



**TWO THOUSAND
YEARS
WITH THE WORD**

BOOK TWO OF THE
CHRISTIAN MISSION SERIES

C. H. REN

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To Kelly

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INTRODUCTION

Friends, in my first book, *A Journey into Christian Understanding*, we shared some of my thoughts on the essence of being a Christian. I thank the Lord for permitting the Holy Spirit to lead me through such a journey and share it with all of you. Now I invite you again with love and fellowship to join me as I continue this path of discovery.

In this book we will explore how the Body of Christ, all the Christian churches, has grown in 2000 years since our Lord Jesus Christ offered the world the gift of God's truth through His sacrifice on the cross, which is the key to our salvation. As with the first book, the discussions within are meant for Christians and non-Christians alike. In fact, it is the criticism of Christianity resulting from historical studies that has been one of the primary motivations for this book. For too long, those who do not understand Christianity and those who fight against it have used history to show inadequacies and failures in Christianity. To the critics, I can but say that, yes, you are right in believing that we Christians have failed often. History is filled with the immature actions and mistakes of our fellow Christians as well as the crimes of those who falsely proclaimed to be of the Body of Christ. Indeed, many Christians, including this disciple, are weak, and it is only by the grace of God that we are welcomed into the Kingdom of Heaven. However, Christian history is not about the failures of man but the glory of God and the perfection of His plan. Thus, this book is dedicated to discovering the triumph of God as revealed to us throughout history.

The truth that Jesus gave to the world is like the ultimate medicine that fights the evil contaminating the spirits of men. Through the past 2000 years, God has guided the delivery of this medicine to different nations in their most critical time of need. Whether a person is led to Christ in this life or after death, everyone will eventually receive the Word. In perfection, God controls the whole

environment to work with the actions of man so that all those who could be saved are saved. All things happen in this world because God has either willed them so or permitted them to be so. God uses and cherishes people who seek goodness. God uses people lost to evil to grow the goodness and then casts them away. However, God's will is always for everyone to turn to goodness. Throughout Christian history all the triumphs and failures have been used by God so that His Kingdom will march to completion. Sometimes this path is painful, for bodies must suffer so that spirits can grow. We must never forget that the growth and salvation of the spirit is what this world is about.

While I dare not presume that I completely understand the ways of God, Christianity is God's invitation for us to mature and understand His ways so that we can do His will as His friends, not as slaves. A study of Christian history must be in the manner that one studies the Holy Bible, with the guidance of the Holy Spirit. In many ways, this journey is more treacherous because we can no longer remain as children upon receiving the truth of the Bible. Recorded history is by no means pure like the Bible; it is full of false views due to the biases of the historians. To navigate this path, we must have faith, faith in the fact that God's plan is perfect while our understanding may be flawed. If our faith should weaken, we might easily find ourselves believing in the misleading stories that link historical facts. This is because the ways of God in history are difficult to see while the ways of man are far too clear. Seeing history from the ways of man, one might mistakenly think that God is either not with us or against us. How else could so much evil and so much hurt dwell in this world? Have faith!

Once again, I must apologize to my fellow Christian brothers and sisters for any offense that this book may cause. The Holy Spirit is powerful but I am weak. There may be a lack of clarity in some of the words to follow. At times I may go too far in formulating hypotheses about why God allowed something to be so. Please treat the discussions as food for thought and prayer. Please do not believe in me but put your faith in what the Holy Spirit leads you to believe. Some of the historical discussions will surely provoke rejection from those whose pride is hurt and denial from those whose

shame is awakened. I do beseech everyone to set aside their pride or shame, for these feelings cloud our understanding of the Lord's plan. Remember that through Christ we are all reborn as one family, free from our past. Our heritage, like the Chronicles in the Old Testament, is transformed from an indictment of us to a testimony of the glory of the Lord.

To non-Christians, I beseech you to keep an open mind. Please remember that popular history is a mixture of facts, assumptions, and interpretations. Historians tend to favor this mixing because facts lend credibility to interpretations and assumptions can often appear as facts. As students, we must never forget that interpretations can be wrong, and that many things we take for granted are still merely assumptions. Some may provide an interpretation of history which portrays God as a mere observer. What you are about to read is an interpretation of history where God cares for every strand of hair on every person's head. The line between facts and assumptions can be very fuzzy. How much physical evidence makes something a fact? Yet, we are so eager to believe physical evidence no matter how unclear it is, and so unwilling to hear the calling of the Spirit of God within us.

With the discussion about mixing interpretations with facts, this book must therefore adopt a format in which the facts or likely facts are separately presented. At the end of each chapter in this book, one will find a presentation of likely facts divided into three categories: 1) the events in the world during the period addressed by the chapter, 2) the advances or changes in Christian thinking and practices, and 3) the changes within the states where Christians dwelled. This information is presented as individual chronological bullets. Keeping this information at an overarching and general level has two advantages. One is that the information is more likely to be true. For example, while the fact that a certain battle occurred in World War I may be dubious, the fact that World War I as a whole did occur is much harder to refute. The second advantage of broad top-level information is that it easily contributes to a global vision and understanding of events during a particular period in history. All this information is compiled from a collection of popular Christian and secular books identified in the reference.

The lists of information for each of the chapters spanning the past 2000 years serve as the foundation for asking the Lord in love and reverence, "Why is this so?" or "How does it fit into Your perfect plan?" My thoughts and feelings, guided by the Holy Spirit, formed the heart of each chapter.

CHAPTER I

THE BIRTH OF

CHRISTIANITY (33 -100 AD)

The apostles and other first Christians were sent out into a world perfectly prepared by God to receive them. For the first 40 years of their mission God permitted the Christian effort to focus on the Jews even though the Jewish leadership rejected and crucified Jesus, God's precious Son. Jesus, even near death, asked God to forgive the Jews because they knew not what they were doing. Jesus is love, and that love is especially true for the Jews whom He has taken care of since the days of Abraham. Yet, as stated in scriptures, His people could not recognize the truth of God, the Word, when the Word became man to be with them. In these first 40 years, Jews across the Roman province of Judea were exposed to Jesus' teachings because the faith, power, and dedication of His Body were based in Jerusalem. Though many Jews continued to persecute the Christians, others whom God had found to be of the right spiritual quality, such as Paul, were made to see. Then they became Christian missionaries on fire with the Holy Spirit. The story of Paul was a perfect example of how God can see the gem beneath the dirt. It was also a symbol of hope for all the rest of the world, which after thousands of years, still could not achieve spiritual awakening by the time of Jesus, and thus continued to wallow in paganism.

Eventually the Christian mission to the world had to begin full force, and the Jewish mission had to take on a new strategy. After decades of effort, mostly false Jews, as described by Paul, were left in the nation of Israel. The Jews who spiritually, not ritually, lived by God's teachings were drawn into the Body of Christ. The Bible tells us that when Jesus began His teaching, thousands of Jews came to Him. Today, Christians should never denounce Judaism, for in many ways we are also Jews and there may still be Jews not reached

by the Christian mission who truly love God. What should be denounced are those so-called Jews who practice God's laws like the Pharisees of old and are just as spiritually dead as the Pharisees. Yet, even for the spiritually dead or blind there is hope; one of the greatest Christians, the Apostle Paul, was a Pharisee. Returning to history, it is important to remember that Jesus primarily spoke against the Pharisees, one of several sects. Many of the Jews who became Christians were of the Hellenistic group, which included many people from the Sadducees sect. Hellenistic Jews were the most educated of the Jewish population, well versed in the Greek teachings of philosophy, science, and the arts. After the year 70 AD, God sent these eloquent people to the Gentile churches that the Apostle Paul had planted years ago. The Lord did this by collapsing the state of Israel.

By the time Israel collapsed, a thriving church had already been established with much sacrifice in Rome, under the leadership of Peter, the first apostle. Rome became the perfect center for the Christian mission to the world. At the same time, by collapsing Israel, the Lord began to send the remaining Jews to the four corners of the world so that He could shape them individually. Throughout history, the Lord has taken the Jewish kingdom away from them several times. After 135 AD, however, the Lord would for the first time begin separating His people as a group. With their temple and cities totally destroyed by the Romans, the Jews would eventually lose all of their land to Arab settlers. Yet, as prophecy stated, the Jewish people survived in separation. In just a few hundred years, many descendants of the Jews in exile would find themselves in a Christian world. History does not record how many Jews in each generation became Christians. It only notes that some Jews remained stubborn to the Word.

The Christian world emerged from Rome, the city and empire which God had permitted to conquer most of the ancient kingdoms, such as Greece, Egypt, Israel, Thrace, and Assyria. It was also an empire where there was great freedom of travel across a vast network of safe roads and ships. Thus from Rome, Christians delivered the Word to all the ancient cultures of Europe and the Middle East.

As the Bible foretold, the Body of Christ in its infancy was protected and kept pure by God. As we look at the first century, the periods of persecution were kept short and localized. The fact that God permitted His servants to be persecuted must never be mistaken for God's abandonment. As history has shown, the persecution actually strengthened the Christians and revealed the power of Christian love and faith to the world. What harms the body can empower the soul, if the soul can see that it transcends this world and belongs with the Lord. When the early Christians faced their persecution with faith and boldness, their spirits were made powerful and pure to be received by God. As the world saw Christians willingly sacrificing even their lives, people realized that Christianity was like no other religion within the Roman Empire. Christianity is the truth. It is not about material desires, for Christians are poor in such meaningless things. The riches of Christians lie in Heaven. Yet, they are not the rewards that God shall surely shower upon His children. The true riches of being a Christian come from the fulfillment of one's love, which is to be with God, Jesus, and all who are saved through Jesus. What joy can surpass seeing God's perfect plan completed and the family of God united in love?

Though empowered by the Holy Spirit, early Christians were still vulnerable to evil, which exploited their spiritual immaturity. Though the early churches were sheltered from the works of Satan, the Bible describes seven challenges faced by seven key churches. As history would reveal, these seven challenges have hindered churches to this day. They are as follows:

The Church of Ephesus worked diligently and patiently to stay true and expose evil men who were out to corrupt. However, in their battle against evil, their capacity to love diminished. Christianity is about love for God and man. If love is lost, then all is for naught.

The Church of Smyra faced persecution and was encouraged to stay true even before death. If a Christian runs a beautiful race of faith and dedication but trips before the finish line due to fear, then all is lost. Fear enslaves us.

The Church of Pergamum survived the temptation of false religions. However, some of its members strayed to those false

religions. A church is a single body united in Christ. If the body permits a part of itself to be impure, then can the body stay pure? One may say that there were only a few lost sheep in the flock, but every Christian knows that a true shepherd must leave his flock if only to bring back one lost sheep.

The Church of Thyatira retained its love, faithfulness, and dedication. Yet, its purity was corrupted by evil. Sexual immorality, specifically adultery, and idolatry became a part of the church. A Christian must be mature and shrewd to see and fight the ways of evil. If a Christian weakens, evil will surely sneak in and twist everything that is good, such as love, faithfulness, and dedication.

The Church of Sardis fell into the trap that ensnared many Jews, which was living by mere appearance. All the practices taught by Jesus are meant to shape the spirit to be receivable by God. If the spirit cannot break away from sin and burst to life, then all is lost. Yet, even among hypocrites there were still a few who stayed true. There is hope.

The Church of Philadelphia was given a little power for staying true to Jesus. Though praised, they were reminded that true power belongs to Jesus and that it is up to Him to overcome their enemies. A church must remember that all true authority, including the right to condemn, and all true power, including the ability to punish, do not belong to it. Victory lies in remaining faithful to Jesus..

The Church of Laodicea was neither cold nor hot. It was told that being lukewarm is the worst state and such people shall be spit out of the Body of Christ. Being hot is the ideal state. However, often those who are cold are still filled with spiritual passion, like the Apostle Paul, blind to the Word. The lesson to Laodicea implies that it is easier to give sight to a passionate spirit than to bring passion to a comatose spirit.

The lesson that these churches offer is that salvation by God's grace lies not in calling out for Jesus, but in following Jesus by doing God's will. They also show that following Jesus is an everlasting commitment, for the Bible tells us that if a good man turns evil then none of his good deeds from the past can save him. Though we cannot achieve the level of goodness to earn our salvation, our

continuous struggle to resist evil and sin is God's will and instrumental in receiving God's grace. Our ability to struggle against evil is through faith and the Holy Spirit, both won for us by Jesus. Throughout these discussions we may wish to think back constantly to the lessons of the seven churches.

Looking at world history prior to Jesus' gift of salvation and history thereafter, one might ask God two questions. First, why was salvation given 2000 years ago, no earlier and no later? Second, why was Christianity guided to different people at different times? Knowing that the Lord's plan is perfect, we may wish to consider the possibility that nations, like individuals, mature spiritually at different rates and in different ways. At the Tower of Babel thousands of years ago, the Lord separated the people and scattered them to the far comers of the world. In different lands the Lord shaped each group in different ways to meet their needs for spiritual growth. Since the days of Abraham, the Lord has revealed that one day He will bring all the nations of the world to Him. A reason why the Word was withheld from nations, including the Jews, for the first several thousand years of spiritual development is perhaps, while the Word is the light of this world, if the light does not save the spirit then the spirit is lost. Thus, it may be at times better to let people mature spiritually by themselves, fighting evil every step of the way. Unless the people are all like Moses and Elijah, at some point in the spiritual development of a nation the evil will dominate. This may be when Christianity is injected. Since nations mature at different rates, the time frame when Christianity is injected does not necessarily indicate the level of maturity. One nation may grow rapidly but soon be hindered by overwhelming evil. Another nation may spend centuries moving slowly but steadily. One characteristic of evil seems to be that it acquires strength as a spirit grows, feeding off the spirit's own strength. Sooner or later, all nations need to be given the truth for they can no longer move towards God on their own.

We have spoken about spiritual maturity and the evil that twists our growth. The following simple steps are an illustration of how this maturation process might take place and how evil

might interfere at each step. The way to the Lord is narrow and straight, but the ways of evil are many. Below are just some of the many ways evil can trap the spirit of man.

Step 1: Man realizes that he possesses a spirit that is not like the animals. Yet, the evil in him enslaves the spirit by locking him in animal instincts.

Step 2: Man feels something bigger than himself and sees reflections of God through nature. The evil in him creates fear of nature, which bars him from attaining a clear vision of God as the creator of nature.

Step 3: Man realizes that he and his fellow man form a greater whole. Evil then feeds them contentment to crush the desire to grow.

Step 4: Man senses that God and he are alike in many ways. Evil then pushes him to place his limitations on God.

Step 5: Man feels that he is powerful in mind and body. Evil convinces him that he has no need for God.

Step 6: Man feels that his power transcends the mind and body to reveal an immortal soul. At this point evil convinces him that he could be God.

Step 7: Man realizes that God transcends this world. Evil rushes in to convince him that God is beyond reach.

Step 8: Man then sees that his spirit could be with God after death. Evil comes and shows him easy but misleading paths in getting there.

Step 9: Man realizes that he could have a relationship with God now. Evil exposes itself in man so that he is too ashamed to open himself up to God.

Based on this thesis, it is amazing that the Jewish people saw spiritually the true greatness of God 4000 years ago while the rest of the world, Egypt for instance, were still trapped worshipping gods and idols of nature with bodies and faces of animals. These false images of God supposedly had control over the elements, life, and death. Yet, in no way did the rest of the world realize the true greatness of God. It is no accident that the Jews became God's first chosen

people. However, even they, after centuries of God's external guidance, became stagnated and were unable to develop a personal relationship with God. The great servants, such as Moses, Elijah, David, and Daniel, became the exceptions instead of preludes to the norm. Jesus had to come for the Jews.

The nations around Israel also advanced at their own pace. The Greeks, for example, started worshiping gods more like them, more human than animal. The Romans broke away from the primitive fears of earlier civilizations and focused their energy on the power of mind and body. Gods in Rome became more of a bureaucratic necessity than false images that enslaved the hearts of men. In fact, gods of many cultures were accepted in Rome. After centuries of philosophical advancement, i.e. democracy, and material achievement, i.e. the network of roads, Romans became trapped in their own success. Obsessed with the indulgences and powers of this world, Romans could not take the next step and understand the true spirit of man. Thus, soon after the sacrifice of Jesus, Rome was in desperate need of the Word. Their insane emperors, like Caligula and Nero, show how much Rome had degenerated. If Christianity had not been in Rome during those periods of insanity, the many spirits that were saved would have been consumed in a sea of spiritual death.

One might ask why the Word was not carried to the Far East even though the silk road to China was well-established in the days of Rome. The conclusion must be that the time was not right. In the time of Jesus, China, an empire nearly the size of Rome, was undergoing a cultural transformation similar to that of Rome. Instead of democracy, China favored a meritocracy based on a hierarchical society held together by respect and honor as outlined by Confucius. However, unlike Rome which excelled at this level and became trapped, China and its neighboring cultures began pushing to the next level, which is to realize a spirit that is beyond the body. This is the foundation of Buddhism, which spread across the Orient. The concept of Buddhism was formed in India about five centuries before the coming of Christ by Shakyamuni, the wandering philosopher. However, India was not ready to receive it and continued to worship gods like those of the Egyptians. Buddhism teaches that

by shaping one's spirit through meditation, moral behavior, and quest for wisdom, the spirit can free itself from this world towards a heavenly existence in Nirvana. The trap of Buddhism is that the spirit, seeing its own power, thinks that it could become a god by itself. Indeed, great spirits were referred to as Buddhas and eventually worshiped as gods. Despite their denial of God and propensity for spiritual stagnation, Buddhism and Confucianism would not start to backslide into lower spiritual levels for several more centuries. Perhaps that is why the Lord gave the East additional time to struggle on their own.

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

THE WORLD FROM 33 - 100 AD

- Rome nearing the zenith of its power, stretching from Britony to Turkey and from the Rhine to most of northern Africa down to Sudan.
- Israel existed as a client state to the Roman Empire with the Jewish population divided into several sects. The primary sects were the Sadducees drawn mostly from the Temple priesthood with a Hellenized (Greek) cultural tradition, the Pharisees who followed a rigid set of customs and traditions under elaborate synague worship, and the Essenes who believed in asceticism and Jewish independence. This independence movement led to rebellions against Rome in 66-70 AD and 135 AD. The rebellions were crushed by Rome with the Temple in Jerusalem destroyed and many of the people killed. Many of the surviving Jews moved to Greece, Turkey, Persia, Arabia, Egypt, Rome, and other lands to begin their life in exile (Diaspora).
- The Goths, Germanic tribes from northeast Europe, began pushing west and south, driving out the Celtic tribes of that region. The Celtic culture was pushed all the way to Britony. Rome constructed the Rhine-Danube wall to protect the empire against the emerging threat of this growing Teutonic civilization.
- The Parthian Empire of the Persian (Iran \ Iraq) region continued its wars against the western Roman frontier.
- China, after over five hundred years of Confucian teachings, was in the middle of a great cultural awakening in the Han Dynasty, with great advancement in the arts. Trade between China and Rome moved along the Silk Road, as goods were passed from trader to trader using caravans.

- Smaller Olmec culture of the Americas gave way to the Mayan, Mocha, and Nazca civilizations. The Mayas of the Yucatan Peninsula would evolve to become a major empire on the level of Babylon.

CHRISTIANITY FROM 33 - 100 AD

- The apostles used Jerusalem as the center of their efforts following the departure of Jesus. As the heart of Jewish culture, Jerusalem attracted thousands of Jewish pilgrims from throughout Judea each year. The foundation of the Body of Christ was built primary on the Hellenistic Jews of that period, along with a precious few whose poverty or illness reflected their faith and purity. Many of the Hellenistic Jews were open-minded enough to hear the Word and spiritually hungry enough to receive the Holy Spirit. This group of disciples quickly encountered strong opposition and persecution from the Pharisees and other conservative Jewish groups.
- As one of the dedicated Pharisee persecutors of Christians, Saul of Tarasus (Apostle Paul) was personally called into service by Jesus in 35 AD.
- As a part of persecution in Jerusalem, Peter was imprisoned by King Herod Agrippa I (approx. r. AD 41- 44), but escaped just before scheduled execution.
- The first disciples spread out from Jerusalem and preached the Word throughout the regions of Judea, Samaria, and Syria. A large community of Christians formed at Antioch, the third most important city in the Roman Empire, and many gentiles were brought into the faith.
- Christianity also spread directly to Rome, and a church was established there under the guidance of Peter around 40 - 50 AD.
- Paul traveled extensively between 47 - 57 AD and established flourishing churches throughout the regions of Galatia, Asia, Macedonia, and Achaia. Basically, the seeds of Christianity were sown across the eastern portion of the Roman Empire.

- At Antioch, Paul and Peter argued over to what extent gentile converts must observe Jewish customs, such as circumcision. This disagreement was settled at the Council of Jerusalem around 50 AD. Paul's position of lifting Jewish customs prevailed.
- By 64 AD Peter had settled in Rome, and Paul's mission work took him back to Rome. Years before, Paul had been under protective custody in that city.
- Over forty major churches were established by the end of the first century. The church for each city was led by a bishop with a council of elders (presbyters or priests) and supported by a group of assistants (deacons).

THE STATE FROM 33 - 100 AD

- During Jesus' time, Emperor Tiberius ruled Rome in a relatively stable manner. A brief period of insanity seized Rome under Emperor Caligula from 37 - 41 AD. In 41 AD, Rome was once again restored to stability and tolerance under Emperor Claudius.
- Christianity attracted Roman attention as more and more gentiles in the Roman Empire were led into the faith. No longer viewed as a Jewish sect, it became one of the many religions within the empire. Romans also worshiped the gods and goddesses: Isis of Egypt, Mithras of Persia, Demeter of Greece, Cybele of Phrygia, as well as the Roman pantheon of gods.
- Resentment against Christians grew throughout the empire due to much misunderstanding. Christian communities were typically separated from the mainstream population. Christian dedication and growth could have been alarming to outsiders. Also, the act of communion fueled rumors that Christians were cannibals.
- Emperor Nero ruled from 54 - 68 AD. In madness, he burned Rome to the ground in 64 AD with the desire to rebuild it in his own image. He blamed this act on the Christians, and the persecution of Christians within the city of Rome ignited. Both Peter and Paul were believed to have been martyred under this persecution.
- Localized persecution of Christians probably occurred in parts of the empire. Revelation mentions the persecution in the province of Asia (region of Turkey) in 81 - 90 AD, when Emperor Domitian ruled Rome.

CHAPTER II

THE MATURATION OF CHRISTIANITY (100 - 312 AD)

The second and third centuries are defined by the rapid growth of Christianity across the ancient world. Churches appeared everywhere from Egypt to Britony, and thousands of spiritually hungry people flocked to the Word. The seven challenges highlighted in the Bible must have plagued many of these churches. At the same time, the churches were left on their own, for the time of the apostles had passed. Yet, these second generation Christians were still protected by God. The Roman Empire often levied persecution upon them, sometimes out of fear and misunderstanding. In this manner, only the most dedicated people stayed with the Body of Christ. However, in no way was Christianity ever in threat of being defeated. In fact, the growth was not hindered at all. This revealed that the people of the ancient civilizations were ready to receive the Word.

Faced with the opportunities, challenges, and responsibilities, the second generation Christians took several decisive steps. First, they started to organize the Church so that the masses of Christians were utilized and cared for according to individual needs. New leaders were selected to head each church, stepping into the shoes of the apostles. The most faithful were drawn into the clergy. A lay class of Christians began to form with people trying to reach Christian maturity. There may also have been many members who tried to turn away from sin but were not yet suited for the Holy Spirit. With the first disciples gone, efforts were made to collect their writings so that the Word could be delivered in the future with accuracy and original power.

With the invitation to the Kingdom of God wide open, many who came must have found it difficult to believe that their spirits could become worthy of God's grace. Thus, knowledge of those

who became powerful servants of the Lord and received His grace must have been very important. The assurance and inspiration of the saints quite naturally created veneration. Since Jesus promised the faithful that they will never die but join Him in paradise and God often sent angels from Heaven to His people, the view that saints in Heaven could plead with God on behalf of the weak Christians on earth emerged. Such reliance on saints, whether it is effective or misguided, could become an act of turning away from a personal relationship with God in shame. However, the embrace of saints by immature Christians struggling to acquire the Holy Spirit could at times have prevented spiritual backsliding whether the saints could hear their pleas or not. It is important to note that the veneration of the Virgin Mary and the saints began at a time when the people desperately needed spiritual support. The leadership of the Church then grew to accept these practices. Jesus told His disciples that whatever they decided among themselves would be accepted in Heaven. We cannot say that the veneration of the saints was wrong in the early days of Christianity. However, like all activities not directly led by the Holy Spirit, venerating saints and using icons could hinder spiritual growth. In extreme cases when veneration turns to worship, Christians drift away from the Lord and surrender to corruption. This issue will appear in later history.

The need for icons and relics is similar to the need to venerate saints. The Bible illustrates that if a woman's faith lies in touching Jesus' robe to be healed, then that is what she must do. However, the Bible also shows that Jesus' power extended everywhere and that people far away could be healed if He willed it. So it is like the woman and the robe that many Christians after the first century began collecting physical symbols of the saints as points of focus for their veneration. Icons also became important because images reminded people that Christ, who seemed so far away, was once a man who walked among them. The danger of icons and relics is that without faith they are mere objects. If the faith is misdirected, then Christ our Lord is forgotten and idol worshiping results. Jesus saw the need for physical reminders and aids to strengthen the faith of His disciples. This reminder or aid came in the form of communion.

In communion, the bread and the wine became reminders of faith for all those seeking direct spiritual embrace by the Holy Spirit. In communion, the bread and the wine became receptacles for delivering the Holy Spirit to those who chose to put their faith in them. In the latter case, consuming the bread and wine would literally be like taking the Lord into one's spirit. Thus, the early Christians believed in the actual material transformation of the communion bread and wine.

While the practices above were allowed to continue by the Church and Jesus, the growth of Christianity took on several branches that were challenged by the main church and did not survive past the early centuries. These groups that became separate sects presented the first major theological battles. Comparing their views with that of the Body of Christ, it is not hard to see why the emerging Christian sects were considered heretics. However, what is worth studying is why these sects grew so rapidly, and why mainstream theologians could not soundly defeat them. Instead, such heresies were eventually dealt with on the brute force level. The greatest theological battle of the early age was perhaps against Gnosticism, which naturally emerged from man's inability to reconcile the perceived image of God in the Old Testament and the teachings of Jesus in the New Testament. Instead of trying to understand why God must be justly harsh to immature people, the Gnostics quickly denounced the Old Testament God and the world that He created as being evil. Seeing the events of this world, many Christians even today may fall into this trap which destroys or perverts faith. Christians must understand that evil is not created by God, but is a disease that taints His most precious creation, man. The cure for evil is man's spirit choosing to fight it to a point where God can pull one into His purity. This is the key, because, while the Word is given as a precious gift of God, the spirit must truly embrace it in order for salvation to be achieved. In Gnosticism, the spirits could not fight past the powers that enslaved them to the world. So they yielded to the corruptions of this world and merely dreamed of a better life after death. Unfortunately, their practice of faith was not the way to get there, for the Word was lost in them.

One may ask why the Lord permitted such misuse of the Word. Perhaps God wanted man to fight the corruption himself so that he could rise above it. The Christians of those early days who were exposed to misleading concepts grew stronger in rejecting them. For those who could not rise above the falsity, perhaps they still deserved to be tested to determine whether the Word was truly embraced by them. Christians in the second and third centuries were thoroughly tested with these false concepts because the churches lacked the understanding or force to stamp them out. While Gnosticism was the most damaging and erroneous of the heresies, other sects, such as Montanism and Novatianism, also provided significant testing for the early Christians. Montanism emerged because some Christians were obsessed about seeing the completion of God's plan with the return of Jesus. Preoccupied with prophecies, they forgot that they were God's instruments in fulfilling His plan and that the work Jesus asked of them was far from being complete. This is an important lesson for Christians today, on the eve of Jesus' return. Even if ten days remain until the arrival of Jesus, a Christian's work must continue until that tenth day. Alternatively, Novatianism emerged out of Christian pride, anger, and intolerance. It is easy to see how Christians who have endured the persecution might not forgive those who compromised their faith to save their lives. Though many Christians have fallen, the heart of Christianity is hope. Therefore, when a Christian repents, hope must be encouraged. Even if Christians would not offer hope to the fallen, they must recognize that their responsibility to separate the Church from those who would corrupt it does not include repenting Christians. All rights to judge and pass sentence belong to God. In the Bible, God said that if any man turns towards good in the end, all his sins will be forgiven.

Christians were not only plagued by fears but were also trapped by blind courage. During the periods of persecution, some Christians sought martyrdom to show their strength in faith. While the Lord does lead some to become martyrs for the growth of the Church, a Christian should always cherish life even if he is willing to surrender it for the Lord. Thus, a Christian's sacrifice must have meaning. The Lord does not need proof of true Christians' faith,

for He reads their hearts. If a Christian hungers for the veneration of others, he is acting out of pride. Christian ways are simple: Choose to service the Lord over death, and love the Lord over life.

The cases of Montanism and Novatianism raise the question where the line between a lack of understanding and heresy should be drawn. Until the return of Jesus, the Church will always be composed of Christians with varying understanding and thus disagreements. Even in the days of the apostles, some Christians supported circumcision and followed Old Testament dietary rules while others opposed them. The apostles decided that Christianity is based on personal freedom to follow one's faith. It is important for Christians to respond to what they believe is God's will whether or not their understanding is clear. Paul taught us that Christians can eat anything. However, those Christians who cannot see this and still follow precise dietary rules are nevertheless showing that their hearts are in doing God's will. If Christians have no laws that bind them, then how can there be heresy? Perhaps the true definition of heresy lies not in actions but in the heart. When a Christian professes that he belongs to Jesus yet his heart no longer understands nor follows the Word, then he has spiritually digressed to being a heretic. Since man cannot see other men's spirits, heretics can only be revealed by their views and actions. A heretic's views often focus on the perversion of a single section of the Bible with such perversion contradicting other Biblical teachings. A heretic's actions clearly run against love, faith, and hope. The result of heresy is not just delays in spiritual advancement but a backsliding of the spirit. This definition of heresy makes it difficult for a line to be drawn. The dangers to those who declare heresy may be equally as great as the accused heretics. Should the line be drawn incorrectly, the accuser will be guilty of dividing the Church. Therefore, it must be done with the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

After two centuries of growth in a challenging environment, one sees that Christianity had touched just about every corner of the Roman Empire. With most people given the opportunity to hear about the Word, perhaps the expansion of the Church began to plateau because all those people whose spirits were strong and pure enough to follow Jesus had already been gathered. The Body

of Christ, by the end of the third century, had grown powerful with the most faithful spirits of the ancient world. The most faithful of the Jews, Egyptians, Assyrians, Greeks, Gauls, Britons, and Romans had been harvested. Yet, the Christian mission was not complete. Instead, the war to win the world from the grasp of evil was just beginning. The road that followed would be far more spiritually challenging for, as the Bible promised, Satan was once again allowed to work against the people of Christ. However, God's plan is perfect, and even Satan's deeds were used to serve His goodness.

As the third century ended, the seeds of growth were sown in three directions. The first direction is the extension of the Word to those outside the empire. The Gothic tribes, barbarians in the eyes of Rome, were literally drawn to the frontiers of Rome. Unwilling to join the empire, Christianity was the only aspect of Rome that filtered into their ranks. In a way, the aggressiveness and pride of these barbarians would prove useful to the Body of Christ. Most certainly, this pride had already resisted the splendors and temptations of Rome - the wealth, the knowledge, and the physical pleasures. In their march to destiny, the Gothic tribes pushed the Celtic tribes to the Isle of Britony. There, the Celtic people would survive as Christians, playing pivotal roles in later years.

The second direction of growth is in the worldly division of the Church that was to come. Since Christians are joined by love, all divisions of the Church must be limited to physical and mental, but not spiritual, separation. For the first three centuries, the churches survived in harsh environments as autonomous entities interconnected by a common resolve. Soon afterwards the churches were given a great deal of worldly influence and power, including the power to unite. Yet, unity was not what the Lord planned. Political forces started to divide the churches of the empire into two groups, the western churches and the eastern churches. The Church of Rome never quite became the supreme authority across the Christian world. Thousands of years ago the Lord separated the nations so that each could be guided in its own way. Perhaps the Christian churches were also separated so that they could mature at their own speeds. The division of west and east was not by

force, for the individual churches were already starting to show significant differences in understanding the Word. The people of the eastern churches were from ancient cultures who experienced centuries of spiritual stagnation after initial progress. The people of the western churches, which included Rome, were from younger cultures, slower to mature but less trapped by their past. This spiritual difference influenced the western and eastern embrace of the Word.

The third direction in which seeds were sown is in the gathering of the weak and the corrupted into the Body of Christ. This is one of the paths Christianity must take since Jesus came for the people who needed Him the most. However, the Church must be very strong to survive this confrontation with the works of evil, or evil will extend its powers into the Church. By the end of the third century, Rome was still filled with spiritually dead people seeking worldly pleasures. They were the deceivers, the selfish, the arrogant, and the apathetic. When such people were let into the Church, they probably attempted to seize power and use the Church to serve themselves. While their agendas perhaps changed as Christians, their corrupt ways eventually exposed them. Nevertheless, many of them who could have been saved were saved. Letting these people into the Body set the Church on a long path of internal struggle between those true to the Lord and those who were Christians in name only. From this struggle, loyal Christians became stronger and many hypocrites transformed in repentance. This gathering of the weak and the corrupted began with Rome becoming a Christian empire.

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

THE WORLD FROM 100 - 312 AD

- The Goths' strength grew, with increasingly more aggressive raids and campaigns into Roman territory. Defeat at Nish by a Roman counteroffensive led to a temporary peace treaty.
- The Huns, Tartars, and other nomads of the central Asian Gobi Desert pushed west to threaten the Goth borders.
- The Parthian Empire was defeated by the Romans by 100 AD, with continued Roman conquest until it collapsed by 200 AD.
- The Persian Empire, which had been defeated by 250 BC, began to reestablish power in the Middle East as the Parthian Empire faded.
- Buddhism grew in China after introduction from India around 100 AD. The decades long decline of the Han Dynasty led to the Three Kingdoms period of great confusion and chaos by 300 AD.

CHRISTIANITY FROM 100 - 312 AD

- Over 100 churches were established by 200 AD; the number doubled by 300 AD. Christianity spread across North Africa and to Gaul (France), Spain, and Britony (England).
- A single bishop was maintained as the leadership for each city as growing congregations pushed for increasingly more regimented services and a complex priesthood structure.
- Archbishops were established in regions of high Christian concentration to oversee the activities of a whole region, which could have several bishops.
- The four gospels were collected as a single standardized body of text for Christian practice by 150 AD. The Gospel of John was the most difficult to accept. The letters of Paul, the Book of Acts, and writings by other apostles were collected in the following decades to form the foundation of the New Testament.
- The Muratorium Canon list developed after 200 AD indicates an early attempt to set the collection of first century Christian writings into general church doctrine or law (canon). The debate as to which documents had sufficient evidence to be incorporated stretched well into the third century.
- Overall, the churches remained separate bodies united in faith, developing on their own in an often difficult Roman state.
- Second century writings indicate the existence of sects which distorted the Word and were generally regarded by the main churches as heretics. The Gnostics separated the God of the Old Testament, whom they viewed as cruel, from the Christian God. Believing that the material body is inherently evil and that salvation depends only on recognizing the spiritual self, many Gnostics led sinful lives devoid of Christian acts. Montanism emerged towards the end of the second century in

Phrygia and Asia Minor as a group that strongly believed in the imminent return of Christ and thus devoted their attention to prophecies instead of the growth of the Church. Novatian, who lost the election to be the bishop of Rome in 251 AD, founded the Novatianism movement, which, contrary to accepted practice, rejected Christians who had repented after abandoning their faith under persecution.

- The veneration of Christians who had lived exceptional lives (saints) grew. This centered around Mary, mother of Jesus, and the apostles. However, martyrs were often instantly elevated to sainthood, and the collecting of relics (personal belongings and pieces of the remains) of the martyrs grew in popularity.
- Origen (185 - 254 AD) became known as the greatest Christian writer and teacher of that period. Doctrines were developed using a Greek philosophy style reasoning.
- Anthony of Egypt and other hermits introduced an ascetic life style to the Christian community in the late second century.

THE STATE FROM 100 - 312 AD

- Capital punishment for Christians who would not renounce their faith was declared in the province of Bithynia. This and similar actions were commended by Emperor Trajan (r. 98 - 117 AD), though no concerted efforts to hunt down Christians were undertaken.
- Many executions of Christians in Rome, Gaul, and Africa under Emperor Marcus Aurelius (r. 161 - 180 AD).
- Emperor Decius (r. 249 - 251 AD) issued an imperial edict in 250 AD that all Roman citizens across the empire must make sacrifices to the traditional Roman gods. Those without verification certificates faced execution. Emperor Gallus (r. 251-253), successor of Decius who died in the Gothic wars, was more lax in enforcing the edict in most regions.
- Emperor Valerian (r. 253 - 260 AD) exiled or imprisoned all Christian church leaders who would not worship Roman gods. Church meetings were forbidden, and later church leaders were executed.
- Emperor Diocletian (r. 284 - 305 AD) issued four edicts in 303 AD: 1) destruction of all church buildings, 2) confiscation of Christian writings, 3) separation of all Christians from the government and army, 4) imprisonment of the Christian leadership.
- Emperor Diocletian retired in 305 AD after stabilizing the empire on the verge of civil war. The empire was divided into the Western and Eastern Roman Empires. Constantine, son of the Western Emperor, defeated Maxentius' army in 312 AD after his father's death to take control of the Western Empire. Constantine attributed his victory to the Christian God and then went on to defeat Emperor Licinius of the Eastern Empire to become supreme Emperor of Rome.

CHAPTER III

A CHRISTIAN EMPIRE (312 - 726 AD)

The greatest challenge to Christianity began when Rome became a Christian empire. Those who had for the past three centuries ignored or rejected Christianity suddenly found it practical to become Christians. With an emperor who was overseeing the Church and showering wealth upon it, Christianity found itself in a treacherous intertwining relationship with the secular world. In one aspect, the Church found itself with the power to use worldly resources, such as money and political influence, to advance the Christian mission. However, the world was and still is full of temptations that could enslave all but the purest Christians. Many Christians might have been enslaved as they became reliant on worldly powers while forgetting the true power of the Word.

The state, by accepting and supporting the Church, extended its secular influence into the Christian mission. From that point on, the Church would always have to walk a fine line between the demands of the state and the purity of the Church. While this change in Church status tested Christians in a whole new manner, Christianity also needed the power that this status provided. When Christianity was young and pure, the Lord strengthened it by forcing Christians to be dedicated. After the change, the Lord strengthened it by forcing Christians to see the ways of the world and the ways of the Word. In the end, a true Christian would have stayed with the Word when the world turned against him and when the world courted him. The new secular power was important to the Church because of the new wave of less devoted Christians. When the Church was full of people filled with the Holy Spirit, the teachings of Jesus and faith were adequate to maintain order. However, after the Church received an influx of people not quite ready for the Holy Spirit, worldly ways may have been necessary to save a group still tied to this world. When the Jews were young and not ready for the Word, the Lord used harsh means to keep the flock from straying.

The new secular power was also important because of the many directions Christian understanding and misunderstanding were taking. The understanding of a mature Christian body is complete, and thus no mistakes in interpretation can withstand its explanations. However, the main body of churches in the fourth century was far from mature. Therefore, the only way to defeat mistakes in interpretation was often by worldly powers. Though this was almost an admission that the Church could not embrace the full powers of the Word, the Lord may have permitted it so that the Church could achieve some level of unity. The need for worldly power carried a great price. In using worldly means to shape Christians, many were trapped in a Church of laws. The inability to see beyond the laws then delayed the spiritual growth that is essential to true unity. False understanding can never be totally suppressed. It has to be corrected through revelation of the truth.

The quest for the truth continued with the efforts of theologians such as Augustine of Hippo, who, after many years of spiritual wandering, saw the truth of Christianity. The concept of original sin, which he introduced, is widely accepted to this day, but difficult to understand. Many Christians through the ages believed that a child departing from this world is not automatically given God's grace but must be baptized into the Body of Christ to avoid the World of the Dead. Looking at original sin from a different perspective, perhaps what everyone inherits as descendants of Adam is a level of spiritual impurity that allows evil to take hold. Thus, it is not Adam's act that taints but Adam's spiritual quality. As in the case of Adam, it is this spiritual impurity that created distance from the Lord. Only under the Lord's guidance can we grow and fight for our salvation. Except for the few, like Moses and Elijah, our fight against evil cannot make us worthy of salvation. However, it can prepare us to embrace Christ, and through Christ we can receive the Holy Spirit and God's grace. Through grace we are saved.

The three theological debates during the period when Rome was a Christian empire were: Is the essence of baptism related to the baptizer? Is Jesus truly divine like God? Was Jesus truly human when He walked among us? Though history never completely

recorded what was said at the early great councils, when leaders from churches throughout the empire gathered to present their views, it is safe to say that neither side was convincing enough to unite the Church. In the case of baptism, Donatists, those who would not accept Christians baptized by fallen Christians, were eventually suppressed as heretics with the power of Rome. Examining Donatism, it is indeed true that Christians taught and baptized by someone teaching a false Jesus have to reprofess their faith to the true Word. However, as long as a Christian was professing the correct understanding and faith in baptism, it mattered not who was doing the baptizing for the Lord has baptized with the Holy Spirit. To say that the spiritual strength of the baptizer played a role in baptism is to steal that right from the Lord. Ideally a baptizer should be a guide and teacher. Yet, often he is just a witness.

While the new theological questions drew heated debates across the churches before the intervention of Rome, the remains of the early Christian sects (Gnostics, Novatians, Montanists), which were fading away as Christianity grew, were quickly suppressed in this period of Christian authority and power. The debate over the humanity and divinity of Christ resulted in several councils that turned and overturned the views of varying sides. Arianism, which took the view that Christ is not truly divine as God, was tolerated for a time but eventually suppressed within the Roman Empire. The view, however, took hold in the barbarian tribes on the borders of the empire. Arianism is correct in that there is a difference in the nature of Jesus and God. Jesus taught His people that only God can be called good. Goodness demands justice, but justice was not what Jesus demanded. In fact, Jesus demanded nothing and gave everything. He is unconditional love.

Arianism, however, offered no real evidence to show that Jesus is not divine even though His nature is not exactly the same as God. The Bible tells us that Jesus is within God and God is within Him. God declared Jesus to be His beloved Son. Jesus has been with God since the beginning, and God created the universe through Him. God granted Jesus all His authority. If these facts do not make Jesus divine, then what does divine truly mean? The Lord, however, permitted Arianism to exist for many years within the barbarian

world. This may be because the Gothic tribes could not make the instantaneous jump toward understanding the full relationship between God and Jesus. The Word was given to these tribal people very early in their spiritual development. They went from fearing a pantheon of angry jealous gods and animal-based folklore to embracing the one true supreme God and teachings of Jesus. In time, they would be taught the true yet complex aspects of Jesus, and Arianism would disappear.

While Arianism eventually disappeared, other varying views would persist to this day. On the issue of the divinity and humanity of Jesus, Rome and the western churches took the view that God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit are of one essence and that Jesus is both God as well as man. The eastern churches, alternatively, took the view that Jesus is God in human form and that He, God the Father, and the Holy Spirit are distinct entities with a harmony of will. Perhaps these two views were permitted to endure because they each embodied an aspect of the truth, which was most important to each group of Christians. When Jesus walked among man, stories relate that His body was that of a man and that Christ felt every pain and need of the human body. This was probably very significant to the Christians in Rome because, prior to Christianity, Romans had already spiritually grown to the level where the individual strength of man was felt. Therefore, knowing that Jesus was one of us and that He brought our feelings to God was important, because it laid the foundation for man to reach out and share his spiritual self with God. Jesus became man's personal messenger and advocate to God. In order for God to share Jesus' experience, Jesus must be in God and God must be in Jesus. If one cannot define where Jesus begins and God ends, then the concept of one essence is valid.

The eastern cultures, except the Jews, were still in a state where man lived in fear of angry and often jealous gods. Therefore, when given the Word, their focus was on the power and the purpose of God. Jesus represented God coming to be with man - loving, caring, and selfless. In contrast to the West, this single nature of Jesus is also correct in that Jesus, while He walked among man, was the same spirit who has been with God since the beginning. To deny the continuous spiritual nature of Jesus is therefore to deny His true

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relationship with God. This does not, however, defeat the concept that Jesus was fully human. True, Jesus' spirit has been and always will be divine. However, it is also said that the spirit of man is like that of God. Therefore, being human is merely a temporary state where the spirit is trapped in a physical body. By this definition, Jesus was fully human. It is also correct to say that while Jesus and God possess a spiritual union, they are still two entities in consciousness. For people who struggled with the concept of a harsh God, it may have been more comfortable for them to see Jesus not only as a conduit to God but also an entity with power and authority of His own. The danger in this non-Trinity based thinking is the temptation to pray only to Jesus since Jesus does hear our prayers. Jesus taught us that our prayers should always be directed to God, from whom all power, all authority, and all goodness flow.

The differences in understanding between the East and West may have been the primary reason why the Lord led them towards different fates. The western churches, who were more spiritually independent, had already begun to challenge imperial authority on some occasions. After a century of imperial oversight, the Church was set free with the collapse of the Western Roman Empire. All the power, corruption, and excesses of Rome were wiped out in a few years. Only the Church remained standing for the people. For all the weaker Christians who were gathered when Rome became a Christian empire, there was suddenly only the Word left to save them. The Catholic Church stepped into this new position of responsibility and indeed saved the people. In fact, the Lord guided the Church to accomplish far more. Through all the battles and chaos, the Church managed to absorb and unite the Christianity of Rome and the Christianity that spread to the Gothic invaders. The West became, after centuries of testing, one body in Christ. While the western churches were set free, the eastern churches were given a strong earthly master in the form of the Byzantine Empire. Perhaps this was because the eastern people wanted some worldly authority to take care of them and to shield them from the corruptions of the world. The power of the Byzantine Empire was also essential in the eastern Christian mission. The neighbors of the eastern churches

were not young barbarian tribes receptive to the Word. They were an ancient people who had experienced thousands of years of spiritual stagnation. They dwelled in the birthplace of Abraham, yet were distant to God. They received the Jews into their land, yet never found God. Therefore, the Byzantines struggled against the Persians and other later Islamic nations, taking and losing territory across time. In this manner, the people of the Middle East were exposed to the Word.

After a few centuries of exposure to the Word with minimal effect, the Lord permitted a new religion to emerge dramatically in the ancient land of the Middle East. Unlike Christianity, Islam was quickly embraced by the people of the Middle East starting with the Arabian Peninsula. Islam's success was probably largely due to the fact that it emerged in the Middle East and thus did not carry the European cultural aspects that Christianity brought. However, Islam also took two key features from Christianity and Judaism that contributed to its worldly success. From Christianity, the developers of Islam learned that their religion must proliferate to all the people of the world. From Judaism, the developers of Islam learned that the masses would much rather follow blindly a set of simple laws to achieve salvation than to pursue the spiritual rebirth so essential in Christianity. If left uncorrected, Islam would trap the whole world in spiritual stagnation through laws and false understanding. However, Islam was not left alone in the world. In fact, it was placed in a perfect position to help Christianity and test Christianity. In helping Christianity, Islam brought the spiritually stubborn people of the Middle East one step closer to the Lord and a leap away from idolatry. Islam proclaimed that it worshiped the same God as the Christians and the Jews. However, they could not accept the true position of Jesus, and thus treated our Lord as a prophet. Nevertheless, the limited recognition of Christianity swung open the doors of the Middle East for the Christian mission. Christians in the early centuries of Islam could travel and live freely across their land. Whether failures lay in the weakness of the Christians or stubbornness of the Muslims, the fact that the Word had not been used effectively to win the Middle East cannot be attributed to a lack of opportunity.

Since Islam is also a propagating religion, it has to this day offered immense testing for Christianity. When Christian faith and understanding slipped slightly, Christianity has often found its flock stolen by Islam. Indeed, as Islamic forces gained control of Christian territory, the weaker Christians have converted to receive the privileges of their new master. When Islamic armies eventually invaded Spain, they were also exposed to the understanding of the western churches. Ultimately, the conflict between Muslims and Christians included a full theological struggle across the borders. The Islamic invasion of North Africa also served to eliminate all traces of Donatism. Donatism had continued to flourish in North Africa despite official Christian Church council decrees on its incorrectness.

Though the western churches thrived under Pope Gregory, the journey there was far from trouble free. After the collapse of Rome, the Church would realize that secular power is a whole new set of struggles, especially when facing powerful invaders. Through the years, many popes learned that, unlike the affairs of God, the affairs of man are not always pure. As caretakers of the physical as well as spiritual well being of the people, compromises often had to be struck. Hopefully all these compromises were guided by the Holy Spirit and not based on the personal arrogance of the popes. Only the Lord knows how many popes yielded to the world. The one compromise not pertaining to the secular world involved the acceptance of Arianism, reestablished in a conquered Rome by the Gothic tribes. In that particular incidence, the pope compromised faith by yielding to the desire to survive under enemy conquest. This may offer another reason why the Lord permitted the Byzantine Empire to remain strong and the eastern churches to become influential. The pope who gave in to Arianism was rejected by the Bishop of Constantinople. In a way, the eastern churches offered a check and balance to the West as the West worked towards uniting all its Christians under Catholicism.

Despite all the chaos in the West, faith actually managed to grow by the grace of the Lord. Not all of the churches were consumed by worldly affairs. Spiritual growth took three directions: solidification

of the written Word, protection of the pure, and mission to spiritually uplift the masses. With the lifting of Roman persecution and greater interaction between the churches, Christians by the end of the fourth century were able to agree on the New Testament. From that point forward, even though Christians of different denominations would debate over the meaning of the Word, they would all agree on the recorded Word. Surely this fact alone could be considered a miracle. The material that should be studied to understand the work of God with the Jews, components of the Old Testament, would still be debated in the following years.

For many centuries after the collapse of Rome, the West was in a state of chaos. The average Christian fought for survival and clung to Jesus like a frightened child. With the main churches struggling against secular powers and local churches usually poorly equipped, Christians easily fell into spiritual laxity. In response, the most devoted Christians sought to create a sanctuary where they could focus on living an ideal Christian life. An ideal Christian life, according to the monks, was to shed worldly wealth and physical pleasures in order to dedicate their lives to work, study, and prayer. The monasteries became the keepers of knowledge through the commonly referenced "dark ages." In the Bible, Jesus spoke of men who would not marry in order to dedicate themselves totally to God. In the Bible, Jesus taught His disciples not to worry about material needs, for God will provide. A disciple seeking to be perfect should give away his riches to the poor and follow Jesus. However, Jesus also asked His disciples to be gentle but shrewd and said that they would need to learn to defend themselves physically and manage money after His departure. Therefore, while monks lived without personal wealth, monasteries still had to be managed in a secular manner to survive. They not only survived in the dark ages but often became prosperous institutions. As the monasteries became places of refuge in the West, monasteries in the more stable East began to play key roles in helping and educating the people. This new function started by Basil the Great would eventually spread to all the monasteries.

The greatest event in this age of chaos, which is rarely mentioned in history books, is the wave of Celtic missionaries who

spread across Europe and breathed life into a Christian realm almost lost to secular problems. Though the event was singular, it introduced a new idea that expanded mission work beyond the pagans. It showed that, when a part of the Christian Body is overwhelmed by the world, it is up to the rest of the Body to pull that part back to the Lord. The Celtic mission illustrated that Christianity is one Body bound by love.

Christianity was preserved in the West through this period of chaos. However, with the end of the chaos came the separation of the eastern and western churches. This separation occurred after the western churches were able to absorb the Gothic people. United in faith, the West would begin a unique journey in growth. The East, on the other hand, would embark upon a separate path of growth on several levels. The one event that sparked these changes was the banning of icons in the East by the Byzantine emperor. The ban was rejected by the West.

Finally, with the stabilization of the West and the empowerment of the Papal State, a territory directly controlled by the Church, a very controversial issue emerged when Pope Gregory led armies into battle. Though the Lord had commanded the Jews to wage war, Christians even today debate whether the disciples of Jesus, with greater love and spiritual maturity, should kill. Though the pope should not be held to any higher standards as the leader of the Catholic Church, he should embody the highest Christian effort in following Christ's teachings. While this understanding still does not automatically denounce a pope leading armies into war, it does present several criteria for popes and all Christians. A Christian's participation in war must be personally guided by the Lord through the Holy Spirit. Even in war, a Christian must love his enemies and pray for a quick end where suffering and loss are minimized for both sides. Unlike the Jews who were spiritually immature and protected by their immaturity, a Christian soldier who kills must place his faith completely in the Lord. Though everything is by the Lord's permission, if a Christian is not sure that his act of violence is by the Lord's will, then he may quickly fall prey to the forces of evil. If Christians in war are indeed in opposition to the Lord's will, then they are in jeopardy of being like the Assyrians

whom the Lord used and cast away. Thus, Christians, even a pope, who believe that they are called by the Lord to war are under hard testing. Even in maturity and love, it is difficult to kill, for death separates a spirit from its loved ones.

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

THE WORLD FROM 312 - 726 AD

- Teutonic (Germanic) civilization divided into the western Visigoths, the eastern Ostrogoths, and other bands of people such as the Vandals. These tribes continuously made advances on the Roman frontiers.
- The Huns of Asia officially pushed into Europe in 372 AD, driving the Goths westward to increase pressure on the Western Roman Empire.
- Persian Empire continued its wars on the eastern Roman frontier.
- The Western Roman Empire collapsed with the loss of Gaul in 406 AD, Spain in 409 AD, Britain in 410 AD, and Africa in 429 - 439 AD.
- Rome itself was first sacked in 410 AD by the Visigoths under Alaric and restored under treaty with the Goths.
- The Huns under Attila raided Gaul, Italy, and Balkans with the help of the Ostrogoths and other scattered Germanic and Slavic tribes in 453 AD. Their campaign was repelled by a collection of Franks, Visigoths, and Romans with final defeat at Chalons, France.
- Rome was sacked again in 455 AD by the Vandals.
- Last Western Roman Emperor Romulus Augustulus deposed by Germanic Chief Odovacar in 476 AD.
- Visigoth kingdom established in Spain since 419 AD expanded into France while King Clovis (r. 481 - 511 AD) united the Franks who were also expanding in power.

- The Eastern Roman Empire, also referred to as the Byzantine Empire after the fall of the West, regained strength after the retreat of the Huns to become the premier power in Europe.
- Emperor Justinian (r. 527 - 565 AD) reconquered parts of Spain, North Africa, and Italy. Control of Rome under indirect and direct Byzantine influence.
- Germanic Lombards took control of Rome and parts of Italy from 568 AD.
- Jerusalem destroyed by the Persians soon after 600 AD, but the Persians were quickly repelled by Byzantine forces.
- Muhammad established Islam (611 AD) based on his revelation from the one true God. Islam unified the Arabian Peninsula by Muhammad's death (632 AD). The Persian Empire was among the first to be defeated by the Muslim armies spreading out from Arabia to bring new subjects into their faith. Persian Empire officially ended by 700 AD.
- Muslim attacks on the Byzantine Empire motivated Emperor Constantine II to develop new fleet to reestablish the power of the empire. The Byzantine fleet was defeated by the Muslim fleet soon after 650 AD, which led to the siege of Constantinople. The land of Israel among other Byzantine provinces fell under Muslim domination.
- Muslim armies consisting of Arab, Persian, and other nationalities pushed into North Africa, Asia Minor, and the Indus Valley by 700 AD. The group known as the Moors pushed into Spain by 711 AD.

CHRISTIANITY FROM 312 - 726 AD

- Christian gatherings achieved a level of formality with the celebration of holidays such as Easter, Pentecost, and later Christmas as well as the standardization of masses, which included the pronouncement of the Apostles' Creed.
- Donatist movement grew in North Africa after refusing to recognize Caecilian as Bishop of Carthage, because he was ordained by someone who had betrayed the faith during the persecutions. The movement derived its name from Donatus, a Donatist elected bishop to Carthage.
- Donatists immediately sought the intervention of the new Christian Emperor, but resisted the emperor and the main Church when results were unfavorable. Despite capture and punishment as heretics, Donatism survived in North Africa until the Muslim invasion.
- Council of bishops started gathering under imperial supervision to agree on Christian beliefs. Donatism forced the churches to recognize that the purity of baptism is not associated with the person performing the act.
- Council of Ancyria around 315 AD declared that deacons must decide on marriage before ordination and should remain celibate if they were unmarried at the point of ordination. Though celibacy was viewed as a sign of holiness, it was not strictly enforced for the clergy for many centuries.
- Pachomius started communal monastic tradition in 320 AD.
- First general council of bishops was called for by Emperor Constantine in 325 AD at Nicaea to address the new viewpoint that Jesus, the Son, who was created by God, the Father, cannot be truly divine as God Himself. This view introduced by Arius in 318 AD, a presbyter at Alexandria, led to his excommunication and the growth of the Arian movement. Despite

the Nicaea creed that the Son and Father are of one essence, Arianism continued to divide the Church.

- Another canon established at Nicaea recognized the bishops of Rome, Alexandria, Antioch, Caesarea, and Jerusalem as having superior authority, with the first three being the head of their region of the empire. The eastern churches, which were also under the jurisdiction of a lower emperor for the eastern empire, did not entirely embrace the Nicaea document and at times favored Arianism.
- The more regional council at Antioch in 341 AD was led by Greek bishops, who defined the eventual eastern position that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are three distinct entities united by a harmony of will. The rift between the eastern and western churches continued to grow.
- Tolerance of Arianism in the West after 350 AD permitted Arianism to reestablish and dominate the province of Illyria. Arianist Christianity then spread to the Visigoths.
- Basil the Great expanded the role of monasteries in the East to treat the sick, help the poor, and educate people in 356 AD.
- The general council of 381 AD held at Constantinople was called by Theodosius, a westerner who assumed the eastern throne. It reaffirmed the creed of Nicaea and ended Arianism in the empire once and for all. The council also resolved the debate over whether Jesus, while He was with us, possessed a human soul or a divine spirit. The decree was that our salvation depended on Jesus' receiving the fullness of our humanity.
- The Council of Constantinople also added the Bishop of Constantinople to the list of superior bishops, with his authority second only to Rome. This led to an immediate response from Rome to formally declare the position of the Bishop of Rome. The Council of Rome held after 381 AD proclaimed

that the authority of the Bishop of Rome as the leader of the entire Church was directly inherited from Peter, the first Bishop of Rome, as bestowed unto him by Jesus. Thus the title and power of pope, meaning someone with supreme authority, transcended what had been given by state or human decrees. The western churches eventually recognized this view while the eastern churches never did.

- The increasing power for the pope started under Pope Damasus (r. 366 - 84 AD), and continued under Pope Siricius (r. 384 - 99 AD), Innocent I (r. 401 - 17 AD), Zosimus (r. 417 - 18 AD), and Boniface I (r. 418 - 22 AD).
- Bishop Ambrose of Milan used the power of excommunication to persuade Emperor Theodosius to back down from punishing over-zealous monks in 385 AD for rioting.
- Augustine of Hippo further expanded the role of monasteries in North Africa to support the local clergy in 388 AD. He also reversed the growth of Donatism in North Africa and introduced the concept of original sin and God's grace in salvation.
- Council of Carthage firmly established the contents of the New Testament for the western churches in 400 AD.
- The Latin Vulgate Bible was developed by Jerome in 405 AD. The Vulgate is based on the Hebrew Old Testament and the Greek New Testament. The Greek translation of the Old Testament, Septuagint, used in the first three centuries was set aside except for the Apocrypha Books. These books are Jewish literature written after the age of the prophets or materials of arguable authorship inserted later into areas of the Hebrew Old Testament. Thus, they are not considered canonical by the Jewish rabbinical authorities.
- The general council of 431 AD held at Ephesus ended after much debate against Antiochene theologians who adopted a

dualistic view of Jesus, which argued that He was with us as both human and divinity. Many common Christians found it easier to simply view Jesus as God in human form.

- Bishop Patrick spent thirty years spreading Christianity in Ireland, starting in 432 AD with emphasis on learning and the monastic tradition.
- Pope Leo I (r. 440 - 61 AD) intervened on behalf of a Western Roman Empire in chaos and negotiated with both Attila the Hun and the Vandals to reduce their destruction.
- The general council of 451 AD held at Chalcedon reversed some positions of the Ephesus council after the death of the emperor who called the Ephesus council. The resulting definition affirmed that Jesus and God are one and Jesus is truly God and truly man. Many eastern churches could not accept this and continued to embrace the single nature portrayal of Christ as Monophysites. The council also rejected the inherent supremacy of the Bishop of Rome and reaffirmed that the Bishop of Constantinople had similar authority.
- Pope Gelasius (r. 492 - 96 AD) proclaimed that the pope was supreme above all men, including the emperor whose responsibility was to protect the Church. Guided by God and Saint Peter, the pope was only answerable to God.
- Pope John I fell into subservience to the new Ostrogoth ruler of Italy (489 - 554 AD) and pleaded with the Bishop of Constantinople, backed by the strong Eastern Roman Empire, for acceptance of the Arian Christians. He was imprisoned by the Ostrogoths for failure.
- All elections to the papacy had to be confirmed by Constantinople or the Byzantine Emperor until 711 AD.

- Benedict of Nursia, who died in 547 AD, developed the rule of monastic life that was to become the foundation of western monasticism.
- Pope Gregory (r. 590 - 604 AD) laid the foundation for future papal supremacy by seizing the remains of Rome and negotiating peace with the Lombard invaders. He built ties with the Lombards that eventually converted them from Arian to Catholic Christianity. Catholicism, the position of the western churches, had already spread to Spain. Gregory also attempted to build ties with the Catholic Franks, while reducing ties with the eastern churches.
- A wave of Celtic missionaries swept into western Europe from the British Isles to revitalize Christianity and a papacy once again dominated by secular rulers. A second wave of Anglo-Saxon missionaries followed in the early eighth century, bringing back Roman style church organization to much of Gaul.
- Emperor Leo III, leader of the eastern churches, ordered the destruction of all icons (iconoclasm) in 726 AD. For the next fifty years, the use of icons was considered idolatry in the East. The papacy, however, defended the use of icons, resulting in the reduction of the regions of papal jurisdiction as punishment by the Byzantine Empire. The western churches officially broke with the East and allied themselves with the Franks in the great schism.

THE STATE FROM 312 - 726 AD

- Emperor Constantine established Christianity as the favored religion of the empire and showered churches with riches, especially the church in Rome until his death in 337 AD.
- Constantius, one of Constantine's three sons, emerged victorious in the struggle for the throne in 353 AD and began efforts to reverse the Nicene Creed in favor of more Arian views, despite resistance by his bishops. He started the tradition of imperial authority over the church.
- Decree of 356 AD issued by Constantius closed pagan temples and prohibited pagan sacrifices across the empire. Pagan religions, however, still lingered on in the empire.
- Emperor Julian came to power in 361 AD and attempted to introduce an organized paganism called Hellenism back into the empire.
- Emperor Jovian came to power in 363 AD and reestablished Christian priority with tolerance of paganism across the empire. Arians and other heretics were also tolerated.
- Emperor Valentinian I (r. 364 - 75 AD) followed Jovian's practices, but his brother Valens who assumed the lower eastern emperor position from (364 - 78 AD) exiled some pro-Nicene bishops.
- Emperor Gratian (r. 375 - 83 AD) and his chosen eastern emperor Theodosius (r. 379 - 95 AD)' strongly supported Orthodox faith and outlawed paganism and heresies such as Arianism. Pagan temples were closed and private worships were forbidden.
- Separation of the Western and Eastern Roman Empire became permanent after the reign of Emperor Valentinian II (r. 383 - 92 AD).

- After the fourth century, the eastern emperors continued to advance their positions as the overseers of the Church with a working relationship with the Bishop of Constantinople to eventually form the Eastern Orthodox Church. The popes in the West gradually became more involved in state affairs, which led to Pope Gregory's complete assumption of state affairs, including leading armies, in 590 AD. The Christians in the Western Empire formed the Catholic Church.
- The Goths and Lombards all invaded the Western Roman Empire as Arian Christians and assumed command of the Roman civil infrastructure with tolerance of the Catholic Church.
- The Vandal invaders, also Arian Christians, were more forceful and demanded rebaptism of non-Arian Christians.
- The Franks entered the Western Roman Empire as pagans. However, King Clovis married a Catholic wife and thus was converted to Catholicism in 496 AD. He then united the Franks, Visigoths, and other Germanic groups under an anti-Arianism agenda.
- For the most part, the Islamic Empire formed in the seventh century was tolerant of Jews and Christians whom they viewed as "People of the Book" since all three groups shared an inter-related history and worshiped the God of Abraham. However, conversion to Islam was strongly encouraged and rewarded.

CHAPTER IV

DIVISION AND GROWTH (726 - 1291 AD)

This period in Christian history began with the emperor of the Byzantine Empire banning the use of icons in worship. The emperor may have felt that icons were drawing the focus of his people away from the Lord and toward idolatry. In so doing, the emperor not only freed his people from the physical crutches for over a century to foster more direct relations with the Lord, but also motivated the West to decide how icons are to be applied in worship. The problem in banning icons is that the heart of Christianity is a freedom of choice for the spirit. In the case of clear heresies, a denial of that choice often brought clarity to the people. However, the need for icons is not necessarily a heresy, because it could be simply a desire for symbols of remembrance. Surely, Christianity is not against physical aspects of remembrance, for Christ asked us to partake of communion in remembrance of Him. However, mature Christians realize that the Lord continuously resides in their hearts and thus they do not need physical objects as aids. The difficulty with forcibly eliminating physical aids is that such an act itself reveals a weakness in applying the power of the Word. In the end, the people's need drove the Byzantine Empire to accept icons again only after one hundred years. The key aspect about iconoclasm is that the emperor and not the church was against icons. Unlike past heresies where small groups of Christians went astray, if icon use was absolutely incorrect, then all the churches would be guilty of heresy. This could only be true if Christianity came to an end in the eighth century and there were no Christians baptized by the Holy Spirit. As long as there were true Christians, the Lord promised that whatever they decided together would be accepted in Heaven, perhaps even the use of icons when Christianity was young.

Returning to the idea that Christianity is like the most powerful medicine that awakens the spirit, even if it does not immediately

bring the spirit to maturity, it will push back the evil so that the spirit can mature in its own time towards God. The churches of the East were growing spiritually as they struggled with the concept of icons. Thus, the Byzantine Empire prospered. However, at some point the growth seemed to have stopped with the people becoming comfortable with their way of worship. Ritualization brought spiritual stagnation or decline, for the power of the Word was no longer taken. During this period of great prosperity in the Byzantine Empire and the Arab Empire there was no documentation of any major missionary campaign into the Muslim world, nor was there much evidence of Muslims converting to Christianity. Thus, after the first millennium the prosperity would be lost.

In the West, the power of the Word would manifest itself in the complete transformation of the people. Within a few hundred years after receiving the Word, the Gothic people, who had lived as barbarians, would achieve a level of civility that far exceeded Greece or Rome. United for the first time after the collapse of Rome, people brought back Roman academic achievements but left behind Roman cruelty. However, it was not in the Lord's plan for the Western Church to live under a new emperor. History tells us that this great empire raised by the former barbarians broke apart in a few centuries to leave the church-controlled Papal State secularly as strong as the other Christian kingdoms. This secular power held by the church helped preserve unity for all the churches spread across the kingdoms of the West. , Without this independent focal point, the Christian kingdoms of the West might have yielded to temptations and decided to control the church for their own interests. Even with papal power and oversight, many kings soon tried to control the church. The West's enslavement by the world would eventually be apparent as their kings fought petty battles among themselves, Christians killing Christians.

Around the tenth century, however, the world was in need of the powers of the West and the people of the West demanded kingdoms and kings like the Jews in the days of Judges. Kingdoms did form in the West: Holy Roman Empire, France, England, Aragon, and Castile. The kingdom of England was very special because it is the land of the Celtic people who launched the first great mission

to save Christianity. Perhaps the purity of the Celtic people was why the Lord permitted the Germanic Saxons and then Normans to conquer England. In the years that came, it would be Norman swords that were to do what must be done.

These kingdoms came to power as the prosperity was taken away in the East. By the end of the eleventh century, the Arab Empire was conquered by the aggressive Turks and another people was brought to the door of Christendom. This time, the people would beat the door down as the barbarians did with the gates of Rome. Unlike the Gothic people, the Turks under Islam were not receptive to the Word. The churches of the East, who had little success with the Arabs, were met with similar levels of failure with the Turks. Thus, another force was necessary to push back the Turks so that the churches of the East would be tested but not crushed. That force came from the West under the pope's calling and took the form of an united army from the kingdoms of the West. Interestingly, the First Crusade came only a few decades after the churches of the West and East decided to sever remaining ties. Then, suddenly there were 50,000 Catholic soldiers camping by request in the capital city of the Orthodox Church. The Lord is often amusing in the way He intervenes. Despite putting two brothers in one room with a common enemy outside, they could not make peace and become one united family in the Lord. Christianity was indeed very immature. How could immature soldiers of the Lord defeat the Turks who had the unity of Islam? As Paul taught us, a Christian soldier's true sword is the Word and his shield is his faith. If the crusaders could not lift the true sword, then another sword had to be used. With the sword of man, the crusaders pushed back the Turks just far enough to free the first churches of Antioch and Jerusalem. Through the state they established, the people of the Holy Land were given the understanding and Biblical interpretation of the Catholics. To this day, Catholic and Orthodox churches share the Holy Land.

The crusades, which began with pure but a little misguided intentions, quickly gave way to the interests of the secular world. With a state in the Holy Land to maintain and victory against the Turks far from sight, the succeeding crusade campaigns fell into the hands of monarchs. The Knights Templar, once filled with

dedicated Christian warriors, became prosperous with land, fortresses, and captured treasures. Eventually, their order was utterly wiped out by monarchs hungering for their wealth and fearing their power, as the corrupted devoured each other. Looking at the objective of the First Crusade, there really was no need for succeeding campaigns into the Turkish Empire. The Byzantine Empire was saved and the Holy Land was freed. Perhaps then was a good time to pick up the true sword of Christianity and conquer the world with the Word. However, that was not to be and the crusades which followed, unlike the first, ended in horrible defeat. Eventually all the emotions of the crusaders turned to hate, and that hate turned towards the Orthodox Church and Constantinople. With Christians hating and killing Christians just a century after the Christian campaign to save Christians, the idea of the crusade had completely fallen to worldly corruption. Paul specifically asked Christians not to fight among themselves and to base all actions towards our fellow man on love.

Though the crusades appear to dominate Christian activities early in the second millennium, it should be noted that the crusades became more of a product of the secular Christian world. The Western Church, centered around the Papal State, pressed on with spiritual survival and growth. The term "spiritual survival" is appropriate considering the centuries of decline the Church went through prior to the end of the first millennium. In those years, the monasteries kept the Christian knowledge while the churches addressed the immediate needs of the people. Towards this goal, infant baptism, gothic church style, and church pardons became popularized. Infant baptism was directly in response to a high infant mortality rate and the teaching that man is born with original sin. This practice is popular to this day. Remembering that it is the baptism by the Holy Spirit that brings salvation, the baptism by man is then a declaration of our faith and longing for Jesus. In this light, whether a child is trapped by original sin or not, there is no reason why parents should not want their children to belong to Jesus from day one. However, parents must realize that whether a child is baptized or not, it is the child's own spiritual growth towards the Lord that determines his or her eventual salvation and position in Heaven.

Concerning original sin, we must recognize that once a child is exposed to this world, he is vulnerable to evil. As his spirit matures, his vulnerability to evil increases. However, his awareness and ability to choose good, God and Jesus, over evil also increases. Only the Lord knows at what point in a child's growth must he consciously turn to Jesus before he is lost. We do know that adults must seek the purity of children for their salvation. These thoughts were probably not on the minds of the people in the Middle Ages. Infant baptism simply offered a degree of comfort, and surely the Lord would notice a parent's love and hopes.

The early Christian churches were built in the Romanesque style, sturdy and functional. While there is no definitive proof as to why church design evolved to the Gothic style, one should note that Gothic designs offered two key impacts on the people. First, the vast number of stone carvings provided an instant pictorial lesson on the events in the Bible. Then as the people entered, the vaulted ceilings lifted the spirits of men. To imagine the impact, one has to consider the harsh environment of feudal Europe after the collapse of the Carolingian Empire. Most people lived in small wood and mud structures. With the grandeur of Rome all gone, the Church was the only thing that stood between man and animal barbarism. The building of such magnificent churches in the days of hardship was clearly an expression of man's love and respect for the Lord. The Lord's acceptance of such structures, even though the Bible said that He had no need of such things, may in part be because of man's need to rise together beyond their state of subsistence. Eventually, hundreds of great cathedrals rose throughout Europe.

The people's need for pardons was natural because of Biblical teachings. While accepting Jesus is the path to salvation, Jesus taught us that salvation in the end rests on doing God's will, which brings us to God's grace. Many who call out to Christ but cannot follow His teachings will not be accepted into the Kingdom of Heaven. To belong to Jesus is to live by His ways in spirit, mind, and body. Hearing this, the people of the Middle Ages, often enslaved by the problems of the world, lived in fear of damnation. The Church had the authority to pardon people's sins because Jesus

said that whatever Christians decide as a group will be accepted in Heaven. However, decisions by true Christians must be based on the Word. Therefore, pardons for past sins could and should be granted because the Lord has declared that if a man turns towards goodness, then all the evil that he has done is forgiven. If the Lord has already forgiven, the Church should do likewise. In contrast, pardons should not be given to Christians who are not repentant because they are still trapped in sin. While these teachings seem to be clear, this authority given to the Body of Christ can be abused by those who themselves are trapped by sin. Therefore, what may have begun as an attempt to free people from haunting memories of their past evolved into a privilege of the Church that was often given at a price.

By the time of the First Crusade, efforts in survival had turned to growth. The cathedrals began educating new generations of more powerful Christians. The papacy began fighting to win the churches back from the influence of the emerging kingdoms of the West. In the process, the papacy started laying stricter codes of behavior for Christian leaders. The selling of pardons was banned. The division between clergy and lay Christians became more defined, with the clergy held to much higher standards of practice. In the fight to win back the churches, the supremacy of the Church over secular authorities was asserted and the autonomy of the Church in selecting its own leaders was negotiated. The college of cardinals was established to select the pope. The threat of excommunication was often used to motivate monarchs. Excommunication is a formalization of Biblical teachings involving Christians separating themselves from those who will not turn from evil. After continuous efforts by Christians in showing their fellow Christian his sins, separation may be the last step. Excommunication is not an act of rejection but of placing the person in the hands of God. It is with the hope that, after God's testing, the person can once again join the Body in repentance. While the use of excommunication by the Church in those days may have at times been questionable, the effectiveness of it is a testimony to the cohesion of Christians despite constant bickering. Perhaps such threats of excommunication were tolerated by the Lord because the kings of the West were

very corrupt and disrespectful of the Church. To win back the churches, sacrifices, such as the martyrdom of Thomas Becket, were made. If the kings were not pushed back to the foundations of their faith, there is no telling how much further they would have sunk.

The struggle between the papacy and the kings of western Europe showed that, while the First Crusade was a unified action of the Church and the kingdoms, the succeeding campaigns did not necessarily reflect a similar conviction. In fact, as the crusader state was sinking into despair, the Church began a campaign to rescue the Christian masses. This campaign, spearheaded by the Franciscan and Dominican monks, brought the true Word to the masses who had never fully received the Word. It also corrected mistakes in practice and understanding before they spread. This campaign used the true sword of Christianity and achieved far more than the crusaders. The crusaders after a hundred years achieved nothing but animosity from the Christians of the East. The wandering monks, on the other hand, brought the fullness of the Word to many parts of the East as well as the West. Eventually, the Franciscans, with their inspirational dedication of both spirit and body, would be permitted to accomplish a most amazing but historically obscure mission.

With a single event, the Lord permitted the aggressive Turks to be brought to their knees, the crusader state to be crushed, the eastern churches to be unharmed, and the Franciscans to be rewarded. This event was the Mongol invasion. By the time the Mongols intervened in the conflict between Christians and Muslims, they had already adopted the Chinese culture and philosophical views. Thus, the Mongols entered not as barbarians but as an expanding empire that surpassed the might of Rome. It would to this day be the greatest, though short-lived, empire the world has ever seen. The Mongols attacked from the heart of China to the boarder of Austria. Most of the Turkish lands were lost. The crusader state was destabilized for later downfall. While the Mongols were conquerors, they were not oppressors for, like Babylon, all religions were tolerated in China. Therefore, those parts of the Byzantine Empire conquered by Mongols were allowed to continue practicing Christianity freely. Ironically, the Orthodox Church enjoyed more

freedom under the Mongols than the crusaders. With the expansion of the Mongol Empire, suddenly there was a secure path from the Christian world straight to China. Unlike the trade routes of the Roman days where different merchants traveled different legs of the journey, Europeans were able to journey straight to the heart of China perhaps for the first time. Twelve hundred years after the gift of the Word, Christian Franciscan missionaries were welcomed into the great court of China.

While the journey to China was perhaps the most amazing case in the spreading of the Word at the beginning of the second millennium, the Word also gradually spread beyond the borders of the Christian kingdoms. In the West, Catholic Christianity spread into the Scandinavian region of Sweden, Denmark, and Norway. As the Slavic people north of Greece began forming kingdoms and migrating east to the region of Russia, they received Orthodox Christianity. With this growth, the Christian conquest of Europe was basically complete. Christianity in Africa, on the other hand, was an entirely different story. Yet, the decline of the Turkish Empire under the Mongol invasion permitted another unique event in North Africa. Briefly, the once Christian province of Egypt rose to power and even assumed control of Jerusalem. History does not fully document the choices of the Christians in Egypt when the Muslims invaded. However, it is apparent that, even under far less persecution than the early Christian days in Rome, many Christians and their descendants chose an easier life by being Muslim. While no man can comprehend fully the greatness of the Lord's plan, perhaps the brief Egyptian rise was to remind them of their past with the Word by taking them to the place where it all began, a place where all the branches of Christianity were represented. Also, the power given to Egypt permitted them to choose. If Egypt had chosen to become a Christian kingdom, no other Muslim state was in a position to oppose them. This opportunity, however, was very brief.

In the western churches' quest to regain their authority after centuries of neglect, they took one bold step that would forever stain Christianity. While the Dominican monks were established

to correct heresies on localized levels, this was quickly found to be inadequate for curbing major movements in alternative Biblical interpretations or practices. During the years of struggle after the collapse of the Western Roman Empire, most of the forces, such as Arianism that motivated deviations from central Christian teachings, still emerged from mainstream Christian scholarly pursuits and debates. The heresies from that period were simple misunderstandings correctable by either reeducation or eventual exertion of church authority. This changed as the West rose in prosperity and power. The Cathars and Waldensians were the prime movements that reinitiated the Christian debate and drew many followers. If left undefeated by the truth or force, the unity of the Church would be threatened. The Cathars revived Gnostic beliefs, and the Waldensians directly opposed the Church. In days long past under Rome, heresies of this nature would come under continued imperial suppression. By the thirteenth century, the papacy was given the authority and responsibility to deal with such transgressions. However, the papacy did not have the military power of Rome and the Christian kingdoms were often uncooperative. Perhaps these were reasons why it at times chose to use extreme violence in the inquisition process. With limited resources to enforce obedience, the approach to heresies would be deterrence. This deterrence, in some cases, were horrifying forms of torture and execution. In time history would forget that the Inquisition often involved harmless penance that served to strengthen faith.

Unfortunately, after the first few centuries the Church was filled with many less than true Christians. The Inquisition in their hands would harm and kill innocent Christians and heretics who could have been saved by gentler discipline based on love. In many cases, the Inquisition, originally intended to save Christianity, became an instrument for persecuting Christians. Under Biblical teachings, the Church has the authority to identify sinful behavior among Christians and gradually take extreme steps to convince the person to repent. At the point of repentance, the sins must be forgiven, for judgment is reserved for the Lord. If the person continues to slip into sin, he is still to be accepted as long as he shows willingness to change. These acts are directed at sins and not mistakes in Biblical

understanding. If Christians are evaluated on Biblical understanding, then most of us would be in trouble. No matter what, the most extreme action the Church should take is to excommunicate a fallen Christian who refuses to recognize his sins. By this action, other Christians are protected from his corruption and he is placed in the hands of God for help. There is absolutely no precedence in the Bible where Christians were allowed to harm other Christians, no matter how good the intentions. It is difficult to assess to what degree corporal punishment that causes no physical damage constitutes harm, for teachers could spank their students. Capital punishment, alternately, is a passing of sentence, a denial of further opportunities to repent. Such an act is directly against Christian teachings even though it is a part of the Old Testament. When the Jews were young and unable to comprehend the full meaning of the Word, the Lord directed them to live by laws. However, since no one can follow all the laws, God granted us salvation by His grace. Jesus taught us that whoever is without sin can live by the laws and stone others to administer God's justice. The Middle Ages must have been filled with inquisitors who believed that they were without sin.

Why did the Lord permit the Inquisition to occur? Perhaps it was because Christianity was not mature enough to preserve its unity and defeat incorrect branches with the power of the Word. Yet the unity and direction of Christianity must be preserved even if false Christians had to be allowed to commit such horrors. At the same time, the Lord permitted the horrors of the Inquisition to remain in Christian memory forever to remind us that even with the help of the Holy Spirit and the guidance of the Bible, a Christian's fall into inhumanity is but a step away. Every Christian must remember that without love all is meaningless. The Inquisition also created many Christian martyrs. Martyrdom has been with Christianity throughout its history as testimony of Christian faith. Through their strength other Christians found courage not to surrender under hardship. By their sacrifice evil men were allowed to condemn themselves. Ironically, in an age when Christian kingdoms grew strong enough to repel external persecutors, the greatest threat came

from the Church. If there was evil in the hearts of church leaders, then the Inquisition became the means to expose and condemn themselves in the eyes of the Lord.

As Christians were killing Christians in the name of the Lord, another group of people in Central and South America were killing people as offerings to an all-so-different master. Since the rise of the Olmec Kingdom around 1000 BC, the people in the Americas lived like other early cultures in fear of the gods of nature. The Mayan civilization, the first great empire in the Americas, began in a similar manner. However, around the turn of the millennium, spiritual growth went so astray that the Mayans began committing many human sacrifices to the god of the underworld. What is also interesting is that apparently their civilization, which functioned strictly based on the concept that their kings were assisted by their gods, survived for centuries without doubts among the people. The Bible teaches us that there are dark forces that God permits to tempt the hearts of men. Since the arrival of Christ, Satan himself has been cast upon the earth to tempt man. Perhaps the people of Central and South America fell into such temptations. Their god of the underworld could be one of the dark angels or even Satan. The Bible tells us that the angel Apollyon guards the Abyss. As the blood of the innocent continued to pour out to a god of darkness, perhaps the Lord permitted the darkness to grant the Mayan kings power to test how long and how deep they would sink into spiritual death. After centuries, the Mayans never grew, never searched into their souls to find the true nature of man in goodness. Eventually the Mayans were wiped out with only their buildings remaining. Historians have been trying to unravel the mystery of the Mayan disappearance for decades. Maybe it is also by the Lord's plan that the Mayan pictorial language cannot be fully translated to this day. For cultures which the Lord has found worthy, their influence on the cultures after them would extend for centuries. However, the Mayan culture would remain buried in jungles until this century. Even though the Mayans were wiped out from the face of the earth, the practice of human sacrifice spread to the succeeding civilizations of the Americas.

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

THE WORLD FROM 726 - 1291 AD

- Carolingians (747 - 987) rose to power under Charlemagne (r.768 - 814), who was crowned emperor by Pope Leo III (r. 795 - 816) in 800. Carolingian Empire brought the Germanic lands and Lombard Italy into its control and reestablished academic pursuits after centuries of decline. Jews were tolerated throughout the empire.
- The migration of Swedes east led to the establishment of the Russian Kingdom after 800 with the capital at Kiev.
- Arab renaissance of science and philosophy emerged (750 - 830).
- Carolingian Empire broke up in civil war after Charlemagne's death. Treaty of Verdun and then Merson led to loose confederations of French states and German states, with some states controlled by the papacy.
- The Saxon King, Otto I, united the German states into the Holy Roman Empire and was crowned emperor by Pope John XII (r. 955 - 964) in 926.
- The Slavic people established the Kingdom of Bulgaria for a brief period (750 - 950) until it was defeated by the Byzantine Empire.
- Byzantine Empire reached peak power in 900 with the decline of the Arab Empire. Constantinople became the central city of Christianity.
- Mayan Empire reached height of power by 800. Unlike earlier cultures, Mayan life centered around continuous human sacrifices to the god of the underworld. Later empires such as the Aztecs

and Incas would also adopt the practice of human sacrifices to their own deities.

- Tolerance of Jews diminished, leading to massacres and expulsion from the Holy Roman Empire after 1100.
- Arab Empire disappeared by 1100, after two centuries of struggle against the rising Seljuk Turkish Empire. The Seljuk Turks also went on to conquer nearly half of the Byzantine Empire, including Jerusalem.
- Region of Northern France organized into the Kingdom of Normandy after 950 and then conquered England in the Battle of Hastings in 1066. Normandy and England united under Henry II (r. 1154-1189).
- The Spanish Peninsula organized into three Christian kingdoms (Portugal, Castile, and Aragon), and started driving south the Moors by 1200. The Moors retained a foothold in Spain for several more centuries.
- King Philip II Augustus of France conquered Normandy by 1200, leaving England the stronghold of Norman rule.
- Crusaders sacked Constantinople and took control of the Byzantine Empire by 1204. What was left of the Byzantine Empire was later regained by the Greeks.
- Ghengis Khan (1167 - 1227) and descendants united Mongolia with China and rapidly expanded west. Russia was totally defeated by 1240. The Seljuk Turks lost the better part of their territory. Mongolian hordes attacked Poland but were turned back by the Germans.
- English nobles pushed their king to adopt the Magna Carta in 1215, which limited the power of the king. This started the evolution towards a representative form of government.

- Egyptian Empire reestablished under a Mongolian-overrun Turkish Empire and captured Jerusalem around 1250.
- The power of the Papal States started to diminish after 1250.
- Lombard Italy rose in power to push the Germanic Holy Roman Empire north by 1254.
- England in 1290 joined in the expulsion and persecution of the Jews.

CHRISTIANITY FROM 726 - 1291 AD

- Iconoclasm continued in the East under Byzantine Emperor Leo III's son Constantine V (r. 741 -775) and declined under Leo IV (r. 775 - 80) until Constantine VI (r. 780 - 797) stopped supporting the campaign.
- Use of wafers in communion standardized after 700s.
- Seventh Ecumenical Council at Nicaea in 787 condemned the whole iconoclastic campaign and proclaimed that icons should be venerated but not worshiped. It explained that icons serve as reminders of faith, and to deny them is to deny the human aspect of Christ.
- By 1000 AD, infant baptism replaced believers baptism due to high infant mortality and the Augustine doctrine of original sm.
- Iconoclasm by the Byzantine Emperor reemerged under Leo V (r. 813 - 820) and Theophilus (r. 829 - 842). Then, the empire finally accepted icons and made peace with the Orthodox churches.
- Eastern and western churches continued to disagree over the position of the Son, which led to the final break-up of 1054 AD between Pope Leo IX (r. 1049 - 1054) and the Patriarch of Constantinople Michael Cerularius (r. 1043 - 1058).
- Fourth Lateran Council of 1215
 - o Archbishops must hold annual regional survey to make sure correct practices are conducted.
 - o Monks must gather annually on the provincial level to make sure rules are adhered to.
 - o Church education will be extended to rich lay people.
 - o Affirmed transubstantiation (bread and wine are materially transformed upon consecration by clergy).

- Established seven sacraments to bestow grace: baptism, confirmation, eucharist, penance, extreme unction, ordination, and matrimony.
- The white monks of the Cistercian Monastery (1097 - end of twelfth century), formed from the Benedictine order, represented one of the first steps in reestablishing the role of monasteries as the bishop schools started to take over intellectual leadership. Living autonomous and austere lives, Cistercians eventually declined due to over-prosperity.
- Starting in 1137, Gothic church designs began replacing Romanesque designs as a vast number of cathedrals were built across Europe.
- Third Lateran Council in 1179: Pope Alexander III (r. 1162 - 63) encouraged secular rulers to discover heresy.
- Papal Decree of 1184: Pope Lucius III (r. 1181 - 1185) called upon bishops to take action against heretics.
- Pope Innocent III (r. 1198 - 1216) declared heresy to be treasonous in 1199.
- The gray monks of the Franciscan Order, approved by the pope in 1209, became traveling friars, preaching the gospel and adopting a life of poverty.
- The black monks of the Dominican Order formed in 1220 traveled the land to find and correct heresies and ignorance.
- Franciscans and Dominicans established significant schools for training laymen and successfully penetrated parts of the East in the beginning.
- Pope Gregory IX issued decree in 1231 to establish the Inquisition process where heretics were placed under secular punishment including death.

- Universities established in the thirteenth century under the eleventh - twelfth century cathedral school structure. A few thousand students per school were taught grammar, logic, rhetoric, arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, and music by clerics using the Roman concept.
- Thomas Aquinas (1225 - 74), the great Middle Ages theologian, bridged the gap between Aristotelian logic passed to the West by Muslims plus Jews and Christianity through the concept of knowledge gained by experience and knowledge gained by the Holy Spirit.
- Cathars, a Christian sect that believed in an evil God who created the material world and a good God who created the spirit, was crushed by the Inquisition in 1250. Cathars spread in western Europe in the twelfth century.
- Waldensian movement, which rejected the church as impure, was crushed by the Inquisition. The movement started in 1176 and spread around Lombard.

THE STATE FROM 726 - 1291 AD

- Massive decline of church organization in the ninth and tenth centuries resulting from the decline of the Carolingian Empire. Local churches fell under the control of regional authorities.
- Prince Rastislav of Moravia (Czech) became the first Slav to be converted to Christianity when the Orthodox Church responded to his request in 860. However, Moravia was soon conquered by the Magyars.
- Czar Boris of Bulgaria embraced the Orthodox Church in 870 with Serbia joining Christianity soon afterwards.
- The Clunic Monastic Order founded in France in 910 started rebuilding monastic unity by eventually tying over 300 monasteries to a central house, free from local authorities.
- Christianity nationally embraced in Scandinavia under King Knut of Denmark (1018 - 35), King Olaf I Tryggvason of Norway (969 -1000), and Olaf Skotkonung of Sweden (995 - 1021).
- Latin churches expanded east from Germany to convert King Wenceslas of Bohemia (907 - 29), King Boleslaus I of Poland (992 - 1025), and King Stephen of Hungary (975 - 1038) to Catholicism.
- Prince Vladimir of Kiev brought Russia into the Orthodox Church in 988.
- Pope Leo IX (r. 1048 -1054) initiated papal reforms. Reformist movement supported by Holy Roman Emperor Henry III (r. 1039 - 1056).
- Pope Nicholas II declared that future popes are to be elected by a college of cardinals in 1059.
- Pope Gregory VII (Hildebrand) in 1075 declared the power of the pope to be supreme with all secular powers owing

sub mission. Additionally, the selling of pardons, clerical marriages, and lay investitures were all banned.

- In 1077, Emperor Henry IV challenged Pope Gregory VII but backed down after facing strong popular opposition and excommunication. He conducted a show of begging for forgiveness at Canossa.
- First Crusade in 1095 called by Pope Urban II in response to Byzantine Emperor Alexius Comnenus' requests when the Seljuk Turks defeated the Byzantine army at the Battle of Manzikert (1071) and took half of what was the Eastern Roman Empire.
 - o 50,000 men descended on Constantinople and then attacked the Holy Land, taking the principality of Antioch, county of Edessa, and Jerusalem. Continued disagreement led to the establishment of separate Catholic churches alongside existing Orthodox churches and the creation of a crusader state supplied by sea from Venice.
 - o Knights Templar and Knights Hospitaller orders of soldier monks created to protect the Holy Land.
- The English church began electing its bishops by the cathedral chapter but agreed to King Henry I (r. 1110 - 35) as the authority for granting bishops temporal powers. Similar agreement reached in France under King Philip I.
- The Concordat of Worms (1122) established under Holy Roman Emperor Henry V limited imperial rights to granting only temporal powers.
- Second Crusade in 1147 led by King Louis VII of France and the Holy Roman Emperor Conrad III ended in total defeat at Damascus.
- Fourth Crusade in 1204 launched by the Doge of Venice against the Byzantine Empire and Orthodox Church, which the West

blamed for their failures. Constantinople was sacked and the East was broken into feudal holdings of the crusaders until 1261.

- Fall of the crusader state in 1291.
- Pope Innocent III (r. 1198 - 1216) challenged King John of England in 1295 over the appointment of the archbishop by refusing church marriages, baptism, plus burial and by excommunicating the king. After some attempts to seize church property, King John yielded and accepted his position as feudal retainer of the pope. This and later papal taxes sowed the seeds of popular English resentment of the papacy.
- Pope Innocent III also forced King Philip Augustus of France to take back his wife after he abandoned her.
- Thomas Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury, murdered by King Henry II of England for his defense of the absolute power of the Church.
- Alexander Nevsky of Russia repelled crusader knights in 1242, but then yielded Russia to Mongol rule where Christianity was tolerated.
- Imperial court of China visited by Franciscans John of Planocarpini and William of Rubricus in 1250. Waves of missionaries traveled across the Mongolian Empire for decades, preaching in India, Persia, and China. Conversion of western Mongolians to Islam and the decline of the empire ended such missionary activities.
- The Inquisition spread across Europe with strong embracement from Spain, opposition by England and Bohemia, and varying acceptance elsewhere. Papally recognized inquisitors judged heresies based on severity, level of ignorance, and degree of relapse. Punishment varied from light penance to burning at the stake.

CHAPTER V

THE POWER THAT CORRUPTS (1291-1517 AD)

The fall of the crusader state did not awaken the kingdoms of the West from their status of corruption. Like the Jews of the Old Testament to whom God granted prosperity, they too strayed away from the Lord, thinking that they themselves could accomplish anything. The quest for individual power by the Christian kingdoms continued. Long bloody wars were fought between Christians not for defense, nor for preservation of the Church, but for power. Amidst this struggle, the papacy, which had once led the kingdoms physically and spiritually, was pushed aside and eventually controlled. Effectively the Church as an entity responsible only to the Lord became no more. Why did the Lord permit this to happen? Perhaps in this phase growth and corruption must occur simultaneously. As spirits grow stronger they are tempted by their own power, and it is only by overcoming temptation can growth continue. The problem was how could a Church with secular authority stay pure and true with corruption all around it? If the Church yielded to the corruption of the kings, then it would be lost. If the Church fought the corruption of powerful kings, then it might have been overwhelmed or the spiritually struggling kingdoms would have to be crushed by the Lord. The historical outcome in which the Church was given to the control of corrupt kings avoided these two dilemmas and protected the true Christians for the time when the Church rose again in Rome.

The surrendering of the Church occurred when the French placed their loyalist in the seat of papal power and moved the pope from Rome to Avignon, France. As a puppet of the French state, the pope backed its policies and military campaigns. The French war with England further motivated the English to separate from the papacy. Christianity is a most potent medicine capable of healing the most

enslaved spirit. In time, fifty plus years, the French popes would start to see their true responsibility and hear the call of Rome. After several attempts and seventy years, the papacy returned to Rome. In the years that came, papal authority would be severely challenged as the college of cardinals periodically elected new popes whenever the current pope was not agreeable. Naturally, the existing pope who held the seat of Peter challenged such actions.

Why was this circus of battling popes permitted to occur by the Lord? Did it not damage the Church? To study this comical struggle in the papacy, we must remember that the entire Body of Christ, churches throughout the European kingdoms, were struggling against state domination. This instability in the papacy could actually have been a symbol of hope. First, it drew the attention of Christians across Europe, even the eastern churches, to the papacy. Then it showed Christians that the papacy after many years was no longer under state domination. The papacy again became a force that motivated state actions. After many wars over power, the European states again took sides over something that mattered. The conflict brought the churches together in passionate debate for their faith at the Council of Constance. If the people could have a role in deciding their spiritual leaders, then most certainly they could go on to question state authority. In this manner, the states' hold on the people was diminished. So the symbol of hope provided by the comical struggle for church power was not absolute authority but the lack of absolute authority.

Another reason why the papal struggle was allowed to occur could be because it taught a lesson in humility. Through their bickering, the popes have shown that they, like the apostles, were men with weaknesses and sins. God granted them responsibilities, and they could only succeed by the grace of God. Like all positions of authority in Christianity, their mission was to serve, not rule. When Christians, including the pope, become the center of adoration and worship, Christianity suffers. The events of the fifteenth century will forever mark a stain on Christian history. Yet, it is a precious stain that constantly reminds us that the ultimate human authority over the Church, even with the help of the Holy Spirit, is still vulnerable to sin and that true authority lies in the Lord.

As churches became overwhelmed by the worldly needs of the states, the monasteries became overwhelmed by the growing worldly needs of the people. In a way they were victims of their own success. By keeping the faith and Christian education through the centuries of subsistence, the monasteries helped to raise the expectations of people. In prosperity the people wanted more from their church leaders. Instead of idealistic monks living distant lives, they wanted priests dedicated to them. The Cathedral schools started increasing the supply of priests drastically. Thus, at the local level the Church gradually became a servant rather than a leader of the people. Amidst prosperity, the monks also feuded among themselves over attitudes on wealth. This is a difficult issue. The primary teaching in the Bible is that Christians should only take what they need, never indulge themselves with luxuries, and not worry about their material needs. To survive in the world and do His work, Jesus told His disciples that they will need to take along money and weapons. We are also taught that the ideal state is to free ourselves of wealth that binds us to the world. This way our treasures would be only in Heaven. Therefore, while Christians must have money and possessions to do their work, the amount should not be much. How much possessions constitute wealth is an individual question. For some, many material items are gifts from the Lord to do His work. For others, a single coin or thirty pieces of silver can bind them.

With the Church in disarray at every level, perhaps the kingdoms of the West were in need of the horrifying events that came. In the days of the Old Testament, when the Jews strayed away from the Lord, disasters of some form would often be sent to punish and remind them of the truth. In the mid 1300's, Europe was hit with the plague, a disaster of Biblical proportions. If people could not remember the Word when they were prospering, perhaps in fear they would turn to the Lord. With every other person in Europe seized by the Black Death, who could stop thinking about the Lord and praying for salvation every day?

Soon afterwards, the mission to China also came to an end. Man's actions are one dimensional but the Lord's plan is perfect in every way. The end of the China mission by the West is perhaps an

indicator that the Church was not ready to be propagated worldwide or that China was not ready to receive the Word. By the time the Word reached China, it was approaching a point of stagnation in spiritual evolution. The philosophies, such as Confucianism, and religions, such as Buddhism, which at one time ignited the hearts of men, were starting to settle into traditions. Instead of hungering for spiritual growth and searching for the truth, the people were starting to live by laws and rituals. The golden age of Chinese culture as embodied in the Han and Tang dynasties was no more. By the 1300's all that was left of the once spiritually growing Chinese culture was conquest and maintenance of an empire. Thus, the Word was needed in China. However, the acceptance of the Word is often a function of the spiritual hunger in the people. Perhaps the Chinese of the 1300's were not spiritually hungry enough. Were they too enslaved by the world? Alternatively, people who lived more righteous lives are not going to be as hungry as those who have committed a great deal of sin. Jesus came for the spiritually ill, and the most ill needs Jesus immediately while others might wait a bit longer. Probably a little of both reasons, spiritual immaturity and a bit of spiritual strength, applied to different aspects of China.

The dimensionality and impact of the China mission did not cease with the cut-off of the safe road to China. The rediscovery of this mythical empire on the other side of the known world would drive European and world history to this day. In the centuries that came, armies of ocean explorers set off in search of a new route to China. This search led to the discovery of the new world in America in slightly more than a hundred years and an eventual route to the East around Africa. What is equally amazing is that since the days of Rome whenever the West turned to China, China has been there to receive it.

Amidst all the corrupting and controlling influences, the churches of the West fought their way back spiritually and physically. The pope eventually was restored to Rome and the Papal State. The college of cardinals was filled with fewer political appointees. The Black Death, which killed a shocking portion of the people in Europe in the 1300's, may have been a key driver to

changes in church attitudes during the 1400 - 1500's. This culminated in the rise of humanism, a movement that embraced life, enhancement of life, and love for fellow man. The cruelty of the Inquisition gave way to scholarly pursuits to advance the human status through technology and philosophy. In that period, the Church, after much struggle against state power, also realized the need to increase Church wealth. Secular power is built on wealth.

While the Western Church was being reborn by the plague, the churches of the East were being reborn by war. For many decades the East was under a Roman style Mongolian Empire which allowed religious freedom. Even though China separated from this empire in the 1300's and ended Christian presence, the empire's hold on the Middle East and Eastern Europe continued for more than another century. During this period of Mongol occupation both Christianity and Islam were given equal opportunities to spread their beliefs, for the Mongols themselves were of neither faith. From this competition or lack of competition, Muslims emerged as the more dedicated and passionate people. The churches of the East, which had gone through prosperity, tragedy, and freedom under the Byzantine Empire, failed to grow spiritually with the Word. There was only one thing to be done. The Byzantine Empire had to be crushed, and the mantle of Church leadership had to be passed to a younger and purer group in the East. So this was perhaps why the Lord permitted the Islamic Turks to rise again and wipe out the Byzantines. Constantinople, the pride of Christianity, a city built in honor of the first Christian emperor, was given to Islam. Although the Muslims did not embrace the Word, their dedication to their religion was remarkable. Perhaps the Lord permitted them to prosper for a time to remind Christians how lax and lazy they were in comparison. As the Turks were ending the Byzantine Empire, the Russians were gaining strength to free themselves from the last of the Mongols. Of all the people of Europe, they had the shortest history. They were the newest Christians, unhindered by past cultures, and in awe of God's grace. So Moscow picked-up the banner when Constantinople fell.

If all things occur by the will or permission of the Lord, then technologies are discovered in accordance with the Lord's plan. In

this light, the Lord gave the printed book to help man and firearms to test man. The people of Europe were getting spiritually stronger, hungry for greater understanding of the Lord's will. Thus the Word in its fullest form, the Holy Bible, must be made available to them. When a flood of books spread across Europe, the nature of the Church was transformed. When the people were given strength, they were also given trials through a new revolutionary weapon. With the gun, killing became easy. Before, many people had to accept events and bury their greed, anger, and jealousy simply because nothing could be done. With guns, the weakest man could seek revenge and the most militarily inexperienced nation could form an army. It took years to train a swordsman or bowman, but it took only a few weeks to train someone to point and fire. Eventually, the ease in military training would make the conscription of peasants to be soldiers in war practical. As a result, the people, especially the peasants, could sit back less and less and leave warfare to their rulers.

The proliferation of Biblical knowledge and physical power continued to fan the intellectual and spiritual growth of the people until they started questioning the adequacy of their spiritual leadership. Ironically, the churches had been the key promoters of academic and intellectual growth that empowered the people to question. However, the church leaders were ill prepared to address the needs of the people, for they were still busy building church wealth and power. From this debate in the lower ranks of the clergy and educated lay people, one single dedicated clergyman, Martin Luther, spoke out boldly against one particular church corruption, the sale of indulgences. His argument was not against any church practice, not even indulgences, but the corrupt use of it. From that tiny spark, Christianity would be forever changed.

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

THE WORLD FROM 1291- 1517 AD

- France under Philip IV (r. 1285 - 1314) consolidated power and extended influence into Germany and Italy. Through the 100 Years War (1337 - 1453), English claim to Normandy ended.
- Plague hit Europe from the Middle East in 1348 and killed half of the population.
- China separated from the rest of the Mongolian Empire in 1368 with the start of the Ming Dynasty. China also supported the spread of Buddhism into the Mongolian ranks as their power declined.
- Hapsburg Dynasty emerged from Austria in 1276 to control and invogorate the Holy Roman Empire after 1438.
- Hungary and Poland emerged after the Mongol invasion and allied themselves with Austria against a growing Turkish Empire in the wake of declining Mongol influence.
- Musket invented in 1475.
- Holy Roman Empire extended control into the Netherlands, Luxembourg, and Burgundy after 1477.
- Castile and Aragon united in 1479 into the Kingdom of Spain, with land holdings in the Netherlands, Naples, and Sicily.
- Columbus discovered the Americas in 1492.
- Portuguese explorer Vasco da Gama rounded the tip of Mrica in 1497, with sailors reaching Japan along the India coast in 1542.

- The new Ottoman Turkish Empire started expanding after 1300 and captured Constantinople by 1453. By 1500, the Byzantine Empire was lost and there were continuous Turkish attacks into Poland and Hungary.
- Ivan III freed Russia from Mongolian control by 1500.

CHRISTIANITY FROM 1291 - 1517 AD

- Franciscan Order struggled with internal feud between the Spiritual monks dedicated to poverty and Conventual monks dedicated to property. Papal resolution in 1279, which proclaimed the Church as the true owners of property, changed little.
- Franciscans were ordered to unite by Pope John XX II (r. 1316-1334) in 1317. Resistant Spirituals were placed under the Inquisition. The pope condemned the doctrine of poverty, which threatened the wealth-oriented church institution in 1323.
- Monasteries gradually fell from lack of support as the wealthy patrons began supporting more accessible local priests. Private chantries, where poor priests constantly offered prayers to the patron family, grew.
- The average man began to embrace Christianity as a personal religion, and the spread of academia ignited criticism of church corruption.
- Mysticism grew in Germany, Italy, and England in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.
- Humanist movement, launched by the writings of Francesco Petrarch (1304 - 74), spread across Italy to become the foundation of the Renaissance. Humanism emphasized scholarly advancements and the improvement of the human state. Greek and Roman arts, political ideas, and philosophies were revived in the fifteenth to sixteenth centuries.
- *The Modern Way of Serving God* propagated by Geert Groote (1340 - 84), was a philosophy that set aside traditions and focused on deeds (poverty, chastity, and obedience). Thomas Haemerken's (1380 - 1471) summary book *Imitation of God* spread across northern Europe.

- First printed book (Bible) produced by Johann Gutenberg in 1456. With some failed attempts to control the technology, printing quickly spread across Europe, making ideas easily accessible to the masses.
- Pope Sixtus IV (r. 1471- 84) focused on amassing papal wealth to finance humanistic activities: building hospitals, supporting the arts such as the Sistine Chapel, and condemning of the harshness of the Spanish Inquisition. To do so, papal bureaucracy was expanded, and the sale of church offices and indulgences was drastically increased.
- Interaction with the papacy and Italy brought the Renaissance to the rest of western Europe by the end of the 1500's. The intellectual revival sparked theologians to demand Church reform or to reject the Church altogether.
- The inheritor of the Spirituals, the Observants, formally broke with the Conventuals in 1517.
- Protestant Reformation started on All Saints Day, October 31, 1517, with Martin Luther presenting his 95 theses that pointed out the abuse of indulgences, which was initially intended to reduce the severity of penance. All the academic and religious centers across western Europe were immediately debating the arguments against indulgences.

THE STATE FROM 1291 - 1517 AD

- Pope Celestine V (r. 1294) abdicated position in 1294 and caused great uncertainty among Christians.
- Pope Boniface VIII (r. 1294 - 1303) drastically challenged royal authority to tax and banish clergy. French king attempted physical attack on the pope, who counter-attacked by excommunicating him. Upon the pope's death in 1303, the French pressured cardinals to elect a weak pope, Benedict XI (r. 1303-1304).
- Under pressure from France a French archbishop became Pope Clement V (r. 1305 - 14). He then chose to stay at Avignon, France, and brought in more French cardinals. Clement V also supported the French king's campaign to crush the Templar Knights' strongholds in France.
- Pope John XXII (r. 1316 - 34), Pope Benedict XII (r. 1334-42), and Pope Clement VI (r. 1342 - 52) all chose to stay at Avignon under French influence. Clement VI supported France in the 100 Years War against England.
- Byzantine Emperor John VI (r. 1347 - 54) sent envoy to Avignon to discuss unification and enlist help against the Turks.
- Pope Innocent VI (r. 1352 - 62) initiated efforts to restore a feuding Italy after years of no papal supervision. Pope Urban V (r. 1362 - 70) returned to Rome for a few years, but then went back to Avignon. Pope Gregory XI (r. 1370 - 78) finally brought the papacy back to Rome, but did not free the College of Cardinals from French influence.
- Rise of Ming Dynasty in China in 1368 brought Christian efforts to an end.
- Cardinals, yielding to an angry crowd in Rome, elected an Italian pope, Urban VI (r. 1378 - 89), who then immediately challenged

the cardinals. So, the cardinals elected a second pope, Clement VII (r. 1523-34).

- After a battle for Rome between the two popes, Clement VII withdrew to Avignon in 1381. France, Spain, and Scotland supported Avignon while Italy, the Holy Roman Empire, Hungary, England, and Scandinavia supported Rome.
- The cardinals at Avignon and Rome attempted to unify the Church at the Council of Pisa by electing a new pope, Alexander V (r. 1409 -10). However, the two old popes refused to resign and three popes reigned.
- Council of Constance (r. 1414 - 18), attended by most western church leaders and even some eastern church representatives, demanded all three popes to step down. The newly elected Pope Martin V (r. 1417 - 31) returned to Rome in 1420 and quickly established order.
- Byzantine Emperor Manuel II Palaeologus (r. 1391 - 1425) personally journeyed to the West to seek help with little success.
- Council of Cardinals at Basle in 1431 focused on unification with the Greek Orthodox Church, but the royal powers in the West showed no interest.
- Pope Eugene IV (r. 1431 - 39) challenged the Council of Cardinals at Basle and transferred the council to Ferrara in 1438. Those cardinals remaining at Basle elected a new pope, Felix V (r. 1439 - 49)
- A decree of union finally agreed upon by the papacy in 1439 was not well received by the eastern people.
- Papacy unified when Pope Nicholas V (1447 - 55) succeeded Eugene IV and Felix V resigned.

- Moscow began to emerge as the leading Orthodox city after 1450 and referred to itself as the third Rome.
- Pope Nicholas V focused on expanding the Vatican and receiving Byzantine refugees as well as scholarly works after the sacking of Constantinople in 1453. Efforts continued by Pope Calixtus III (r. 1455 - 58), Pius II (r. 1438 - 64), and Paul II (r. 1464 - 71). Ideas of crusade against the Turks went nowhere.
- Pope Alexander VI (r. 1492 - 1503), who had many children prior to becoming pope, directed attention to diplomacy and mediated the division of the Americas between Spain and Portugal.

CHAPTER VI

DIVISION AND

REFORM (1517 - 1900 AD)

What started as a protest against corruption ignited a division and conflict within the Western Church of unparalleled level. For centuries the Lord had permitted only two branches of Christianity. All other varying views were quickly or gradually dispelled. This all changed with the Protestant Reformation. When the dust settled, Christianity would have a third branch. Who was right, the Protestants or the Catholics? The fact that neither side was wiped out in their conflict perhaps indicates that the growth of the Body of Christ needed both forces and that neither side had captured the complete truth. Debating the Protestant perspective, Christians cannot argue against the simple approach of following only scripturally based practices. However, the Protestant interpretation of the Bible as led by Martin Luther is not necessarily completely correct. For example, the Catholic emphasis on the merits of good works and purgatory does have Biblical traceability even though such understanding may have also eluded the Catholics. Though Martin Luther was correct in the assessment that our salvation is ultimately by the grace of the Lord, the Bible does not state that our role in salvation is limited to worship and prayer.

Throughout the Bible, the importance of doing good out of genuine spiritual goodness is always emphasized. The good Samaritan was not a Jew or a Christian with the Holy Spirit. Yet, Jesus made him an example for all Christians. The choice to embrace goodness in spirit, mind, and action is our own. Prior to receiving the Word, such choices prepare us to receive the Holy Spirit as the baptism of John the Baptist by water prepares us to receive the baptism of the Lord. After the baptism of the Lord, we are empowered to embrace goodness tighter than ever before. Protestants must remember that Jesus taught us that our salvation is

achieved by doing God's will, not by just calling out to Jesus. To those who believe that goodness could only be from the Holy Spirit, it is worth considering how man is made in the image of God. Even though man is plagued by evil and trapped in sin, is not the core of his spirit filled with the capacity for good and the will of the Lord written in his heart? Though our efforts to do good could only move us a tiny step closer to the unfathomable level of goodness required to save ourselves without God's grace, it may be that key step which makes us acceptable for God's grace. If there is no such line, then one might ask why does God not simply reveal Himself to everyone and offer His grace to all?

The existence of purgatory is referred to as the World of the Dead in the Bible. There, the souls that have not had the chance to receive the Word in life would be fully educated. The prophet Samuel of the Old Testament sleeps in the World of the Dead, but the Lord has not abandoned him. This sleep was briefly disturbed by King Saul through witchcraft. Those people with sufficient goodness in the World of the Dead will be saved on the day of judgment while the people lost to evil will be condemned upon hearing the Word. True Christians filled with the Holy Spirit will go to a place of rest, not purgatory. As Jesus promised, they will never die. However, only the Lord knows who are worthy of the rest and which Christians must be further educated. Given the general understanding of scripture for the people of the Middle Ages, many Christians of that period might have gone to purgatory.

As to the other practices of the Catholics rejected by Protestantism, Jesus granted His people the authority to accept new practices beyond scriptures. Naturally His people would have to be guided by the Holy Spirit when adopting new practices. However, the practices of Christianity can evolve as Christianity matures. As a result, the real Protestant argument against certain Catholic practices such as the use of relics should not be because they are not in the Bible, but because Christians have matured beyond certain physical crutches in faith. On the other hand, such authority given by the Lord has been abused so often that it may be simply better to live by what was established in the Bible.

The responsibility of all Christians under Protestantism is perhaps the true heart of the Protestant Reformation. Before Christianity was made easy for the people of Rome, the Church was simply composed of disciples with different roles. There was no real line between clergy and laity. Even as the separation became necessary with the massive influx of marginal Christians, the real line between clergy and laity should have been who has received the Holy Spirit, not who has taken the vows of priesthood and celibacy, for most of the apostles had wives. Protestantism notes that, since the early days when whole nations were baptized by order of their kings, the lay Christian class had spiritually grown to a point where many were filled with the Holy Spirit. However, the Holy Spirit did not call them to the existing priesthood. The proliferation of the Bible supported this growth. As a result, these lay members were allowed to expand their roles to match the disciples of the first century. This step in growth for the Church is, however, filled with spiritual perils. Thus, Protestantism must always be a path of personal choice based on faith. Unlike Catholicism, people cannot be forced into Protestantism even though many monarchs have tried to do so. This is because a Christian in Protestantism must pursue a personal relationship with the Lord through the Holy Spirit and take on the responsibility that is given to him. A Protestant who is not seeking the Holy Spirit or not spreading the Word is in spiritual jeopardy. He may be better off being governed by the practices of Catholicism. With masses of Christians gathered into the Protestant Church, sometimes coerced by national authorities, many were in jeopardy. Yet, the pressure to become Protestant did serve to awaken many Catholic lay people to their full spiritual potential. While some Catholics were not ready for the responsibilities of Protestantism, others needed to be awakened from their comfortable pattern of practices.

As the Body of Christ was being reshaped and prepared for the future, the future revealed itself as foretold. After the fifteenth century, the gateway to the world was opened to the Christian kingdoms of Europe. The first to venture forth would be the Spanish, selected for a unique mission. During the period of the Inquisition, the Spanish showed themselves to be dedicated Christians yet

weak in love. The cruelty that they inflicted would shock even the hardest of men to this day. Their fate rests in the Lord's judgment. Were they faithful but immature and knew not what they were doing? Or, were they given the fullness of the Word yet could not find the spiritual capacity to love? Either way, the Spanish were permitted to be the first to travel to the far corners of the world as conquerors and destroyers. Upon their penetration of the Americas, they immediately and completely destroyed the two major civilizations (Aztec and Inca) that were there. Perhaps the Lord permitted this destruction as He permitted the destruction of the Caananites. Throughout history, there were civilizations so dominated by evil, so dedicated to worshipping gods of evil, that all or most of the people must be taken from this world, thus ending their line. The Aztecs and Incas were cultures which avidly practiced human sacrifices to appease their gods that demanded continuous blood and torment. Satan wears many masks, and one of them could have been the serpent god of the Aztecs or the god of the Incas. The destruction of the Aztecs was facilitated by a natural genetic disaster. The American Indians had no immunity to smallpox. Masses died when Cortez released it into the Aztec Empire. In the Old Testament, the Lord proclaimed that all natural disasters occur with His permission. In the course of time the surviving Indians of Central and South America would be brought to Christianity by the Jesuit order that moved with the explorer ships.

Protestantism did not gain acceptance easily, and in many ways the Western Church split due to the stubbornness of both sides. Catholics initially did not accept the criticism of Martin Luther and forced him into a corner. Martin Luther was so convinced of his understanding that he refused to back down even at the expense of dividing the Body of Christ. The Catholics would years later undergo a major internal reformation that responded to Martin Luther's initial thesis. However, by that time Martin Luther had already developed the additional principles of Protestantism as an afterthought, and there was no backing down. Had the Catholic Reformation occurred right after Martin Luther presented his thesis, Protestantism probably would not have been founded. Instead, the idea of separating from Rome appealed to monarchs who historically had been

uncomfortable with the dominance of the papacy. England's seizure of this opportunity was predictable. Had Martin Luther made the choice that the unity of the Church was of higher importance and that change could occur gradually across decades, then the religious wars might have been avoided. All this was not to be, and Christians for the first time were locked in heated civil war. Why did the Lord permit the Catholics to launch war against the Protestants? Perhaps it was the old trap of faith but with limited understanding. If the Christians of Jewish descent in the first century felt that they must not eat pork, then they should not do so. Likewise, if the Catholics felt that Protestantism was a corruption of the Church launched by Satan, then they must fight it according to their limited understanding. On the other hand, if the Protestants were dedicated to their beliefs, then they must endure any and all punishments that the Catholics could levy or fight back.

Clearly, there is a concern about love for one's fellow man whenever a Christian chooses to kill. If a Christian's heart is filled with hate, anger, or fear, then his salvation is in jeopardy. Since God judges the heart, He will judge people's love for Him as reflected in their desire to follow His will and their love for one another. If the love is there but the spirit is dominated by ignorance, then perhaps there is hope. The Apostle Paul was a persecutor of Christians. From this Christian against Christian holy war, we can only say that no Christian was completely free of sin and ignorance. The Holy Spirit is our helper, but the choice of actions belongs to man. As Paul argued with Barnabas over their varying understanding, Christians will struggle with each other because of limitations in understanding and at times forget that they are still of one body as long as they profess that they belong to the Word as proclaimed in the Apostles' Creed. The war did motivate Christians to examine their faith and choose sides. From then on, a Catholic was more likely to be a Catholic by choice.

Protestantism, once established, led Christians to a new world of freedom in spiritual pursuit of the Lord. With only the Holy Bible as their guide, Protestant denominations grew and spread in different directions. The denominations that received state support such as Calvinism and the Church of England quickly gained secular

influence. Denominations that presented ideas which opposed the principles of state power or the popular church hierarchical organization found themselves again persecuted, this time by other Protestants. The center of this Protestant-on-Protestant persecution was the Anabaptists. Their belief in the separation of church and state in addition to their opposition to war were not agreeable to the state. Their practice of having no church hierarchy defied both the Protestant and the Catholic church structures. In response, the Protestants, especially the Calvinists, with the support of the state, persecuted them as cruelly as the Romans had persecuted Christians. In the end, the Anabaptists were reduced to reclusive farming groups with their evangelistic drive crushed. Yet, the foundation of their faith appears to show no conflict with Biblical teachings. Therefore, perhaps the Lord permitted this to happen to test the Protestants with new-found power and to keep the Anabaptists away from a world that was not ready for their choices. In this testing the Protestants revealed that they also suffered from the problem of the Catholics, which was strong in faith but weak in love for fellow man.

The Anabaptists' choices in Christian practices revealed them to be very pure but not necessarily spiritually powerful. Specifically, they were right in that love is the heart of Christianity. However, sometimes a Christian may be compelled to fight in opposition to evil -- a war raged in Heaven over the birth of Jesus. Although Christians should always pray that they will never have to end the physical lives of others, often a philosophy of pure pacifism embodies the belief that human physical life is the most precious of all things. If this was true of the Anabaptists, then pacifism would not be just an expression of love but also an indicator of enslavement by the world. If all acts of killing are of great sin, then the Lord would never have guided Joshua to destroy the Canaanites. Killing is the termination of a spirit's growth on earth. As such it should never be done without seeking the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Beyond the guidance of the Holy Spirit, there is no justification for Christians to kill. In the face of evil-doers, Christians may be required to yield and accept martyrdom as a testament of faith. No man is wise enough to know when it is the right time to fight and kill. However, if one

who is unable to acquire the guidance of the Holy Spirit kills in order to save the innocent, perhaps the Lord will see the love and forgive the ignorance. Only the Lord knows whether the evil-doer needs life more than the innocent who would receive salvation.

On matters of church hierarchy, a Christian must recognize that the spirits of men are diverse and different in quality. The Lord grants worldly authority and uses people according to their qualities. Thus churches since the days of the apostles have hierarchies and the delegation of responsibilities even though all Christians are either apostles or disciples. Authority is not a symbol of a Christian's greatness, nor is it a power for a Christian's personal use. It is power granted by the Lord for a Christian to serve, and this capacity to serve must be respected by other Christians. The symbol of a Christian's greatness is love of the Lord and love for fellow man often expressed through service. Although authority not bestowed by the Lord has been taken and abused by human powers in many churches of that time, this does not justify the rejection of the concept of hierarchy. Instead, Christians should seek the hierarchy that is in accordance with the Lord's will. The rejection of hierarchy could be extremely dangerous when Christians start to question the true hierarchy that the Lord builds in Heaven. Satan's rejection of God's plan for man to eventually be above the angels led to his downfall.

We have said that Calvinism was embraced by the Protestant states, but what made it so appealing to the people? First, to the masses of lay Christians who became the driving force behind the Protestant revolution, Calvinism revived the old presbyter style of church government that granted a great deal of authority to the laity. Second, its view that God's salvation is for the select few may have been very appealing. People who chose to become Protestant to pursue a personal relationship with the Lord may fall into the trap of thinking that they are the chosen few. True, the Lord knows who will be saved, for it is written that their names are in the Book of Life. However, Jesus also taught us that God cares for everyone and it is His desire for all of us to be saved. Thus, salvation is not based on favoritism. Instead, the evil in some people prevents them from

receiving the Lord's grace, which was extended by Jesus to all. Nevertheless, the Lord in perfect justice works with everyone so that those who fail had been given maximum opportunities and those who succeed are fulfilling the Lord's plan out of free will. This is not destiny because the Lord is not forcing us to the future but working with us and our choices.

One thing is for sure, while the Lord is omniscient, man is not. Even a little knowledge about the future could negatively affect a man's judgment. Thus, the Lord gave prophecies to the right men at the right time so that His plan is fulfilled. As Christians we cannot by our own wisdom judge anyone to be beyond the Lord's salvation. The hardest of criminals might find goodness at the moment of death. Even a fallen Christian separated from the Church might find love for the Lord in the trials of this world. The Lord looks after everyone even though many will reject Him. Thus, not knowing who will spiritually awaken, we Christians must try to bring the Good News of Christ to everyone. Knowing that some will be lost, we Christians must still try to save them to the very end, for our love must be unconditional. Every spirit lost to darkness is a great sadness to the light.

Protestantism was permitted by the Lord at the right time in human spiritual development. In the years that followed the spirit of man would rapidly gain in strength. This spiritual strength was physically manifested in waves of intellectual expansion. Man began questioning himself and his world. He was no longer satisfied with the limited understanding of the Middle Ages. Many in this age of enlightenment strayed away from the Lord under the temptations of their own powers. Others bent Christianity to meet their own expanded, yet still clouded, understanding of the physical world. One thing was clear: The rigid position of the Catholic Church, which relied upon faith but could not explain the ways of the Lord in this world, was in opposition to the thinkers of the age of enlightenment. This conflict was compounded by Catholic Church leaders making scientific declarations or banning scientific activities when the Holy Spirit did not grant them such levels of understanding. One of the first conflicts was Christopher Columbus' thesis that the world was round. The Bible did not declare

the world to be flat. What made the church leaders so sure that the world was flat?

Protestantism permitted the great minds and maturing spirits of the age of enlightenment to grow within the Body of Christ. It lifted the opposition of those authorities in the Church who could not understand and encouraged thinkers to turn directly to the Lord for answers. If such minds turned away from the Lord, then it was truly due to the evil that was growing in them. It is indeed inspirational to know that perhaps the greatest scientific mind of all times, Sir Isaac Newton, was also pure enough to remain with the Holy Spirit. What is interesting, however, is that the Lord permitted all the directions of enlightenment to continue. Those who worshiped science and philosophy as their new gods were allowed to promulgate their ideas. Those who broke away from the Christian understanding of God, like Unitarians and believers in a humanistic creator, were also allowed to spread their views. Perhaps the Lord permitted these deviations away from the Word because the spirits were still growing. Sometimes in growth, spirits must be lost to the world for a while only to be pulled back to the Body of Christ when they become stronger. This pulling back is possible because while the complete truth of the Lord has been given in the Holy Bible, it has often not been received in completion. Throughout the Middle Ages, many Christians read the scriptures in faith even though their understanding was only at a minimal level. Thus, the scriptures could be given again and again as the spirit matures with remarkable effects in driving away evil.

In the case of Unitarianism, for example, the spirit searching for a personal relationship with the Lord may have felt the existence of a single creator and not three entities. Instead of realizing that God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit are truly and completely joined, one in voice and will, the Unitarians rejected the position of Jesus. Yet, Christ our Lord is the embodiment of love, forgiveness, and patience. For thousands of years He guided humanity without praise. If the people again deny Him, He will continue to look after them and again guide them back to the truth. One thing is for certain, all paths that are not the Christian path of truth will stagnate in spiritual growth. On that day they will need the Word in force. If they are

stubborn, then the Lord may have to crush their pride or even scatter them. Until that day, the Word must be continuously placed before them so that all who suddenly awake could be led back to the Body of Christ.

Amidst the chaotic Protestant Reformation, Christian groups began emerging from the Protestant realm that desired a freedom of worship and purity in dedication to the Lord that no state-influenced church could provide. Thus, the Lord arranged a special land for them. This land was acquired by the British Empire, the successor to the age of Spanish conquest. Unlike the Spanish, the British people had developed since the days of the Celtic monks in a more humanistic manner. Even in the Body of Christ, some countries may grow more than others. In that spiritual growth, dedication to the Lord may be tested. As Christianity's new ambassadors to the world, the British had a respect for human life and human freedom that far exceeded the other nations of Europe. At their colonies in North America, Christians of all forms came for a freedom of life and worship. In this land their struggles and devotion would lead to prosperity and total freedom.

As North America flourished, the Europeans after hundreds of years of questing were finally permitted by the Lord to penetrate into Asia. The first to come under Christian influence was India, an ancient culture which was the birthplace of Buddhism but later slipped back to simpler pagan gods. For centuries, they were trapped in spiritual stagnation. Against them, the Lord allowed the British Empire to achieve domination since the 1600's. Their stubbornness would be tempered with worldly masters who brought with them Protestant missionaries to present the Word in opposition to their ancient philosophies. From this point, the British and other nations gradually worked their way to the heart of the Orient by the 1800's. However, their domination in that region would only be adequate to ensure penetration by the Christian missionaries. While the Protestants were given the lead in penetrating the ancient cultures of this world and in building a new Christian kingdom in North America, the Catholics were given the lead in the less culturally advanced areas. After the destruction of the major empires in the Americas, the surviving Indian population of Central and South

America remained to be given the Word. These cultures were in an earlier state of spiritual development and were unable to jump directly to the level of self-responsible Christian growth that Protestantism demanded. On the other hand, the teachings of the Catholics concerning behavior and practice helped discipline the spirits for growth. Though their understanding of the Word was in most cases insufficient to transform them into friends and participants in God's plan, their faith and love would lead to salvation. In time Catholic and Protestant missionaries would each touch the far corners of the world to offer every culture choices in following Christ.

As Christian missionaries spread across the world, the spiritual growth in Europe as a result of the turbulent reformation period was challenged by a world force so damaging to Christian ways that we must question whether Satan was directly given charge of such an activity. With the religious wars over and with the bounty of the world for the taking, the European kingdoms began a campaign of empire building and profiteering that shaped the modern world. The thousands of soldiers, merchants, and businessmen who descended on the world did not follow a Christian path of love and spreading the truth. Their agenda was profit, not by the products of their labors, but by exploitation. In the least case, they became wealthy by selling items that were cheaply acquired and produced abroad. In the worst case, they looted foreign lands and enslaved the people. For even the least case, God frowned on businessmen as recorded in Revelation perhaps because their hearts were not devoted to human growth but to greed. Their treasures were on earth, not in Heaven. In their efforts to gain profit, they distanced their souls from the Lord, shared less with fellow Christians, and tempted others in their priorities. The prosperity that mercantilism brought Europe would consume millions whose ancestors generations ago fought for their faith. In the end, even many Christian missionaries would choose to accept this corruption by supporting ventures of profit and looking the other way on atrocities. However, others stayed true to faith and suffered persecutions by hostile foreign kingdoms and their own people. It is they who would be among the first to stand with Jesus.

The great test of this purity of faith was slavery. While the Bible does not condemn slavery, it does condemn all human relations not built on love. Sometimes one is given authority over another because that person needs to be tested, guided, or protected. Other times men are permitted to take authority to test their level of inhumanity. Along the coast of Africa, Europeans were given a unique opportunity to raise and guide a vast continent of mostly spiritually immature people in the light of Christianity. Instead, they allowed themselves to become arrogant with the growth that the Lord had given and took the people of Africa as slaves. If God who is so far above us treat us as His children, who are we to mistreat our brothers? Yet the Lord's plan is perfect, for as Europeans and the churches of Europe were being tested after years of growth, many Africans were sent on a harsh path of spiritual awakening. As we try to imagine the months of travel with minimal food, water, and space in the bows of a slave ship and as we think about the many generations that were placed in bondage, we should also think about the four hundred years in which the Jews were in bondage in Egypt. In the end, the people were prepared for the Lord. What is amazing was that slaves in their torment would in time see the Lord of their masters in the true form, loving and caring. Even as their masters mistreated them, their master's Lord loved them. Even as their hearts were filled with anger towards the white men, their spirits would cry out to the Lord. Can anything but the truth be revealed under such situation? In the end Christianity triumphs.

The American story is one of a struggle between the strongest Christians and the tremendous temptations of mercantilism combined with the confusion of enlightened thought. However, America began as a land given to Christians. The Puritans who had endured years of persecution in Europe led the struggle to settle this new world. Christians of all denominations yearning to break away from state-accepted Christian entities flocked to the colonies. The colonies then prospered under Christian dedication to hard work, sharing, and mutual support, unlike the kingdoms of Europe which were threatened with spiritual stagnation and consumed with passion for riches abroad. Mercantilism would be slower to challenge the American colonies. Interestingly, the most dedicated Christians

were placed in the North where the environment favored skilled labor and individual hard work. The settlers of the South, the debtors and poor given new hope, would be tested with opportunities for slavery. All the Christian teachings of love could not stop the South from becoming the most notorious slavers in the world. In time, the cotton fields of the American South would feed the manufacturers of Europe and the North.

The growth of the American colonies and the spiritual immaturity of the people on both sides made separation from England unavoidable. What is interesting was the government that the founding fathers established. The principle of this government came not from Christianity but from growing spiritual strength and independence from the Lord. Many of the founding fathers were not pure Christians but intellectuals who developed an understanding of the creator based on humanistic reasoning. However, this reasoning was tainted by pride and spiritual corruption in the world. This flawed reasoning reawakened the humanistic philosophy which the Greeks and Romans had achieved. Yet, the philosophy could not lead them out of spiritual stagnation. This philosophy, when combined with an open concept of a creator, resulted in an American conclusion that all human beings have inherent rights: life, liberty, pursuit of happiness, and equality among men. This was a natural conclusion for spirits growing more powerful, for how else could such spirits accept the fact that they may be inferior to others and must have their freedom constrained and/or happiness denied? Yet the Lord has shown that He would place His people in bondage in Egypt, in Babylon, and under Rome. The truth is that freedom is a gift from the Lord for those who are devoted and a trial by the Lord for those who have grown powerful and perhaps proud. For Americans, it was a little bit of both. In fact, life itself is a gift from the Lord, and Paul taught us that we are all different creations, not equal in spirit and not equal in needs for spiritual guidance.

As Christians and not enlightenment thinkers, we should pray that all people are mature enough to accept freedom and work for others' freedom if that is by the Lord's will. Our desire for this freedom for others and ourselves should be based on the realization that it may be the best environment, pending the return of Christ,

for Christianity to grow. Unfortunately, with the freedom to grow closer to God there is also the danger of drifting away. Perhaps it was best that the fight for freedom in America was led by less pure Christians, for how could Christians, who were taught not to fight against the state for matters of this world, find such arrogance to think that they had a right to be free? This right when extended to the government gave rise to democracy, as invented in Greece and refined in practice in Rome. A Christian should feel sad in a democracy because our true King Jesus is not with us and because the Lord has not given us a temporary king like David. Instead, we are left to our own faith to select a leader. Democracy is the solution for people unable to come to a consensus, a unity of understanding. Knowing that democracy is a poor substitute for a God chosen leader, Christians must take on the power that the Lord has permitted in prayer and choose by themselves a leader who would please the Lord, a leader with love for the Lord and love for the people.

The danger of power is abuse, and democracy's abuse comes from the tyranny of the masses. In this matter, Christians are often tempted very subtly. Since the founding of America, Christians have strived and succeeded in enacting Christian values into law. Yet, Paul taught that Christians are not bound by laws and that non-Christians are not bound by Christian teachings, for it is their faith in the Lord that matters. Jews lived by laws and the laws did not save them; dare Christians hope that by forcing actions one can shape the spirit? Laws in government belong to the secular world. Perhaps Christians should treat them in a secular manner even though out of love we may want to force others to do good. Secular laws keep the people from physical harm. What keeps the spirit from harm is the Word and the Holy Spirit. Though Christians should perhaps focus on bringing non-Christians to the Word without judgment, this does not mean that the actions of non-Christians are not reflections of their corrupted state. Should they remain as non-Christians under corruption, the Lord will judge them according to their thoughts and deeds on the last day.

While the organization of America was built on enlightenment philosophies, the growth of America was based on individualism

in the 1700's and 1800's. The spirit of America was shaped by three Christian groups with three Christian forces. The Puritans' faith placed the American spirit on a solid foundation. The Quakers instilled the spirit with love and caring. Though often overshadowed, this caring launched the abolitionist movement that eventually ended slavery. Finally, the Methodists brought the spirit understanding to counter the evil as the spirit grew. Methodist churches steadily spread across America and steered Christians toward the true mission of evangelism. Baptists, who shared a common heritage with the Puritans, grew based on faith from the poor and weak struggling in harsh environments in the newly expanded regions of America to offer hope. With such a strong spirit, America endured the period of massive territorial expansion in the 1800's, a bloody dehumanizing civil war, the birth of the industrial age, and the rise of capitalism while retaining a remarkable level of innocence and faith in the Lord. This is not to say that horrible acts were not committed in America. However, the Christian spirit in America prevented everyone from being consumed by sin and preserved hope and the strength to turn to Christ for salvation.

While the mantle of Christianity was given to America in the West, the new center of Christianity in the East faced a treacherous path. After centuries of minimal evangelistic activities towards their Muslim neighbors and minimal growth in Biblical understanding within the church, the Orthodox Church was handed over to state powers as the Russian state sought to join the West. The Orthodox Church was so trapped in tradition that the force of spiritual hunger that launched Protestantism in the West was nowhere to be found in the East. Under state authority, the freedom of the people to worship was gradually curtailed. This should have provoked the Christians and given them a chance to act. A new spiritual awakening could have occurred, causing Christians across the Orthodox realm to take on the role of first century Christians. Yet, despite initial resistance by the traditional Orthodox churches, the people quickly settled into apathy under the new state church institutions. The power that kept Christians strong and pure under Roman persecution was not with many of the Christians in the East.

By the 1800's the empires of Europe would be permitted to invade into the heart of Africa, control the Islamic nations by force, and absorb the kingdoms of the East into their sphere. Under such unified conditions of state where even the royal houses from Russia to England were all inter-married, the churches of Europe could have easily broken from the momentum of the day and discussed unification. However, the churches found themselves more trapped by their individual organizations than the state. Amidst the grim horrors of interlocked European kingdoms dedicated to colonialism and people trapped in the new bondage of the working industrial age poor, Christianity would launch yet a new counter-offensive with the concept of societies. With both Protestant and Catholic clergy bound in their ways, the lay class launched a mission to save each other. Societies did not fight against the churches but instead complemented them by offering aid and love to the suffering and worldwide mission work across church and state lines. While rich in love and faith, the laity many times still lacked the spiritual maturity of those dedicated to the Lord's service. Thus, societies composed of lay volunteers constantly faced the danger of being corrupted by the priorities of the world. While relieving human suffering is a natural expression of Christian love, it should never be conducted at the sacrifice of the evangelistic mission. In suffering, some people are spiritually prepared for the Lord, and they must be harvested. Through love by Christians, other people are also prepared for the Lord, and thus the harvest must come with physical relief. A Christian must ultimately let the Holy Spirit lead him on this difficult path.

The nineteenth century ended with Christians controlling the world while Christianity was being challenged as never before by the ways of this world. Old churches often fell into ritualization and complacency while the spirit of evangelism burned bright among new Christians in America and Asia. The technological advances, which had trickled forth for the past many centuries, became a tidal wave by the end of the nineteenth century. By the time of the U.S. Civil War, cannons, rifles, and other assembly line products had turned military conflicts into simple events where

men were slaughtered until one side was exhausted. This dehumanizing social transition was then followed by the sweat shops of the industrial revolution. There, all sense of job accomplishment was demolished, and humanity became a part of the machine.

By the end of the nineteenth century, life, liberty, and individualism, which the Lord granted to the colonial Americans and the frontier settlers, became merely a dream obtained by the very few. Yet, in church the spirit of man no matter how poor was still free and cherished as individuals by the Lord. To the very few, wealth became the force of liberty, but the force had often been sustained by the labor of others. A new form of slavery entered the world. The tyrants of old could only force people to work by the whip. As a result only the most corrupt of men could adopt such cruelty, and the people continued to dream of freedom. The debtors of the past were working to buy back their freedom. The employees of the past, craftsmen and artisans, were proud of their products. However, the birth of capitalism forced the people to surrender themselves out of economic necessity, often with no end in site. With this loss of pride, many lost their faith in themselves and the Lord. On the other side, the masters lost themselves, rationalizing their cruelty. As corporate leaders found justification in the capitalistic system to enslave people into dehumanizing labor, their love for others was lost. A Christian leader places the people first while a capitalistic leader places profit first. The lack of guilt further distanced the capitalists from the Lord. Looking at the nineteenth century, one might think that a new god by the name of "money" had entered the world and the world was starting to kneel at that alter.

Within the gilded halls of the Vatican as the Catholic Church's secular power disintegrated, the pope would chart a new course in attempt to preserve the cohesion of the Church. First, the pope was declared to be infallible on matters of faith. Then, the Virgin Mary was declared to be immaculately conceived, the rationale being how else could she have given birth to Jesus. These declarations strengthened the Catholic Church by making all its members throughout the secular world focus on the single leadership of the

pope, and by increasing the position of Mary, upon whom many in the church were spiritually dependent, to near divine status. However, these declarations also increased the barrier between the Catholic Church and the rest of the Christian denominations. On the issue of papal infallibility, as Christians we must recognize that we should be of one Body and one organization which, though ruled by Christ, may still need human leadership. However, we must recognize that all human leaders, even under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, are capable of mistakes in understanding. Perhaps the need for this recognition is why the Bible specifically recorded the Apostle Paul scolding the Apostle Peter, the center of papal authority, for mistakes in understanding. The Holy Spirit is strong, but even the best man is tainted by sin and the limitations that sin creates.

On the issue of Mary, the obvious question is that if Mary was immaculately conceived, then was her mother immaculately conceived also? The argument that only a heavenly conceived person can herself be a recipient of heavenly conception never ends, going back generation after generation. Looking forward, if Mary were immaculately conceived, then what type of being was James, the son of Mary and Joseph, and brother to Jesus? The Bible says nothing about the origin of Mary. However, it does say that Mary did not know of her role until it was revealed to her by the Archangel Gabriel. When Jesus turned water into wine at the wedding feast, He addressed Mary not as His mother but as a woman who is incapable of grasping the importance of His work, thus desiring to use His powers for simple worldly needs. However, to honor Mary as His mother, Jesus did perform the miracle.

While we cannot say anything about a claim by the pope that the Holy Spirit has led him to the realization of the immaculate conception of Mary, we can say that if Mary had been immaculately conceived, she was not aware of it. She lived the life of a normal girl before giving birth to Jesus, and she lived the life of a wife to a carpenter after marrying Joseph. She loved Jesus and knew that Jesus was the Son of God. However, she did not stand as an equal to Jesus. Instead, she watched as Jesus and His followers fulfilled

God's plan. Mary's role would in many ways have been greater had she not been immaculately conceived. Being one of us, Mary then carried our humanity to mingle with the Spirit of Jesus, which was delivered into Mary's womb by the Holy Spirit. Through this mingling with Mary's spirit, which God has found to embody the best of humanity, Jesus in a unique way became human as well as divine. What is also interesting is that, since Jesus was only delivered into Mary's womb and not created as a new spirit due to relations between Mary and God, Mary was still a virgin after the birth of Jesus and free to marry Joseph.

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

THE WORLD FROM 1517 - 1900 AD

- Spain, through Cortez, destroyed the Aztec civilization in 1519.
- Spain, through Pizarro, destroyed the Inca civilization in 1530.
- The Netherlands rebelled against the Holy Roman Empire in 1568 and built a mercantile republic.
- English defeat of the Spanish armada in 1588 ended Spain's supremacy of the seas. The Spanish invasion attempt was accepted by the pope after the execution of England's Catholic Queen Mary and the recovery of Protestantism.
- Feudal Japan united under Shogun Tokugawa in 1603 and adopted the position of isolationism and avoidance of foreign influence.
- France established colonies in Canada in 1608, Caribbean in 1626, and India in 1674.
- A vast Polish kingdom ruled by Catholic nobles began to unravel after the Orthodox populace of the east rebelled in the Cossack Uprising of 1648-49.
- England underwent civil war and was controlled by the military dictatorship of Cromwell in the Commonwealth period (1649 - 1660).
- Trade with the American colonies, Africa, and the Orient brought most of the European kingdoms into a mercantile system by 1650.
- The Moors were completely driven out of Spain by 1650.

- The continuous series of failed Turkish campaigns against Austria and its allies from the mid 1500's led to the Treaty of Karlwitz around 1700 and the decline of the Ottoman Empire.
- Peter the Great (r. 1682 - 1725) dragged Russia into the western culture.
- Steam engine invented in 1769 in Scotland by Watt.
- English colonies in North America succeeded in 1776 in forming a new nation built on ideals (freedom and equality) from the Age of Enlightenment.
- French Revolution in 1792, resulting from middle class discontent with the privileges of the aristocracy, plunged the nation into chaos and terror.
- Revolutionary fever propagated and supported by France to surrounding nations: Batavian Republic in Netherlands (1795 - 1806), Helvetic Republic in Switzerland (1798 - 1803), Cisalpine Republic in N. Italy (1797 - 1805), Ligurian Republic in Genoa (1797 - 1805), and Parthenopean Republic in S. Italy (1799).
- Young General Napoleon Bonaparte (1769 - 1821) assumed control and established order in 1799.
- Napoleon declared himself emperor in 1804 and proceeded to take over most of Europe until he was disastrously stopped by the Russian winter in 1812. Final defeat by English and Prussian forces came in 1814 at Waterloo.
- As statesman, Napoleon established a still widely used set of Roman style legal codes and expanded secondary and university level education.
- Upon Napoleon's defeat, the Congress of Vienna reestablished the borders in favor of Prussia, Austria, and Russia. England

also gained recognition for its conquered Dutch and French colonies.

- Spanish and Portuguese colonies in the Americas gained independence in 1810 - 24.
- Telegraph invented in 1837 in the United States by Morse.
- China resisted England's attempt to import drugs to balance the trade in the Opium War (1839 - 42). China's defeat led to European trade domination in China.
- Revolution spread across Europe briefly in 1848 amid financial system collapse, unemployment, food shortages, and cholera epidemic. In less than a year, monarchical power began reestablishing itself.
- Japan forced out of isolation by Commodore Perry of the United States in 1853. Massive industrialization of Japan soon followed.
- The British government assumed full control of India in 1857 as its trading companies stepped back.
- Civil War (1861 - 65) occurred in the United States over North / South economic differences, but quickly evolved to the higher cause of freeing slaves.
- Bismarck of Prussia built the German Empire in 1871 by defeating Denmark in 1864, Austria in 1866, forcibly annexing Alsace - Lorraine from France in 1870, and winning the alliance of S. German states.
- Gas engine invented in 1872 in the United States by Brayton.
- Light bulb invented in 1879 in the United States by Edison.

- In the wake of German unification, Italy also unified after a series of internal conflicts.
- Ottoman Empire lost most of its territory by 1882 as Russia expanded into the Balkans and the Europeans expanded into N. Africa.
- Massive European campaign to conquer Africa started after 1880, leading to the fall of Muslim and Zulu kingdoms. France took West Africa and England took nearly every place else after the Boer War (1899 - 1902). Christian Ethiopia and Liberia remained free.
- Radio signals discovered in 1895 in Italy by Marconi.
- Industrialized and militarized Japan began expansion with Sino Japanese War (1894 - 95) to take Formosa and Korea.

CHRISTIANITY FROM 1517 -1900AD

- Loyal Catholics who saw the need to reform as argued by Luther gathered in Rome in 1517 to form the Oratory of Divine Love.
- Martin Luther was ordered by the papacy to recant in 1520. Upon firm refusal, he was excommunicated on 3 January 1521 and then pursued by the Holy Roman Emperor. He was offered protection by the German princes.
- Anabaptist movement spread across Germanic region from 1525 under church disapproval. Anabaptism was based on believers' baptism, discipleship (living according to Christ), no church hierarchy, love and pacifism, evangelism, and separation of church and state.
- At the Diet of Augsburg in 1530, Luther presented the principles of Protestantism:
 - o The Bible is the foundation of Christian beliefs, and all traditions and beliefs not explicitly expressed in the Bible must be rejected (supreme authority of the pope, merit of good works, indulgences, mediation of Virgin Mary and saints, all sacraments not established by Christ, mass as a sacrifice, purgatory, prayers for the dead, holy water, images, rosaries, chantries, and shrines).
 - o Salvation is based on God reaching us through Christ with His "Grace," not by our efforts through deeds. Good deeds are a result of the Holy Spirit acting within us.
 - o Christians are all disciples, equal in responsibility to read, interpret, and spread the gospel. The division between spiritual and lay is lifted, and the common man has a responsibility to manage the church.
- The Protestant Bibles broke away from the Catholic Vulgate Bible by moving the Apocrypha out of the Old Testament to

the back as inspirational literature. Then these books were dropped from the Bible.

- John Calvin (1509 - 64), under the influence of Luther, developed new theological views in 1536, *The Institution of the Christian Religion*. Calvinism was based on church as the supreme center, salvation through preselection by God, complete rejection of the Catholic Church, and a Presbyterian church government where all ministers are equal and the people are represented by elders.

- Pope Paul III (1534 - 49) successfully launched the counter reformation by:
 - o Appointing reformist cardinals.
 - o Establishing a reform commission in 1536 headed by Contarini of the Oratory of Divine Love.
 - o Holding the Council of Trent.Reform commission immediately identified papal irresponsibility, corruption, and moral failures.

- Contarini, as papal legate at the Colloquy of Regensburg, developed a compromise Catholic position where Protestant emphasis on faith was accepted but the Catholic concepts of transubstantiation and papal authority were still maintained. This attempt at unification was rejected by Luther and Contarini was accused of heresy by Rome.

- Jesuit Monastic Order founded in 1540 by Ignatius of Loyola. With complete dedication to the papacy, the Jesuit mission was to educate, win back Catholic regions, and mission to new lands at all cost. Jesuit schools were famous for excellence. Many churches in France, southern Germany, and eastern Europe were brought back to the papacy. Missionaries traveled on Spanish and Portuguese ships to the Americas, Africa, and Asia. Francis Xavier (1506 - 52), the most recognized Jesuit, established a surviving mission in Japan.

- Papal Inquisition and book banning established by Cardinal Caraffa in 1542 as an attack on the spread of Protestantism. Heretics, propagators of non-Catholic views, were systematically eliminated. France retained national control of the Inquisition process while Germany rejected it all together.
- Council of Trent (1545 - 47), (1551 - 52), (1562 - 63) resulted in a strengthened Catholic position to counter Protestantism:
 - o Reaffirmed transubstantiation, faith and works, mass practices, seven sacraments, celibacy of clergy, purgatory, and indulgences.
 - o Denounced the sale of indulgences.
 - o Increased papal power to defend the position of the Church.
- Mysticism, the pursuit of spiritual union with God through Christ leading to flashes of supreme ecstasy, spread in Spain after the Catholic Reformation.
- Unitarianism, which denied the Trinity in favor of a single God, began forming after the reformation. After persecution and the execution of its leaders by Calvin, it was finally organized in 1565 in Poland and Hungary.
- Despite Luther's objections prior to death, Lutheranism was established as a denomination in 1580 under the Book of Concord. The strong conviction of Lutheran preachers drove many to Calvinism.
- William and Mary's toleration in England fueled a diversity of views and new church entities. Arianism, which denied the divinity of Christ, reemerged and drew many Baptists and Presbyterians into the Unitarian church.
- Moscow was officially elevated to the level of Antioch, Alexandria, and Jerusalem in 1589. The Prince of Muscovy assumed the title of Czar or Caesar, and thus in theory became the leader of the Eastern Empire.

- Pietism movement, emphasizing rebirth and personal faith, started in the 1600's in Holland and spread across Germany and England.
- Age of "Enlightenment" or "Reasoning" emerged with scientists such as Galileo (1564 - 1642) and philosophers such as Descartes (1596 - 1650). Intellectuals of the period turned toward physical experiences, evidence, and reasoning. All understanding then emerged from the point of skepticism and debate.
- Enlightenment took three paths:
 - o Questioning the validity of religion and God [e.g. David Hume (1711 - 76)].
 - o Rejecting institutional beliefs in favor of a humanist view of the Creator [John Locke].
 - o Defending faith, attributing intellectual inspiration to the Holy Spirit [Sir Isaac Newton].
- Quakers, "Society of Friends," established by George Fox in 1650's, but faced persecution by other Christian groups because of their aggressive preaching. Quakers believe in following Jesus' teachings, pacifism, opposition to institutionalized religious practices, and opposition to mandatory tithe.
- The Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith "Propaganda" established by Pope Gregory XV to assume responsibility for world mission activities, which use to belong to the appropriate European states. Propaganda focused on correcting previous alienation of foreign cultures as well as abuses, laxity, and errors in missionary activities.
- Jesuit Propaganda monk Alexander de Rhodes led a group of priests, "Good friends," on a mission to the Far East in 1650.
- Propaganda instruction of 1659, based on Robert de Nobili's work in India and Matthew Ricci's work in China, directed

missionaries to adapt to local customs and language. One cannot make Asian Christians into Europeans. Complete separation from pagan cultures was no longer an issue.

- Jesuit interpretation of the Propaganda led to friendship in the court of China, an edict of toleration in 1692, and 300,000 Chinese converts by 1700. However, ancestral veneration and the Confucian words for God and Heaven were accepted.
- By the 1700's, prosperity in the American colonies led to much laxity and laziness in the churches.
- The perceived corruption in China resulted in a ban by Pope Clement XI on Jesuit practices in 1704. In response to the downfall of the Jesuits, all missionaries were eventually expelled from China, and native converts were persecuted.
- Protestant missionary philosophy, based on individual royal supervision, held settlers and traders accountable for mission work. For example, the Dutch East Indies Company supported missionaries as a part of doing business.
- Methodists established by John Wesley in 1729 at Oxford as the Holy Club. Members gathered daily for prayer and study to achieve systematic spiritual growth. Though emphasizing unity with the Anglican Church, the society was open to all with the rules established by Wesley in 1743. With the position that salvation is obtainable by all people, Methodists grew away from Calvinists.
- Massive missionary effort launched by the Moravians from 1730's, surpassing most previous Protestant activities.
- The Great Awakening began in England and swept through New England churches under the leadership of Jonathan Edwards and George Whitefield.

- The awakening in America launched cooperation among all the Protestant denominations, evangelical missions, institutions of higher learning, and a sense of liberty that drove the revolution.
- Great Awakening launched many missionary efforts after 1750.
- English abolition committee established in 1787 upon inspiration of William Wilberforce. As a result, English slave trade was halted by 1807, and the slaves were emancipated in 1833 throughout the empire.
- English evangelical societies focused on saving the urban poor after the 1780's. Their multidenominational nature caused much friction between the Anglicans and nonconformists.
- The concept that the Bible, is in human words, unable to describe God who is beyond space and time, was introduced by Immanuel Kant (1724 - 1804).
- Societies became a new Christian group structure along with Episcopal, Presbyterian, and Congregational. Societies were driven by lay volunteers. Bible societies spread across the world from England in 1804.
- Czar Alexander I formed the Russian Bible Society in 1812.
- Spiritual movement launched by James Martineau in the Unitarian Church in the 1830's. The Unitarian Church broke apart with the spirituals turning away from Biblical teachings in favor of reason and conscience.
- American Southern Baptist and Methodist Conventions broke away from the main body in 1845 over slavery. They continue to declare that slavery is not wrong.

- Scientific movement began to affect Biblical thinking, especially with Darwin's theory of evolution in 1859. Agnosticism, atheism, and non-literal Biblical interpretation gained strength.
- Pope Pius IX devoted energy to spiritual authority in writings:
 - o *Ineffabilis Deus*: doctrine of the immaculate conception of the Virgin Mary.
 - o Syllabus of Errors: condemnation of freemasonry, political liberalism, rationalism, Bible societies that spread the Word without comment, and civil marriages.
 - o Vatican I Council 1869: Ultramontanists triumphed over Gallicans in reaffirming papal authority.
 - o Dogma of Papal Infallibility in 1870: absolute correctness of the pope in religious practices and faith.
- YMCA (Young Men's Christian Association) founded in 1865 by George Williams to evangelize young men worldwide through lay volunteers.
- Evangelical Alliance for interdenominational international campaigns formed in 1867.
- Second awakening in the United States as the Methodists and Baptists evangelized westward. Sermons were nondenominational, but with an anti-Catholic position. Methodists became the largest American denomination while the Baptists drew in the working poor.
- The Salvation Army started as the Pleasant Sunday Afternoon Movement in the 1880's, with the goal of drawing industrial class men in England to Christ through subtle motivations.
- Nonconformist denominations, such as Methodists, started many chapels in the slums of the industrial revolution. Chapel philosophy focused on help, haven, and material needs for the people. The preaching of the gospel was a secondary objective.

- World Student Christian Federation formed in 1895.
- The evangelical movement of the 1800's carried three different messages:
 - o Methodist: Christ died for all, and we can imitate Christ.
 - o Calvinist: Christ died for some, and we are lost in sin.
 - o Evangelical: Christ died for all, and we are lost in sin.
- Archeological evidence began supporting many stories of the Bible as it was coming under attack by scientists, philosophers, and historical critics.

THE STATE FROM 1517 - 1900 AD

- Pope Leo X (r. 1513 - 21) ignored the reformation until it spread across Europe.
- King Gustavus Vasa freed Sweden from Denmark in 1523 and established Lutheranism as the national religion in 1527. The old church structure and bishops were retained.
- Pope Clement VII (r. 1523 - 34) tried to initiate reforms but could not overcome corrupt church members, the Holy Roman Empire, and French royalty. The loss of the English church was unavoidable because an agreement on annulment by the pope would have brought immediate opposition by the Holy Roman emperor, who was the nephew of the queen of England.
- King Henry VIII broke the English church away from the papacy in 1534 over the divorce issue. Just years before in 1521, he was named "Defender of the Faith" for his book against Lutheranism.
- King Christian III of Denmark stripped the bishops of their land in 1536 and brought them under control in a new Protestant church. Norway and Iceland followed suit.
- One year after Luther's death in 1546, the Schmalkald War broke out between the Germanic princes and the Holy Roman Empire, resulting in the suppression of Protestantism.
- King Edward VI of England (r. 1547 - 53) embraced the reformation with a Calvinist emphasis.
- Counterattack against the Holy Roman Empire by Maurice of Saxony led to the Treaty of Passau in 1552, which legally recognized Protestantism.

- Queen Mary (r. 1553 - 58) attempted to reestablish Catholicism with persecutions that led to the burning of over 200 church leaders.
- Queen Elizabeth (r. 1558 - 1603) gradually removed Catholic leaders from power and built the Anglican Church based on Protestant views and an Episcopal (Catholic) style government.
- After 1527, both Protestants and Catholics launched a 25 year campaign to destroy the Anabaptists. The Catholics burned them, and the Protestant drowned them. Yet, three groups survived: the Brethren in Switzerland, the Mennonites in the Netherlands, and the Hutterites in Moravia. They settled down to a simple farming life with evangelical zeal totally crushed.
- Calvinism established in Scotland under the efforts of John Knox (1514 - 72).
- Religious differences drove the Dutch War of independence from Spain (1560 - 1618).
- Reformation met strong opposition in Spain, culminating in over 100,000 killed by the Dulce of Alva between 1567 – 73 with Catholicism remaining firm.
- French civil war (1562 - 1598) between the Huguenots (Calvinists), Catholics, and Politiques (non-religious) led to the Edict of Nantes.
- Calvinism spread throughout Switzerland and gained a strong foothold in France with seventy churches by 1559. Strong opposition by French Catholics led to the St Bartholomew's Day massacre of Protestants in 1592. King Henry II was forced by the Catholics to give up his Protestant beliefs after ascending to power in 1589. He was eventually able to legalize Protestantism in 1598 under the Edict of Nantes.

- Lutheranism and Calvinism spread equally across the Poland, Hungary, and Bohemia regions.
- Jesuits brought Mexico, Central America, South America, and the Philippines into Catholicism and gained a foothold in Africa, India, and the Far East.
- Divine right of kings proclaimed by King James I (r. 1603 - 25) and Charles I (r. 1625 - 49). Opposition to this and other matters led to the English Commonwealth, 1649 - 60.
- Surrounding Catholic nations devastated Germany in the Thirty Years War (1618 - 48). After years of fighting, the lines fell back to the original 1529 stalemate position.
- England, France, and Holland expanded globally as the Germanic princes (Protestants) and Spain and Austria (Catholics) exhausted each other in the Thirty Years War.
- All those who wanted to move the Anglican Church towards Calvinism were labeled Puritans and were suppressed by Queen Elizabeth and King James.
- Anglican Church was established in the states in 1607 at James Town Colony. However, the Episcopalian structure was never popular in the United States.
- John Robinson (1576 - 1625) led a separatist branch of Puritans as the pilgrims to America.
- Pilgrims, English separatists from Holland, settled in New England in 1620, with masses of Puritans arriving after 1628. The two groups joined in 1648 under the Cambridge Platform to form American Congregationalism.

- Dutch Reform Church (Presbyterianism) established at Manhattan Island (New Amsterdam) in 1626 and remained strong after English take over in 1664.
- English and Welsh Baptist Church established at Providence, Rhode Island, in 1639 by Roger Williams.
- The remaining people in England who were not a part of the Anglican Church were independents, Presbyterians, and Baptists who adopted many Anabaptist positions.
- Non-Anglican denominations were tolerated under the Commonwealth but were again persecuted by King Charles II when he was restored.
- Poland exiled all Unitarians who would not change in 1658. Many went to Hungary, Holland, and England.
- Hungary completely suppressed Unitarianism in 1671.
- King Charles II regained the throne in 1660 and reestablished the Anglican Church.
- Continued English attempts at forcing Protestantism on Ireland met with steady resistance.
- In Russia, "possessors" under Joseph of Volokolamsk, who wanted a united rich church and state, defeated the "non-possessors" under Nil Sorsky, who wanted a poor church overseeing the spiritual path of the state.
- Russian patriarch Archpriest Avrakum suppressed Zealot movement, which demanded aggressive spiritual reforms, in 1682 by burning the Zealots at the stake.
- King Louis XIV of France re-established Catholicism in 1685 and drove out the Huguenots.

- English Presbyterianism established in Maryland in 1683 by Francis Makemie and later in Philadelphia as many Irish and Scottish refugees arrived.
- At the invitation of William Penn, thousands of Germany Lutherans, Moravians, Dunkers, and Schwenkfelders settled in Pennsylvania with the Quakers. They were joined by smaller numbers of Huguenots and Mennonites.
- Russian church brought under complete state control by Peter the Great with the establishment of state supervisors and a subservient council of bishops. The position of patriarch was dissolved in 1727, and all confessions of treason must be reported.
- Those who resisted the state owned church in Russia, "Old Ritualists," retreated to private communities. Many of them sought the Lord in a priestless manner.
- Russian church property seized by Cathrine the Great in 1770. However, senior church leaders were well supported by the state and heavily involved in politics. The local priesthood decayed into poverty and Biblical ignorance.
- Thomas Coke and Francis Asburg appointed by Wesley in 1784 to oversee Methodism in America. They became the first bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church formed at a Baltimore conference.
- English Unitarian movement launched by John Biddle (161562), with the first church established by Theophilus Lindsey in 1773.
- First Unitarian Church in the U.S. established in Boston in 1785 by James Freeman.

- First under the Toleration Act and then through the 1795 Plan of Pacification, Methodism separated with the Anglican Church and was accepted as a separate denomination.
- Colonial competition for power in Africa resulted in the demise of African missionary activities in the 1700's after years of success.
- Philippines became a strong Spanish Catholic base of operations.
- Spanish missions were well established in Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, and along the coast of California after the 1700's.
- Russian state-managed Christianity expanded east to Siberia as the empire expanded.
- U.S. and French Revolutions were driven by humanistic ideals of liberty, equality, and fraternity. Such ideals were embodied in the Freemason movement which directly conflicted with the Catholic Church.
- French church boundaries redistricted along political lines, with bishops selected by popular election under the Civil Constitution of the Clergy created after the revolution. Clergy also swore allegiance to secular authorities.
- Pope Pius VI (r. 1775 - 99) was briefly arrested by French revolutionary forces in 1798.
- Concordat of 1801 established relations between France under Napoleon Bonaparte (1769 - 1821) and the Vatican under Pope Pius VII (r. 1740 - 1823). The pope would appoint bishops but the emperor could veto.
- Papal State taken by Napoleon in 1808 with Pope Pius VII exiled.

- Unitarianism legalized in England in 1813, with the international association established in 1825.
- Pope Pius VII initiated Ultramontanist campaign and reestablished the Jesuit Order after returning to Rome in 1814 to win back the churches in France and Germany.
- Divine right of kings and the authority of the church again embraced at the Council of Vienna after the Napoleonic Wars. Russian, Austrian, and Prussian alliance established under the justification of holy religious teachings.
- Liberal Catholicism grew in spite of Ultramontanism. Concept of democracy eventually fueled the revolutions in France, Germany, and Italy after 1848.
- Roman Catholic Church hierarchy reestablished in England in 1850, leading to decades of anti-Catholic riots.
- Friedrich Wilhelm IV (1795 - 1861) of Prussia eventually yielded to popular demand for a Declaration of Rights to guarantee religious freedom.
- Kingdom of Italy under Victor Emmanuel (1820 - 78) took Rome, reducing papal power under Pope Pius IX to the Vatican region by 1870. Law of Papal Guarantees limited popes' income and Pius IX withdrew to exile.
- Kulturkampf initiated by Otto von Bismarck, Chancellor of Prussia and head of the German Confederation of States, to reduce Catholic ties to government. State training enacted for bishops as well as a reduction of bishops' rights. The Jesuits were expelled. This practice was followed in Austria to a lesser degree.

- Pope Leo XIII (r. 1878 - 1903) argued for social reform and increased diplomatic relations with Washington, Tokyo, and Moscow.
- Pope Pius X (r. 1903 - 14) severed diplomatic relations with France, made concessions to Italy, and encouraged liturgy (Gregorian chants, veneration of Virgin Mary, etc.).
- Communism, ultimate state of atheistic social Darwinism, introduced by Karl Marx (1818 - 83) in *Das Kapital*, 1867.
- Friedrich Nietzsche (1844 - 1900) argued that God is dead and humanity must move on.
- Mission work became a justification for colonial expansion in the 1800's. At the same time, missionaries focused on education and economic prosperity for the people of Africa and India to eventually free them from colonial exploitation.

CHALLENGES TO THE FAITH (1900 - 2000 AD)

The seed of human independence planted in America spread within decades to Europe, with disastrous results in France. Perhaps the forces of individualism that drove people to demand freedom, when untempered by strong Christian faith, pushed people to act far more tyrannically than the kings they overthrew. The French Revolution became a bloodbath that sent Europe into war and chaos. Although the European monarchs were able to reestablish the right of kings, the age of kings would fade by the twentieth century. Yet, the impact of this evolution in human society, which was more significant than any other change that had occurred in the past 2000 years, was preempted by another event resulting from the industrial revolution.

The industrial revolution brought telephones and railroads throughout Europe. This forced the interaction of nations in Europe to new levels as each nation heard within hours about events across the continent and around the world. The interaction necessitated armies of diplomats. The industrial revolution introduced planes, artillery, land vehicles, machine guns, and ironclad steamships that increased the destructiveness of armies by ten folds. This necessitated treaties and alliances as insurance in case war started. In an ideal world where the spirit of man lived under Christian teachings, this increased interaction among nations could have been turned into a force for unity. As people visited and got to know each other, love and trust could have grown to unite the people of Europe and the world. By the twentieth century, this opportunity for unity in fellowship may have been the last chance as the effect of Christianity started to weaken within the first Christian kingdoms. This opportunity, however, was not even realized, for the hearts of Christian men became suspicious, proud, impulsive, and selfish. The

treaties became a giant web of distrust as the armies piled higher and higher. Eventually, total war in Europe could have been started with the drop of a pin and did start with one assassin's bullet.

If the start of World War I was due to the inability of Christian men to trust and love one another, then the waging of WWI served nothing but to teach men how truly horrible war could be and how cruel man can be. Weapons were used not only to kill but also to inflict agonizing torment. Young men were ripped apart by shrapnel, burned by flame throwers, and destroyed from the inside by poison gas. Looking at WWI, one can almost understand why wars must be fought by the young, for only the young and those who are not trapped by this world could find the courage to confront such horrors. If this courage and willingness for martyrdom could have been dedicated to the Lord, the Kingdom of God might have been completed by now. However, in WWI the young were ruled by secular powers. Thus, we could but hope that the months each soldier spent in the trenches of Europe permitted him to find a relationship with the Lord. By the end of WWI, the world could not believe that man would levy such horrors upon man again.

The Lord did not permit WWI to end without letting the world share in the suffering. The increased mobility of people in WWI fanned the spread of a deadly flu across the world in the last year of the war. In places such as the United States where the war was but a distant inconvenience, death came by the flu to tens of thousands. Suddenly, fear swept through the streets as the young and old alike suffered horribly and died. Then in an instant, everything was over. The flu went away and the war ended. The world went from total horror to precious peace.

The lesson of WWI would prove ineffective against two combined forces: the increasing power of the common man and the self-centered motivations of the common man. In Russia, the common man would overthrow the last of the absolute European monarchs in bloody revolution. The people would, after internal strife, adopt the communist philosophy of Karl Marx. In Germany, the people would rally behind the fascist philosophy of Adolf Hitler.

Germany eventually allied with the other fascist states of Italy and Japan in attempt to assume a position of supreme leadership

among nations. In the United States, the common man, who had assumed responsibility for his nation over 150 years ago under the humanistic democratic philosophy, would begin to feel an increasing sense of righteousness and global responsibility. These three philosophies, all due to man's unwillingness to seek a God-chosen king, clashed in World War II. Unfortunately, as the spirit of man grew to this level of independence, Christianity no longer remained the dominant force in guiding the course of nations. However, Christianity was still accepted in democratic nations where religious freedom was guaranteed in the core philosophy. Ironically, fascism and communism, like humanism which we have discussed earlier, touched upon a portion of the truth in God's plan. However, without Christian teachings and the Holy Spirit to guide the understanding, these pieces of the truth became flawed philosophies.

In communism, Marx outlined an alternative philosophy to the individualism in a democratic society that gave rise to capitalism, an exploitation of those who have not by those who have. Marx predicted that the people who are exploited will rally together and create a shared existence where resources are distributed equally among men. Teamwork instead of competition is then the key to human existence. The unfortunate aspect of communism is that it rejects all hierarchies of man, including the Church. Communists considered the Church as a traditional element which enslaved the people. While this may have been true to some degree, the communists were not able to separate the human church organization, which is as imperfect as man, from the teachings of the Bible, which is the perfect gift from God through Jesus.

The Christian understanding is that there are hierarchies on earth as in Heaven. However, these hierarchies should not be built on wealth and power in the secular world or in the Church. Instead, positions in the Christian realm are based on service, love, and faith. Since wealth is not a Christian pursuit and there are many poor in need of help, Christianity favors a volunteer form of financial communism in which wealth can be distributed to those in need. The communism that rose in the world was the opposite of volunteerism and love. It grew based on the poor wanting to take from the

wealthy with the wealthy resisting to the bitter end. Equality was forced, and the foundation of communism became jealousy, discontentment, and insecurity. After years of forced equality, the spirit of man did not rise to the ideals of teamwork and sharing. Instead, with Christian teachings suppressed and monarchs who had to recognize the Lord removed, communist societies yielded a vacuum for the clever and ruthless to gain totalitarian power while still espousing the team philosophy. Under Stalin, millions of Russians died at the hands of a suspicious dictator. Yet, as in the days of Samuel when the Israelites demanded a king, the Lord permitted communism to form because that was what the people cried out for.

In fascism, people touched upon the truth that nations have different characteristics and different fates as guided by the Lord. Some nations, such as the Israelites, were selected for very special roles in the course of man's spiritual development. Other nations, such as the Canaanites, must be eliminated as a whole from the spiritual growth of humanity. Stumbling onto this fact and corrupted by a great deal of arrogance, nations could easily think of themselves as superior, with the right to rule over others even by force. Three nations, Germany, Japan, and Italy, assumed this philosophy with right of mastery in the late 1930's and began a campaign of conquest that led to WWII. The people of their conquered lands were often treated with extreme cruelty. If the fascist nations had realized the complete truth, they would have seen that the great symbol of national superiority is love, love for God and love for all mankind. This love when expressed in physical form becomes service and sacrifice. Thus, the greatest nations would not acquire power by conquest but by selfless giving. They would apply their resources to relieve the suffering among their neighbors and help others realize the truth that is embodied in Christianity. If by the will of God they are given authority over other nations, then that love must be expressed as a parent to a child. How this God-given authority is obtained is between God and the nation through the Holy Spirit. What must be distinguished is the use of force as personal/national lust for power versus the use of force as directed by the Lord to serve His will. In the latter case, the love must be retained and

the nation should pray for the opposition even as force is applied. Unfortunately, the arrogance of fascism went far beyond just national superiority. In their world, even the Church must support the superiority of the state. Eventually, the state had neither need nor room for the Church, for their arrogance had challenged even the greatness of the Lord. Looking at their arrogance and seeing their actions, one might wonder whether the fascists stood side by side with Satan himself.

WWII was not a complete waste of soldiers' lives as in WWI for modern warfare had matured to be brutal but efficient. All resources, human and machine, were used with precision and conservation. The pace was fast, and the maneuverability was high. There was not much time in combat to contemplate relations with God. Instead, the soldiers were often absorbed fully, mind, body, and soul in the fight. Death was often instantaneous, thus denying that last breath of repentance. Only the Lord knows how much more tragic war had become. Even though there was a new form of romanticism with WWII, few realized the new level of spiritual horror that came to being. When wars were fought between Christian kingdoms, some level of Christian ethics remained in war. With Christianity almost forgotten, WWII pushed beyond Christian values to the point where everything could be done in the name of preserving or proliferating one's own ideology. This included attacking civilians on a massive level and assassinating key personnel. After thousands of years, war had returned to the core struggle of one people against another, total onslaught and with little mercy. The civilized war where men of honor met on the field of battle was no more.

Many will say that war is not a civilized game, and therefore it should be total and ugly. This is like saying that since man is bound to sin, we might as well sin all the way. By this rationale, all is lost. A Christian's position is that there is hope in the depths of sin and love in the greatest of conflicts. So, we are concerned with the

fact that modern weapons have made civilian recruits a powerful resistance force against the enemy, and modern weapons have made the civilian population one of the easiest targets to attack. To the civilian resistance, the spiritual danger lies in becoming as horrible as the enemy one is fighting. This is especially true when children

are taught to kill. For those who kill civilians, the issue is whether it is easy to kill the innocent to gain victory. If there were but ten good men in the Kingdom of Sodom, the Lord would not have destroyed it. How many good men must be in a city before man would not destroy it? If Christians kill only one man praying to the Lord for peace, we must wonder what we have done. Yet, others will say that there was humanity in WWII because bans against weapons of extreme suffering were honored by most parties. Towards this comment we must question to what degree a ban to reduce pain makes wars neater and more efficient. For those who are bound by this world, a limit on pain and suffering is very humane. However, as beings of the spirit we must question the sanity of wanting to eliminate weapons that take life slowly while glorifying weapons that take life rapidly. First, no weapon that takes God's precious gift of this life can be viewed as humane. Then, weapons that take away a spirit's last chance to find salvation are almost unspeakable.

WWII as a whole was a series of ethical contradictions. Aggression was regarded as bad, but vengeance in equally violent response was justified. Killing captured people was considered horrific, but mass killing of people in enemy cities was an effective strategic attack. The same army that was justified in bombing or shelling a city into rubbles might have found it horrifying to send troops into a city to kill all the people one by one at close range. It was under these confusing standards of justifiable violence that one fascist state, Germany, cast aside all standards and took the ultimate step in racial elitism. With not even a pretense of guidance from God, the Nazi rulers of Germany decided that they were gods and had the right to destroy nations. In complete arrogance and extreme hatred, most of the people of Germany supported a genocide campaign that nearly succeeded in murdering the Jewish nation. Throughout history the Lord had permitted the Assyrians, Babylonians, Greeks, Romans, and Persians to all become an instrument in punishing His people. Yet in the end, these instruments possessed by evil were themselves cast away. Truly as the gospel foretold, the Jews had never faced a horror as great as the Holocaust. The world to this day is shocked at what happened to them.

If the Lord punished the other enemies of the Jewish people, how great would He punish Germany? With vastly superior men and machines, Germany came within a step away from conquering Europe. Then the Lord permitted the United States, the one last country where Christianity still remained in strength, to rally the nations of the world to defeat the fascist nations. In the case of Germany, the punishment was complete with almost everything left in rubbles and nearly all the men of the country killed. Germany had to grow again from the women and children, uncorrupted by the men lost to arrogance and hatred. Japan, where Christianity had been rejected before it was known, was shown the face of total annihilation by the atomic weapons of the United States. However, they were only injured and given to the care and guidance of the United States. Finally in Italy, where the majority of the people were more complacent than extremely fascist, they were given a chance to race back to traditional values. In the end, fascism, the twentieth century philosophy weakest in love, was wiped out.

Italy was the birthplace of Catholicism and Germany was the birthplace of Protestantism. How could Christians have failed so miserably in these two ancient Christian kingdoms? Perhaps being ancient is exactly the reason. Even when given a spiritual medicine as strong as the Word, the powers of evil could in time take hold and lead people away from the Lord if the medicine was not constantly readministered. The same problem that plagued the Jews also plagued Christian nations. In Germany, Protestantism gave German Christians tremendous authority to decide their spiritual destiny. This spiritual independence could easily have been manipulated by Satan, since most of the spirits had been weakened, to lose the essence of Christianity. When the people had no choice in their rulers, wars could have been blamed on the pride of the leaders. The people's testing and suffering were directly guided by the Lord based on the maturity of the people. Thus, mature people should pray for a wise and caring God-chosen king like David. In the twentieth century the people demanded the power to choose their leaders and thus their fate, because they either could not see the perfection of the Lord's choices or simply did not want the Lord to choose. At the same time the Lord permitted the processes of the world to spin

faster with technology so that the impact of the people's choices would be felt sooner and more intensely. Because fascism was a movement by the people, the Christians in a fascist state were motivated to choose nation over the Lord or at least make spiritual compromises. Compromise was exactly what the Protestants did under Nazi rule. Many Christians were instantly corrupted by the power and ego feeding fascist philosophy placed before them. For other Christians, they dwelled in a land where churches had historically appeased the state to gain status, and so appeasing Nazi rulers was probably easy. Yet, a few did oppose Hitler and were martyred.

Some might argue that a Christian can do nothing under such circumstances but survive. Such people might wish to remember that all power belongs to the Lord and all is possible with the Lord. The apostles, even under extreme persecution, were not hurt until it was their time to become martyrs. The function of a Christian is complex but the job of a Christian is simple. It is to love and, as a part of that love, spread the true Word even under extreme sacrifices. While Christians should not seek martyrdom, the value of their lives should be a subset of that love. How much is a life worth if it cannot be an instrument of the Lord? So a Christian even under a fascist state should go where the Holy Spirit leads him. Some may be led to martyrdom so that the Nazis lost in evil could be given one last chance. Others may be led to survival in order to keep the underground movement alive. What we do know is that there are absolutely no teachings in Christianity which justify perverting or denouncing one's faith in the face of danger. Repentance awaits Christians who have weakened in the face of danger.

In Italy where Christians were more tightly guided through the centuries by the old Church, the danger was for fascism to rise among the few to lead the population away as sheep. The responsibility of the Christian mission lied with the clergy. Even so, the sheep were shown how precious it was to have a master guided by the Lord. This was especially true for all the Italian soldiers forced to fight in the German campaigns. With most of Europe devastated by the war, the Italians who found themselves on the side of the aggressors were returned in the end to their past way of life relatively unharmed.

This leads us to the question why the Catholic Church, with its enormous influence, stayed so silent in WWII. The answer probably is that the Vatican had to survive Hitler's tyranny. The pope surely felt that Hitler could have reduced the Vatican to rubble and scattered the leadership of the Church. If the land and assets were taken, the Catholic Church might not have sustained its cohesion. Towards this likely rationalization by the leaders of the papacy, we might wish to pose the question how important was the Vatican if one more soul could have been saved. The Lord could make the Vatican rise from the rubble with a word. Every single Christian with faith stronger than a mustard seed, as Jesus taught us, could command the Vatican to rise. If the Vatican was left in ruins, the real question is how could the Church be defeated if it were true to the Lord. Even if all the Church leaders were martyred like Peter and Paul, would the Lord not make the Church grow a thousand folds as He did in the days of old? True, Jesus taught us that Christians must be shrewd. However, that shrewdness means finding the best way to deliver the Word, not hiding behind rationalizations when the Word was so clearly needed. Nevertheless, the Lord permitted the Church to hide perhaps because it showed millions of Catholics that the pope, too, was a man with a man's weaknesses and failures.

Christians also failed in several ways in the heroic nations of WWII even though the Church remained strong as an institution. Among democratic nations with strong individualism, there was momentum to ignore the suffering elsewhere and not get involved. Even Christians, when given security, could look past the suffering of their fellow man. In the United States, most of the people did not start caring about the fascists until Pearl Harbor was attacked. A democratic country, however, cannot be treated as a single entity because of the freedom. With that freedom small groups of volunteers did travel abroad to protect the weak with genuine concern. The rest of the people charged into WWII with the banner of righteousness, the symbol of the Lord, and the heart of vengeance. Only the Lord knows to what degree vengeance and hatred of the enemy ruled the day. True Christians must always love even when confronting enemies. Despite the rallying call for vengeance, the Lord

granted victory perhaps because the humanistic democratic philosophy, even in its confusion, still embraced a degree of love and compassion. This love was tested in the end with the presentation of atomic weapons. For a brief moment in time, the United States, being the only country with nuclear technology, could have achieved mastery of the world. Yet, its people and leadership chose peace and respect for other nations.

Finally, the last test of WWII lied in China where Christianity has had minor success against the age-old Confucian culture and Buddhist teachings. In the past centuries, spiritual growth had clearly stagnated into traditions. Yet, the people held onto the old ways. In the early 1900's an attempt was made to bring democracy to China. However, the people had grown too apathetic to cherish that freedom and take on such responsibilities. Freed from the enslavement of emperors, China became a haven for rival warlords and chaos. United by one nationalist party warlord just before WWII, the leadership proved to be too weak to hold back the Japanese invaders, and too selfish to martyr themselves in defense of the people. As a result, the people were forced, after centuries of complacency, to resist and fight for survival. This forced physical awakening led to a spiritual awakening after the war. Suddenly, the people who did not care when democracy was offered to them wanted more. Communism, which promised equality among men and the lifting of the poor, grew in China until the old China was driven to the island of Taiwan. Yet, Taiwan survived so that the old China was not lost forever. There, what was good about China remained a reminder to the mainland while the bad lost its hold on the people. While communism, as we have discussed, is clearly a distortion of the truth, it represented for the first time the people's desire to choose. After countless centuries, the peasants finally spoke out. In time, communism would serve to wipe way the old culture and traditions to make China essentially a blank slate for the future. Many of the intellectuals in China fled to Taiwan as communism rose. Many of these people, though unable or unwilling to raise their nation from its spiritual stagnation, still remembered the love, respect, and sense of justice that was at the core of Chinese culture. They would be given the rare opportunity of immigrating to

the United States where Christianity still had strength. In the United States, the Chinese Christian churches began to grow in the last decades of the twentieth century.

The fate of people under communism in Russia and later the Soviet Union was very different from those in China, for Russians were people who had lived with the Word for centuries. Yet, they chose communism instead of spiritual rebirth. As communism wiped away the last remnants of Christian authority, the people were shown how truly horrible their fellow man could be. Millions died in purges driven by suspicion, and the whole country suffered for decades as their leaders spent national resources to engage in a global struggle against the western powers led by the United States. To increase the incentive to turn back to Christ, the people had to live continuously under the fear of nuclear annihilation.

Also under the fear of nuclear annihilation, the people of the United States were tested in a very different manner. After the war the people were given immense prosperity and technical marvels to ease the toils of life. With wealth, free time, and the fear of death the people would gradually discover through events that their government and leaders were not perfect. Many young people would die in questionable wars, while at home, the struggle by African Americans and women for rights that democracy promised would shake the very foundations of society. In the wake, many people were left spiritually empty and hungry. The ritualism in many churches did not quench this hunger. The existing understanding of the Word was not enough for many. While the old churches clung to what they had, new generations began turning to drugs, physical pleasures, cults, secular philosophies, science, and other religions for the answers to life. Most of the old churches blamed the youths as being corrupted by the world. However, they could not answer why Christianity did not prevent this corruption.

Very few wanted to recognize that the existing understanding of the Word was not complete and that the application of the power of truth was still very limited. Often, the old churches' standards for what are corrupt were driven by secular conservative values beyond scriptural teachings. Thus, many old Christians looked upon the new music and clothing of the young with disgust.

This position was not true for all Christians. Many new Christian groups emerged with evangelical dedication to recapture the youth. Though they still could not address the questions of the youths, they offered love, acceptance, and fellowship. Through love the force of evil was pushed back so that the spirits of the young could burst to life and receive the Holy Spirit. Many physically and spiritually tormented youths were rescued into the arms of the Lord. However, many spiritually strong youths, proud and intellectually demanding, remained out of reach. Even worse, an increasing number of false prophets emerged using the name of Christ but teaching things in opposition to the Word. They would lead their followers, youths and adults like, spiritually astray in subtle and deceptive ways. Some promised easy salvation for people who still wanted to live in sin. Others bred hatred and arrogance instead of love. Many false prophets used perceived God-given powers to gain authority. Some false prophets even dared to proclaim that they were Jesus. False prophets are not clergymen lacking in understanding. False prophets are those who intentionally ignore parts or all of the Bible and work to undermine the foundation of Christianity. As Jesus warned, the false prophets and all who are weak enough to follow false prophets will be cast out. False prophets not only lead the weak into darkness, but also ward the foolish away from the true Word. The foolish often see the incorrectness of the false prophets and conclude that Christianity is incorrect. They are then quick to condemn Christianity without even hearing the Word, without opening the Bible.

While all the Christian kingdoms under capitalism or communism were kept busy after WWII, the Lord took away their powers over the rest of the world. After centuries of Christian domination, many nations of this world were set free again to choose their own destiny. Among them were the Muslim nations of the Middle East, the Hindu nation of India, the tribal nations of Africa, and the Buddhist nations of Korea and Japan. The Muslim nations, which have rejected Judaism for thousands of years and Christianity for centuries, quickly returned to their traditional beliefs and level of zeal. Again they would become a test to all Christians as Islam began to spread rapidly across the world. India, which ignored Christianity

for four centuries under British rule, continued to ignore Christianity under self-rule. Yet, small groups of Christian converts in India fought on to relieve suffering and, spread Christianity through love. In Africa where colonial lines cut across historical tribal territories, the tribes would spend decades feuding instead of taking the opportunity to unite into a great civilization. The limited groups of Christians there began to adopt a more free-form church, blending traditional cultural practices with Christianity. After decades of chaos with the emergence of dozens of feudal lords, Africa was confronted with the immense testing of the AIDS epidemic and other deadly diseases. In the later part of the twentieth century, diseases and famines would reverse the population growth in Africa as the rest of the world moved on to greater prosperity.

We have already discussed how China is being prepared for the future. In Japan where centuries of Buddhist teachings of pacifism could not curb their hunger for conquest and capacity for cruelty, the decades of U.S. guidance after WWII had little effect in changing cultural characteristics. Christianity still could not gain much acceptance. With the people in fear of war, they threw their hunger for conquest into economics, and wealth became their new lord and master. Huge Japanese corporations formed to help usher in the final period of the twentieth century. In Korea, the northern territory that had been historically ruled by China was given back to Chinese influence as the communist state of North Korea. The ancient small pacifistic Kingdom of Korea in the south would be allowed to gain great prosperity and exposure to Christianity. As a result, Buddhism is giving way to rapidly growing Christian churches.

Amidst this new world order, one ancient Biblical prophecy was fulfilled. Soon after WWII, the nations of the world decided to restore the Jewish homeland. After nearly 2000 years of exile and an even longer period of foreign domination, the Kingdom of Israel would rise in freedom as Jews from all over the world returned home. The Jews in Europe who had rejected Christianity for 2000 years often under persecution would be given a chance to rebuild their relations with the Lord under the old covenant as in the days of

David. In the Holocaust, many of their young, weak, old, and sick were taken. Those left were the strong and proud who once were enslaved by the ways of the world and the rituals of their religion. They emerged from the Holocaust broken, shamed, and hopefully with fear of the Lord. They would be allowed to return home. The Jews in the Soviet Union who were not given as strong a message of Christianity because of the non-evangelical nature of the Orthodox Church suffered a less horrifying period of persecution under communism. There, pressure was placed on them to abandon their faith, their culture, and their people. Those who refused to do so would be eventually allowed to return home to Israel. In the United States, the Jews were offered great security, power, and prosperity. Many of their rituals became tainted with secular practices and liberal views. For many, Judaism became merely a cultural heritage instead of a declaration of their relationship with the Lord. While many were trapped in this modern Babylon, some were able to give up everything to return home to David's kingdom. There, Jews from all across the world would win great prosperity and victories over all their traditional enemies. In that prosperity, the new Kingdom of Israel would slowly backslide as people spend more time at Dead Sea resorts than in devotion to the Lord. However, the laws are strictly obeyed as in the days of the Pharisees.

As our discussion arrives at the closure of the twentieth century, we will focus on three key topics: the status of Christianity, the great theological attacks on Christianity, and the rise of a new world order. Throughout the twentieth century Christian churches around the world have been losing ground to a world rushing past their traditional ways. When churches lost authority, many ritualistic Christians drifted away. When churches refused to grow in their understanding of the Lord's plan, many intellectuals turned to non-Christian sources for meaning. When people failed to understand the disasters that had befallen them, they lost their faith in the Lord. When people acquired all the technological wonders, they started believing that there was no need for the Lord. In the end, most churches were left confused, worried, and less certain of their ways. To a degree, this supports the movement for unification of the Christian denominations. Though unification is still far away,

numerous worldwide discussions have been conducted, establishing a greater sense of cooperation. Even the Catholic Church, which has been so firm in its views, relaxed its position against the Protestants in the Vatican II council.

This hopeful movement is, however, overshadowed by immense difficulties. Beyond losing many members, the types of membership in the church have also changed in the twentieth century. With many strong spirits lured away by the secular world, the percentage of weak, fearful Christians clinging to the Lord increased. In the Catholic realm, veneration of the saints and the Virgin Mary became stronger than ever. Needing the support of a heavenly being they feel close to, such as a mother entity, many Catholics looked upon the Virgin Mary as their new Lord, pushing back their relationship with Christ. Within the Protestant realm, the Pentecostal Church emerged and broke away with an emphasis on pure spiritual awakening and seizure by the Holy Spirit. So much energy is devoted to achieving this state of spiritual rapture that the pursuit of greater understanding of the Word is often forgotten. In many ways, Christianity has gone full circle. For centuries, new branches of Christianity formed because their new understanding of the Word could not be accepted by the existing church. As the twentieth century came to closure, many Christians within the Pentecostal and Protestant churches opted for the charismatic movement, choosing to be immature children in the arms of the Lord instead of mature servants seeking greater participation in the Lord's plan.

While the churches struggled in the twentieth century, the Lord granted one Christian effort unprecedented success. By the end of the twentieth century, the Bible, which is the common focal point for all the Christian denominations despite their differences, has been translated into nearly every language in the world. Efforts have also been successful in making the Bible more easily understandable to speakers of the English language. Even more amazing, the Catholics and Protestants, with so many disagreements between them, began thinking about creating a common Bible. After 2000 years of leading the Word to select nations in different stages of spiritual need, the Word is finally being released to all by the Lord as the boundaries

of the world are tom down by technology and as all the nations of the world sink deeper into spiritual stagnation. Though weakened by the world, the Christian missionary effort to deliver the Word, with its few volunteers armed with native language Bibles, press forward. Each year, the list of martyrs increases. Each year, new Christians find themselves persecuted in their own country that rejects the Word.

In the early days of Christianity, fringe groups formed with practices and views that were considered heresy. These groups were eventually all suppressed. With the decline of primary Christian Church authority and influence in the twentieth century, many fringe groups again emerged and proliferated in strength. Two significant groups are the Church of Jesus Christ and Latter Day Saints (Mormons) and the Jehovah's Witnesses. The Mormons believe that they were given their own prophet in the late 1800's in the person of Joseph Smith. They also believe, despite the fact that Jesus told His apostles everything, that no one knew about a lost tribe of the Jews that arrived in the United States to become ancestors of the American Indians. According to the Mormons, this secret and the visitation of Jesus after His crucifixion with the American Indians were kept hidden to Jews and Christians for thousands of years until an angel revealed it in the form of gold tablets to Joseph Smith. The Book of Mormon is considered by the Mormons to be a text equal to the Holy Bible.

The appeal of the Mormons is clear; Christ is suddenly personalized for the Americas. However, if it were true then it would be in opposition to our discussion of the Lord's complex systemic plan for growing Christianity from a single foundation. According to Mormon claim, Jesus attempted to pass His gift of salvation directly to another people, but He failed as those people continued in paganism. Certainly, no signs of Jesus' teachings remained with the American Indians. If the Book of Mormon is a complete hoax or some archeological document of less than divine inspiration, why does the Lord permit the Mormons to survive? Perhaps one reason is that in many cases the Mormons in their confusion have shown more dedication than Christians with sound understanding of the Word. Perhaps another reason is that, while the Mormons still preach

the Holy Bible, they may eventually see the contradiction between the complete truth expressed in the Bible and the errors in the Book of Mormon. The full degree of contradiction can only be revealed through a chapter by chapter discussion of the Book of Mormon. The danger of the Mormons is that anything that is not true cannot belong to the Lord but is under the control of Satan, the great deceiver. With but a foothold, Satan can use the falsehood to eventually mask all the truth. If the Mormons focus on their book and proclaim the Bible but never study it, then all is lost.

The Jehovah's Witnesses, on the other hand, stay only with the Holy Bible. However, they believe that Satan was successful in challenging God's authority by causing a rebellion in Eden. The rest of history is then seen as God restoring the world to His full authority. Thus, the group actively rejects all worldly authority, eagerly awaiting the end. The unfortunate fact about their view is that they deny the full and complete wonder of the Lord. They reject the idea that all creation, including Satan, is under the Lord's plan, and that Satan has no power unless the Lord permits it. Jesus taught us that, while we should not be a slave to this world, we should also not hate it, for much of it is a reflection of Heaven. Throughout our discussion, we have seen how much of this world is designed to help us grow spiritually. Those who hunger for the end may find themselves not ready for it, because they have ignored the path of growth towards the end.

As the Christian churches lost people, authority, and confidence toward the end of the twentieth century, the world grew increasingly powerful in its critical attacks on Christianity. Many of these attacks sought to divide Christianity by accepting some concepts while rejecting other core Christian truths. Consequently many Christians along with non-Christians began doubting the completeness of the Faith. The attackers in many cases are truly formidable, being intellectuals and scholars well versed in the Bible and history. Often, their Biblical knowledge, though not knowledge of the truth, far exceeds that of the clergy. Some even dared to consider themselves the leaders of Christian advances. Since the beginning, Christian theologians have advanced Christian understanding based on faith that the Holy Bible embodies the gift of the Word. As such, it is

divinely guided and is perfect in content. All debates centered on the interpretation of its meaning. The twentieth century ended with some theologians challenging the very essence of the Bible. Many of these people consider the Bible merely as a philosophical tool to be blended with current social values when it applies. In conjunction, much of the Bible is viewed as being dated, relevant only to ancient societies. Even the motivations of the Biblical writers are questioned. Based on these conclusions, they argue that Christianity should evolve beyond the Bible to embody new church experiences. Many scholars have difficulty accepting the historical events in the Bible and demand archeological proof. Naturally, many scholars consumed by intellect and current understanding of the physical world cannot accept the numerous tales in the Bible, which they consider as myths. If a thing cannot be explained by science, in which many have more faith than the Lord, then it is rejected. Others argue that faith should be built simply on human experience, not on Biblical teachings. In the end, these theologians agree that there once was a philosopher named Jesus who presented some teachings about 2000 years ago.

For those attackers of the Word who are trying to destroy the Church from within, it is sad that their spirits are so ruled by this world that they cannot be guided by the Holy Spirit to see the truth. Given this state, we could show them by intellectual means how every verse in the Bible comes together with such agreement and comprehensiveness in details that it had to be guided by the Lord. As a result, they might begin to understand the perfection of the Lord's plan. We Christians can study science with faith and discover that scientific knowledge is in complete agreement with Christian understanding even though many scientific theories are intentionally built to oppose the concept of a creator. As the demands of the people increase, the Lord has granted many archeological discoveries in the twentieth century, all confirming the actuality of Biblical events.

Countering those who see the teachings of the Bible merely as a philosophy, we must concur that much of the Old Testament does address laws and practices appropriate to Jewish society in ancient times. However, this is not because the physical lifestyle was

different back then, but because the Jewish people were spiritually young and immature. While Christians should be mature enough to rise above laws and rituals, the understanding of how Old Testament laws were intended to shape the spirit will serve to guide Christians for all times, for the Word is embodied in God's laws. The Bible is like one breathtaking painting. One must stand back and see the whole painting at once to know its full beauty. If but one square inch is removed, the beauty is lost and everyone stares at the blank spot. As Christianity is being attacked by men who study the Bible but worship scientific reasoning, perhaps the defenders of Christianity should keep their faith in the Lord strong but study the ways of science to counter-attack. This may be difficult as more and more Christians revert to simpler forms of worship, which rely on faith and energy but deemphasize the depth of understanding.

With the Christian kingdoms nearly gone and the churches losing their secular influence while being attacked by intellectuals and deceivers from all sides, the world has been set free to grow into a new world order distant to the Lord. Unprotected by the teachings of Christianity, much of this new world order is being shaped by the efforts of the Evil One who is unceasing in his deception. The first step in this new world order is to tear down the remnants of Christian influence in the old Christian societies. With Christian teachings forgotten by many, full Christian meaning understood by very few, and Christian ways twisted by others, the mark of Christianity on society is often an easy target for the forces of darkness. The soldiers in this campaign are often the hurt, lost, oppressed, and spiritually empty, unwittingly deceived into activities that are against the will of God. The first of these activities is the branch of the feminist movement that challenges Bible teachings about the relations between man and woman. For thousands of years the Lord has guided the spiritual growth of men and women along different but intertwined paths in accordance to their spiritual needs. We must recognize that the spirits of men and women are different as the spirits of people in different national branches are different. However, the problem is that men throughout the centuries since Jesus' teachings have so often failed in their responsibilities to love

and care for women. Even among Christians,. mental and physical abuse of women, disrespect of women's emotional needs, and rejection of women's capabilities exist. As the churches weakened, some women decided to take on the responsibility of correcting this problem by fighting back against men and men's institutions. Unfortunately, they were not fighting to create the Christian ideal but to wipe away the Christian understanding. Many in anger argued that what the Lord has permitted for thousands of years is wrong and that women are in reality superior to men. Some even argued that God may actually be feminine but do not go on to explain why this feminine god would permit male-dominated societies for thousands of years.

The irony is that the points made by some leaders of feminism for female superiority may in many ways be correct. Women on average may be brighter than men and more sensitive to the ways of this world. Their natural instincts give them a better grasp of this reality. However, few, including men, have considered the possibility that the Lord gave men their responsibility because women are brighter and more tied to the world. If women had to take on men's responsibilities, perhaps many would be spiritually lost. Men, on the other hand, are generally more like children, and it is better that they know not what they are doing. Since the days of Adam in Eden, men have been often clueless.

While the fate of the few women who led this attack lies with the Lord's judgment, the Lord did permit the position of women to change as the twentieth century came to an end. Maybe this is because, after centuries of spiritual growth, the spirits of both men and women have grown strong enough to be independent, not ruled by kings and not controlled by men. There is, however, great danger in independence. If women in complete independence choose Christ and ask the Holy Spirit to guide them to conduct only the affairs of this world that will not corrupt them, then their relations with the Lord will be more special than ever. If women allow themselves to become lost in this world by adopting ways of deception, greed, selfishness, and pride to compete and rise above men, then they will be captured by evil.

Another major assault on the legacy of Christian society is the often forced acceptance of homosexual behavior. The laws of the Old Testament strictly forbid men from having physical relations with other men. The tenth commandment implies that men should not even have desires for what belongs to another man. While Christians are not governed by laws, we should understand that it is the Lord's will that the bond between men should be on a spiritual level of brotherhood, which would only be destroyed by unnatural desires. The Lord clearly abominates homosexual behavior. The Lord's will is that the spirits of men and women, which are complementary, unite in a manner to produce the next generation of spirits on earth. This unity is achieved through a physical union. To help men and women fight past the physical lust created by spiritual qualities not of love, the Lord established the institution of marriage so that spiritual love could mature. Even with such understanding and incentives, some spirits are of such a quality that the physical world pushes them towards unnatural desires. This does not mean that these spirits are worse than others, for other spirits are pushed by the world towards sins of a different nature, such as deceit, greed, hate, and jealousy. As Christians we should help to encourage all who are of Christ to overcome this and other hard testing. We should forgive those who are trying to fight even though they may have fallen in the past. In the extreme cases where people have chosen to embrace sin despite all levels of encouragement, excommunication should be considered so that they could be left unharmed in the hands of the Lord.

Unfortunately, Christian societies have often been harsh throughout history. Many chose to follow Old Testament laws to persecute the homosexuals. Yet, these same persecutors would ignore other laws broken by many weak Christians. As a result, those with homosexual desires were usually not able to get the support of their fellow Christians, and some remained in sin by conducting homosexual practices in secrecy. Towards the end of the twentieth century when the churches weakened, homosexuals decided to fight back against centuries of persecution. In this fight, they pushed aside Christian understanding and argued that God created them

differently and thus they should be accepted. A similar argument would be that God created deceivers, adulterers, and criminals to be what they are. If so, then this world is just a twisted game in the hands of God. Christians know this is not true. Rather, this world is God's plan to help our spirits overcome the evil so that we can be received into His love by His grace.

In this fight against evil, God does permit certain spiritual qualities to surface so that we can struggle and grow. With the efforts of the homosexuals, their way of life gained acceptance. Perhaps the Lord permitted them to succeed because the teachings against such behavior are for the growth of the spirit. If the world has already abandoned Christianity and the growth of the spirit, then such physical behavior is of little relevance. Another reason may be that the spirit of man has matured to a point where he should be given the freedom to fight this sin with his own strength. As homosexual parades proudly march through the streets of once Christian societies, perhaps many who could have resisted such a way of life under harsh laws may fall to temptation in a non-Christian world. Yet, the spirit must be tested in growth.

Some attacks on Christian ways are not just by minority groups. With the churches weakened, many found the argument that they are made and accepted by God with all their weaknesses to be attractive. So, if people want to yield to lust and adultery, it is just the way they are. If husbands and wives cannot get along, it is acceptable to divorce. After all, enlightenment philosophies teach that all people have the right to happiness whether or not it is the Lord's will. The Lord leads spirits to each other in marriage so that they will have the opportunity to grow in a special union. In some cases, even though the husband and wife fail to achieve this spiritual unity, their offspring are what the Lord wishes for the growth of humanity. In other cases, couples are brought together to test each other so that their spirits can be shaped in more painful ways. In all cases, except a betrayal, a Christian marriage must never break. Paul, however, did specify that the non-Christian world is not bound by such levels of commitment. Thus, as Christian society disappears, the institution of marriage collapses across the world. What is most shameful is that many Christians and churches weak in faith have

accepted the degradation of the institution of marriage. To survive in a hostile world without strong faith in the Lord's protection, many churches made compromises to the world to keep its weak members.

All these activities to remove Christian values from society and all the theological attacks on Christian teachings are still not the greatest threat to Christianity. Christianity in the new millennium faces possible defeat not because of attacks, for its foundation is perfect. Instead, it is being relegated to a position of insignificance. In the new world order, the truth is buried under an ideology of mutual human respect and tolerance. Christianity is acceptable for meeting some people's emotional needs but so are other religions. Society tells us that no one can be sure about the truth. We find Christians living in this new world order suddenly arguing for the restoration of the Buddha god-king of Tibet or the continued practices of American Indian mysticism. Christians who boldly proclaim that Jesus is the only truth or that the Word will one day wash away all the cultural ignorance across the world are labeled as intolerant bigots. This condemnation of Christian boldness is at times incorrectly justified by associating true Christians with the many false prophets who use the name of Christianity to breed racial and social hatred.

The foundation of the new world order rests upon the concept of a global community. Many once again believe that if the people of the world can work together with or without God, they can do almost anything. The spirits of men across most of the nations of the world have all matured to the level that they think they could do without the Lord. Armies of engineers, doctors, scientists, and businessmen are working feverishly to create this world order. Using information technology, they have enabled people across the world to communicate easily with each other and gain awareness of events worldwide. Centuries ago, a person in a village once in a while saw a disaster befall his neighbor and he felt deeply about it. At the end of the twentieth century, most people see horrible events daily on the television and feel very little. Centuries ago, a person in a village had a few lifelong friends whom he depended on. At the end of the twentieth century, most people have hundreds of acquaintances

near and far, but rarely will they find a friend who will be with them through thick and thin. As the people of the world became more prosperous, the financial community found ways to lure the average man to worship at the alter of money. By the end of the twentieth century, Wall Street had managed to totally detach money from the labor and productivity that it use to reflect. In the age of mercantilism, businessmen used trade to exploit the labor of others. In the twentieth century information age, businessmen found that if they could gain access to enough investors, they could create mythical worth. In the early twentieth century, the value of stocks and currency were tied to actual companies and materials, such as gold. This would change as value became strictly determined by people's demand for it. Great fortunes could then be made by simply projecting and fanning people's desires to get rich. The promise of easy wealth would turn out to be so tempting that by the end of the twentieth century, many would be spending their free time planning their investment strategies to feed off other people. A century ago, the average man would have simply worked hard, saved his money, and spent his free time in family or spiritual pursuits.

The new world order is also occurring in modem medicine. The medical breakthroughs of the early twentieth century against bacterial and viral diseases started steep increases in world population that became an explosion towards the end of the century. With the world population surpassing six billion people, a large portion of all the people who have ever lived is alive today. The battle to gather souls for the Kingdom of Heaven is more important now than ever. The efforts of Christians today will determine whether billions of souls are saved or lost to the forces of evil. Medical science, however, is not concerned with the soul but with the body. As the twentieth century ends, medical science promises to unravel all the secrets of life so that man can literally challenge the works of God. Despite the Lord's command that human life, for the sake of the spirit, shall not exceed 120 years, medical science is about to end the process of natural aging. Despite the Lord's command that new life should spring from an union of man and woman, medical science is about to clone life and genetically engineer new beings, whether or

not we think these beings will be granted souls. Indeed, medical science is a part of this new world order and a building block in the new Tower of Babel, which man is creating to challenge Heaven.

CONCLUSION

Two thousand years after the Word came to us, we find the nations that received the Word first struggling with spiritual stagnation. The nations given to Christians to continue their growth are consumed by secular ideologies, and much of the world is trapped by religions which cannot bring man's spirit to the Lord. As Christian missionaries continue their attempts to deliver the Word to everyone in the world, many of the churches that support or should support them grow weaker with the spiritual stagnation of their congregations. Of the two billion people worldwide who consider themselves Christians, only a very small fraction still retains the fire of the spirit cleansed by the Word. To prevent this digression many churches have turned towards more basic spiritual pursuits or firmer traditional practices. Often, Christian growth through greater understanding of the Lord's plan is sacrificed for fear that new ideas would create more confusion.

The great question of the day for Christians and non-Christians alike seems to be "What is next?" For those who worship science and secular social concepts, these are their days to bask in the glory of the power of man. Indeed, the spirit of man has grown more powerful than ever before, so powerful that the world must be filled with hard testing to flush out the evil that corrupts it. For non-Christians, there seems to be a growing feeling that something big is about to happen. Yet, their incomplete understanding and distance from the Lord keep them in darkness. The armies of false prophets unleashed onto this world are also relishing these days, easily gathering the spiritually weak, often from within the Christian churches.

As Christians we might wonder whether God's truth, when passed by our feeble hands, can now fight the immense force of evil that has grown with the power of the human spirit. Though we are weak, the Bible and the power of the Holy Spirit are strong. We know that the most blessed of God's people are those who turn to

Him after receiving the Word without miracles, trials, and force. If Christian messengers can still save but one more spirit, perhaps we should not yearn too hard for the fulfillment of prophecies and the return of our Lord Jesus. However, the evidence does point to a changing of the seasons for man's development. If so, then the prophecies tell us that a short period of great miracles and great trials awaits the rebellious kingdoms of the earth to convince people, for the last time, to turn towards the Lord. Afterwards, the army of Heaven shall descend with Jesus to place truth firmly in front of every man and force all to serve the will of God. While that will be a joyous day for Christians across the world, it will be a sad day for those who have denied the Word. Thus, if there is but one minute left, we must seize that minute to reduce the ranks of those who deny the Word and bring the lost sheep into the embrace of the Lord. A Christian's work is never more critical than now, for time is running out. The Word must be delivered with more boldness than ever before. The arguments against false prophets and other religions must be made clearer than ever before. The love for God and fellow man must be stronger than ever before. Our relationship in prayer with our Father in Heaven through Jesus must be unwaivering.

Friends, in this brief parting, I once again humbly ask you to accept this book as a sincere attempt to understand some of God's plan and wondrous acts. God's perfect plan accounts for every person and every event no matter how small and unaccountable they seem in history. I, however, can only see to the limits of my mental and spiritual capacity. Thus, in my discussions, the objective has been to increase our understanding a little with the hope that it will help us grow closer to the Lord, expand our ability to serve Him, and defend Christianity from the many attackers who use the misunderstanding of history against us. In no way should any of these discussions be construed as a condemnation of any people or nation, past or present, even though God's worldly punishment could sometimes be witnessed. All judgments belong to God. God's final judgment reaches into the hearts of men, which we cannot see, and is beyond this life in a realm that we cannot comprehend. Soon, Christ our Lord will return, and the events of the past will be remembered simply as a testimony to His triumph.

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

THE WORLD FROM 1900 - 2000 AD

- Arms race resulting from advances in military technology motivated alliances and treaties across Europe at the start of the century.
- Japan's naval victory over Russia resulted in complete control of Manchuria and Korea after 1905.
- After years of effort, Sun Yat-sen (1866 - 1925) overthrew the Ching Dynasty in 1911, taking China away from the imperial system. Nationalist and communist ideologies flourished in the revolutionary party, leading to tension and eventual breakup in 1921.
- Ten million soldiers died in WWI (1914 - 18). Poisonous gas, planes, machine guns, armored vehicles, and U-boats all contributed to the slaughter. In the Treaty of Versailles in 1919, the victorious nations (England, France, and the U.S.) forced the defeated Germany into crippling war reparations.
- The weak Russian monarchy fell under revolution in 1917 during WWI. Years of civil war resulted in Lenin and the Bolshevik Red Army taking total control. Russia became the first communist state.
- Killer strain of flu swept across the world taking over twenty million lives of all ages in a horrifying manner.
- The invention of the television in 1927 began bringing the events of the world directly into people's homes in the U.S. by the late 1940's after WWII.
- The Chinese nationalists under Chiang Kai-Shek, principal inheritors of the revolution, defeated all the local warlords by

1928. Open aggression between the nationalists and communists started in 1927.

- The crash of the U.S. stock market in October 1929 drove the world into crippling depression.
- The Nazi party under Adolf Hitler rose to power in a crumbling and angry Germany in 1933. A campaign of national mobilization and Jewish persecution immediately followed. Territorial expansion began slowly after 1935 with war-weary England and France looking the other way.
- Spain turned fascist in 1936 in a bloody three years civil war.
- Fascist Italy made a formal pact with Germany and Japan in 1937.
- Japanese invasion of China initiated in 1937 with much of the coastal regions occupied in the first year. China's internal conflicts were suspended to resist the Japanese.
- WWII began with Germany invading Poland in 1939, which drew in Polish allies, England and France. With a non-aggression pact with Russia, Germany seized Poland, the Baltic States, and attacked into Finland. In 1940, the Germany *Blitzkrieg* took Denmark, Norway, Netherlands, and France in weeks. Then Germany broke the pact in 1941 and attacked Russia. Japan attacked Pearl Harbor in 1941. This drew the U.S. into the war, which led to allied victory by the end of 1945.
- WWII resulted in 45 million dead worldwide: six million Jews died in Nazi genocide campaign and nearly twenty million Russians died resisting the Nazi advance.
- Atomic bomb was developed in 1945 by the U.S. and used twice against Japan to bring the war quickly to an end. Over 100,000 Japanese men, women, and children died instantly or slowly due

to painful radiation poisoning. Perhaps a million U.S. and Japanese soldier's lives were saved due to the swift conclusion of the war.

- Decades of passive resistance by Gandhi led to Indian and Pakistani independence in 1947.
- United Nations formed after WWII and partitioned Palestine into Arab and Jewish states in 1948.
- Soviet takeover of Czechoslovakia and blockade of Berlin in 1948 led to the formation of NATO and the beginning of the Cold War. U.S. adopted the policy of containing communist expansion.
- Soviet Union and the U.S. partitioned Korea into two states.
- Chinese communists drove the nationalists to Taiwan in 1949 after years of fighting.
- Resistance against the reestablishment of colonial powers spread across South Asia.
- North Korea invaded South Korea in 1950. U.S. lead UN forces pushed back N. Korea to the Chinese border. Chinese forces then pushed the UN forces back to the original 38th parallel. The fighting ended in stalemate in 1953.
- Soviet and Chinese-backed communist forces in Vietnam opposed French control of Vietnam in 1954. U.S. was gradually drawn into Vietnam as the French capability disintegrated.
- Massive economic growth in the U.S., Japan, and Western Europe in the decade of the 1960s. Civil rights movement started with the march on Washington in 1963. Environmental movement started in 1926 and gained momentum. National

Organization for Women founded in 1966 to revive feminism.
Homosexual rights movement started in 1969.

- Israel triumphed over surrounding Arab states in the Six Day War of 1967 and captured neighboring territory. Arab nations began turning towards the Soviet Union in light of U.S. support for Israel.
- Middle East oil producing nations exerted power through an oil price hike in 1973 to cause worldwide economic disturbance.
- U.S. withdrew from Vietnam in 1975 after an unsuccessful conflict.
- Iranian Revolution in 1979 brought into power the religious sect and marked the growth of Islamic fundamentalism across the Middle East.
- The proliferation of personal computers increased our social dependence on machines.
- After decades of failed attempts at sweeping changes by Chairman Mao Tse-tung (Great Leap Forward to advance the economy and Cultural Revolution to reawaken the revolutionary spirit), China moved towards capitalism in the 1980s under Deng Xiaoping.
- Economic decline and the historical magnitude brought on by a drought in 1983, sent African countries into prolonged crisis. The spread of AIDS further contributed to the despair.
- Soviet Union entered a period of economic, political, and social reform along democratic paths after 1985 under Mikhail Gorbachev. Too weak to recover from decades of exhaustive military build-up, the Soviet Union broke apart into Russia and surrounding independent states in December 1991.

- U.S. demonstrated its next generation military force and theory by overwhelmingly driving back the Iraqi aggressor in Kuwait during the 1991 Persian Gulf War. U.S. casualties were minimized with precision strikes that crippled enemy operations.
- The world advanced into the information age in the 1990's as the worldwide computer web grew, linking millions of personal computers across the world in a common interactive environment. This web quickly became the backbone of financial operations and other societal activities.

CHRISTIANITY FROM 1900 - 2000 AD

- At the start of the 1900's, Protestants and Catholics continued to lose the younger generation to the secular ideologies of communism, nationalism, and individualism / humanism. The liberal secular humanistic forces could not hold back the nationalistic tension that led to WWI in 1914.
- The Pentecostal Church was organized in 1906 at a revival in Los Angeles and quickly grew in North America, Europe, and the Third World. Among the American churches were the Assemblies of God, Church of God, and Church of God in Christ. The churches emphasized the gift of the Holy Spirit as reflected in speaking in tongues and faith healing. Illness is often viewed as a lack of faith or result of sinning. Many poor and less educated people were drawn into this denomination where there is no clergy class but a great deal of spontaneous emotional expression in worship.
- First World Missionary Conference in 1910 at Edinburgh. Conference highly dominated by colonial powers.
- First International Missionary Council in 1921.
- The "Living Church" was formed in Russia in 1923 as a departure from traditional church positions. It swore allegiance to the communist powers. Yet, it still faced limitations in freedom of worship.
- Jehovah's Witnesses was formed in 1931 from the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, started in 1884. This proclaimed Christian denomination focused on themselves as being the only people true to God and thus selected for salvation. The Bible is the foundation of faith, but much emphasis is placed on the destruction of wickedness and the coming of God's Kingdom.

- Young Catholic churches began gaining authority in the twentieth century with six Chinese bishops in 1926, one Indian bishop in 1923, one Japanese bishop in 1927, one Annabite and one Sri Lankan bishop in 1933, and one African bishop in 1939.
- World Conference on Faith and Order at Lausanne in 1927 and then at Edinburgh in 1937 focused on doctrinal problems. This led to the World Council of Churches that met periodically (Amsterdam in 1948, Evanston in 1954, New Delhi in 1961, Uppsala in 1968, Nairobi in 1975, Vancouver in 1983, and Canberra in 1991).
- Second World Missionary Conference in 1928 at Jerusalem began working on the relations between old and young churches.
- Discovery of the ancient city of Ugarit in Syria in 1929, revealing Canaanite lifestyle.
- The Wycliffe Bible Translator Society started an effort in 1934 that eventually led to a unique translation of the Bible that focused on the verse by verse meaning of the original Hebrew and Greek manuscripts to create a Bible in modern language. The theory is that the word for word translations of the Bible, which are still the most predominant church texts, may at times not carry the exact meaning of the original language. These new modern language Bibles, such as *The Good News Bible* in 1975, are still direct translations which make no attempts at interpretation.
- Many German Protestants backed Hitler because of resentment of Catholic and socialist growth. Hitler's anti-communistic stance appealed to them while Hitler's anti-Semitism was overlooked.
- Some German Christians rallied together under the Barmen Declaration of 1934. While avoiding direct confrontation with Nazism, the Confessing Church that formed called Christians

back to traditional values. This brought on a period of Nazi harassment known as the Kirchen Kampf (period of church struggle).

- Vatican under Pope Pius XI strongly condemned communism in 1937. Later, all Catholics involved in communistic activities would be excommunicated.
- Third World Missionary Conference in 1938 at Madras.
- U.S. church position in the face of communism and fascism varied.
 - o Some hated communism so much that they backed fascism.
 - o Some argued for peace and neutrality.
 - o Others argued for a just war.
 - o Some favored communism after seeing the Great Depression.
- Discovery of Gnostic text at Nag-Hammadi, Egypt in 1945.
- United Bible Society established in 1946 with the following goals:
 - o coordination, cooperation, expansion
 - o harmonize policy techniques
 - o help from central committee
 - o analysis of trends and world situation
 - o emergency responseThe society supported the development of full Bibles in 329 languages and select Bible sections in 2009 languages
- Discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls at Qumran, Israel in 1947. Among the scrolls is a copy of the Old Testament, which is 1000 years older than any other known text.
- International Missionary Council in 1947 at Whiby, Canada.

- The western churches supported the reestablishment of Israel after the Holocaust. Orthodox churches were sympathetic to the Palestinian cause.
- After breaking away from colonialism, Christians in Africa and India attempted to globalize the gospel, separating its teachings from western culture and values.
- After Stalin's death in 1953, the Russian Orthodox Church increased support to Mother Russia in the Cold War. Church representatives traveled abroad to extend its influence. The Church even joined the World Council of Churches in 1961.
- During the 1950's, American Protestants took an extreme anti-communism position.
- Pentecostalism was recognized as the fourth branch of Christianity after 1950 by the World Council of Churches. However, tensions continued with Pentecostal penetration into mainstream Catholicism and Protestantism.
- From the 1960's, Christians began supporting the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa until apartheid was lifted in 1994.
- In the 1960's, a series of civil rights leaders emerged from the African American churches in the U.S.
- From the 1960's, Catholic priests in Latin American began supporting revolutionary activities, believing that salvation is linked to political freedom and economic prosperity.
- Vatican II (1962 - 65) called for by Pope John XXIII (r. 1958 - 63) opened the Catholic Church to discussion with other denominations on matters of a common Bible, shared ministries, and doctrinal agreements with the hope of one day achieving unity.

- Honest to God Movement in 1963 raised questions about ritualized worship and attempted to teach that God is close, not far away.
- The Roman Catholic Church and the United Bible Society agreed in 1968 to cooperate in spreading the gospel and in Bible translations with the hope of achieving a common Bible.
- Theological battles in the twentieth century:
 - o Liberalism: free interpretation of the Bible under social influence.
 - o Modernism: Christianity is not based on ancient teachings but on ever-increasing church learnings.
 - o Archeological Affirmation: demanding proof of the events of the Bible.
 - o Socialism: society destroys the spirit of man.
 - o Criticism: Bible is not exact but just an outline.
 - o Anti-Myth: reinterpretation of the Bible free from perceived mythical viewpoint.
 - o Positivism: believing through scientific evidence.
 - o Existentialism: faith by human experience.
 - o Freudianism: God believed to be an invention of man to cope.
 - o Worldly Christianity: practicing of Jesus' teachings in society.
 - o Bible Theology: identifying the central themes that tie the Old and New Testaments together.
 - o New Quest of Historical Jesus: studying the impact of period customs and practices on the writers of the gospels.
- World Council of Churches' Commission on World Mission and Evangelism in 1973 at Bangkok called for moratorium on funds to select churches that would not join the partnership or exhibit distorted Christian views.
- International Congress on World Evangelism in 1974 at Lausanne explained that at times a reduction in financial aid may

be necessary to increase self-reliance and refocus funds to other points.

- The desire for self-identity has led many African churches to become independent, combining traditional practices with personal, often spontaneous, forms of worship.
- The Bible translation effort reached 517 languages by 1900 and 1577 languages by 1975.
- Massive proliferation of cults towards the end of the twentieth century. Many falsely used the name of Christ. Many centered on Satan. Many centered on old druid religion principles, revived as new age thinking.
- Islam proliferates worldwide, drawing in many people of African and Asian descent who have become disillusioned with Christianity which is seen as a white European faith.
- Traditional Orthodox churches competed with newly arriving evangelical missionaries as East European countries democratized in the 1990's.
- World population in each major faith:
 - o 2.0 billion Christians (1 billion Catholics, 300 million Protestants, 200 million Orthodox, and 500 million others)
 - o 1 billion Muslims
 - o 350 million Buddhists
 - o 14 million Jews
 - o 750 million Hindus

THE STATE FROM 1900 - 2000 AD

- State registration of churches required in France after 1901 with the Association Law. The Separation Law of 1905 repealed the Concordat of 1801, separating France from the papacy and ending Catholic privileges.
- Russian Orthodox leaders backed the new provisional government of 1917 after years of Tsar Nicholas II's church neglect.
- Bolshevik takeover in Russia resulted in loss of church lands, state subsidies, religious schooling, and church marriage. This led to the excommunication of government leaders in 1918 and a call for revolt to restore the monarchy.
- The Council of People's Commission called for separation of church and state, and freedom of religion. Gradually, the Russian Orthodox Church lost its position as the central faith.
- First totalitarian state was established in 1919 by Benito Mussolini under a fascist doctrine, which fed on post- WWI frustrations and ultra-nationalism.
- Pope Pius XI made a deal with fascist Italy in 1929 through the Lateran Agreement. This resulted in the Catholic Church losing its land in Italy, keeping Vatican City, and being recognized as the national religion.
- Law on Religious Associations in 1929 in Russia forbade religious charity work and education, religious meetings of all forms, and religious material aid.
- Stalin persecuted church leaders in the 1930's with imprisonment, harassment, and torture. Under the threat of fascism and in need of allies, Stalin made peace with the Orthodox Church, dissolved the Living Church, and restored the Orthodox Church as the central religion.

- Fascist control of Germany achieved by the Nazi party under Adolf Hitler in 1933. Nazism emphasized the racial superiority of the Germanic people and the elimination of perceived Jewish and other foreign corruptions. Christianity was generally considered a Jewish plot, but tolerated under practicality.
- Hitler struck a deal with the Vatican and the German bishops in which Catholic education and support funds were maintained, but confessionals and political involvement by the Church were stopped.
- Despite Protestant efforts to declare allegiance to Hitler through a single Reich bishop, the Ministry of Church Affairs was created in 1935 to systematically remove Christian influence on Nazism.
- The Vatican under Pope Pius XI in 1937 also took the position of not directly attacking Nazism. Instead, the pope criticized its heathen practices. Hitler in turn increased pressure on the lower ranks of the Catholic Church but did not directly attack the Vatican.
- Religious persecution spread across the Soviet-dominated states, such as Bulgaria and Romania.
- From 1960 - 1980, religious limitations increased in the Soviet Union. *Glasnot* and *perestroika* brought total relaxation of pressure against religious practices by 1985.
- Poland retained a high degree of religious freedom through the Cold War.

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