat a monster named Grendel. Then he is faced with the problem of Grendel's Mother, and he defeats her also. He later returns to Geatland, where he becomes king, and when he is old he kills a dragon and dies. Although dealing primarily with Scandinavian matters, the work has risen to such prominence that it is sometimes called "England's national epic."
- The Divine Comedy, written by Dante Alighieri between 1308 and his death in 1321, is widely considered the central epic poem of Italian literature, the last great work of literature of the Middle Ages and the first great work of the Renaissance. A culmination of the medieval world-view of the afterlife, it establishes the Tuscan dialect in which it is written as the Italian standard, and is seen as one of the greatest works of world literature.