

<p>EPHESUS Revelation 2:1-7 The Church on Fire</p> <p>Time period Pentecost to Death of John</p> <p>33AD - 100AD - 64 AD Rome burns & persecution under Nero. - 70 AD Jerusalem destroyed by Titus</p>	<p>SMYRNA Revelation 2:8-11 The Church in the Fire</p> <p>Time period Death of John to Constantine's "conversion"</p> <p>100AD - 313AD</p> <p>Leaders Polycarp of Smyrna Ignatius of Antioch Justin Martyr Irenaeus/Tertullian Origen Cyprian of Carthage Athanasius</p>	<p>PERGAMOS Revelation 2:12-17 The Church Joins Government (The Church Diluted)</p> <p>Time period Constantine to Pope Leo</p> <p>313AD - 440AD (455 Vandals pillage Rome)</p> <p>Leaders Basil (Monasticism) Jerome (Vulgate) John Chrysostom Augustine Leo the Great</p>	<p>THYATIRA Revelation 2:18-29 The Roman Church (The Hidden Church)</p> <p>Time period Pope Leo to Martin Luther's 95 Theses</p> <p>440AD - 1517AD</p> <p>Leaders Pope Gregory - celibacy of priests - purgatory becomes official doctrine The Crusades Bernard of Clairvaux (Knights Templar) Francis of Assisi John Wyclif John Hus</p>	<p>SARDIS Revelation 3:1-6 The Reformation Church (The Church Reborn)</p> <p>Time period Luther to The Great Awakening</p> <p>1517 - c. 1700</p> <p>Leaders Ulrich Zwingli William Tyndale John Calvin Ignatius (Jesuits) John Knox Blaise Pascal John Bunyan John Fox (Quakers)</p>	<p>PHILADELPHIA Revelation 3:7-13 Great Awakening Church (The Church Alive)</p> <p>Time period Great Awakening to c. 1900</p> <p>c. 1700 - c. 1900</p> <p>Leaders Jonathan Edwards John/Charles Wesley George Whitefield William Wilberforce William Carey (India) Charles Finney George Muller Charles Spurgeon D.L. Moody</p>	<p>LAODICEA Revelation 3:14-22 Last Days Church (The Church Divided)</p> <p>Time period 1900 to Today</p> <p>Leaders C.S. Lewis Francis Schaeffer Billy Graham</p> <p>Many others depending upon the "stream" of the divided church you "swim in." And many more will emerge until the Lord's return.</p>
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Ephesus
 Apostolic Church

Smyrna
 Suffering Church

Pergamos
 Diluted Church

Thyatira
 Hidden Church
 Thorny Soil

Sardis
 Reformation Church

Philadelphia
 Awakened Church

Laodicea
 Last Days Church



Sown Devoured Rocky Soil 100 X 60 X 30 X

The Church in Ephesus

The Apostolic Period – 33AD – 100AD

Hard working, doctrinally pure, spiritually insightful but in danger of being “removed” if they did not repent and return to their “first love.”

Major Events:

- 64 AD – Great fire in Rome blamed on Emperor Nero. He blames Christians and first great persecution follows.
- 67 AD – Martyrs: Paul, Peter, Trophimus- convert of and co-worker with Paul, Ananias-Bishop of Damascus, hundreds of others.
- 70 AD – Jerusalem destroyed during Jewish revolt (Masada)
- 81 AD – Emperor Domitian – second persecution
- John – boiled in oil then banished to Patmos (appx 18 months)
- 100 AD – The apostle John dies in Ephesus at age 94

What happened to the other Apostles?

Judas – hanged himself

James – Brother of John – Beheaded (sword) in Jerusalem (Acts 12:2)

Paul – beheaded in Rome (as a Roman citizen he could not be crucified)

Peter – Crucified upside down in Rome

Andrew - went to what is now Russia. Christians there claim him as the first to bring the gospel to their land. He also preached in Asia Minor, modern-day Turkey, and Greece, where he is said to have been crucified on an X shaped cross (the cross of Andrew.)

Thomas – Went to India, where the ancient Marthoma Christians revere him as their founder. They claim that he died there when pierced through with the spears of four soldiers.

Timothy – became Bishop of Ephesus. “At this period (97 AD) as the pagans were celebrating a feast, Timothy, meeting the procession, severely reprovved them for their ridiculous idolatry, which so exasperated the people that they fell upon him with their clubs, and beat him in so dreadful a manner that he expired of the bruises two days later.

Philip - had a powerful ministry in Carthage in North Africa and Asia Minor, where he converted the wife of a Roman proconsul. In retaliation, the proconsul had Philip arrested stoned and then crucified.

Matthew - the tax collector, ministered in Persia, Ethiopia and Egypt. He was killed with a spear or beheaded in Ethiopia.

Bartholomew (also called Nathanael) – traveled to India with Thomas, translated the gospel of Matthew into their language, then went to Ethiopia, Southern Arabia and, according to Foxes Book he was beaten, crucified and skinned alive or beheaded in Armenia.

Jude (also called Thaddeus) – was possibly beheaded in Lebanon or Syria.

James- the son of Alpheus is thought to have ministered in Syria. The Jewish historian Josephus reported that he was stoned and then clubbed to death.

Simon, the Zealot - ministered in Persia and was killed, probably sawn in half, after refusing to sacrifice to the sun god.

Matthias - the apostle chosen to replace Judas, went to Syria with Andrew and to his death by burning.

James – the brother of Jesus and leader of the church in Jerusalem came to be known as James the Righteous. He was thrown down from the top of the temple during Passover. The fall did not kill him so the religious leaders were going to stone him “but a priest said to them. ‘Wait! What are you doing? This just man is praying for you!’ But one of them – a fuller – took the instrument he used to beat cloth and hit James on the head, killing him.” (Foxes Book)

Simon – the brother of Jude and James the younger was Bishop in Jerusalem after James. He was crucified in Egypt during the reign of Trajan.

Mark – became Bishop of Alexandria preached in Egypt and was burned alive there during the reign of Trajan.

Luke – Hanged in Greece

John- died a natural death at 94 years old. He was a church leader in Ephesus and took care of Mary the mother of Jesus in his home.

The Church in Smyrna

The Church in the Fire – 100AD – 313AD

PART 1 Major Events

Attacks from Outside the church

10 Emperors who persecuted the Church

- **Trajan** 98-117AD
 - Ignatius – Third Bishop of Antioch “sent to the beasts.” 115 Christians killed by archers

- **Hadrian** 117-138 AD

- **Marcus Aurelius** 161-180 AD
 - Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna martyred
 - This is the emperor in the movie – *Gladiator*

- **Septimus Severus** 193-211 AD
 - Perpetua – 22 year old mother with a nursing child – martyred along with others.
 - Tertullian writes: ““We spring up in greater numbers the more we are mown down by you: the blood of the Christians is seed.” Often quoted as “The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church.”
 - Clement of Alexandria says, “... *we have exhibited before our eyes every day abundant sources of martyrs that are burnt, impaled, beheaded.*”

- **Maximinus** 235-238 AD

- **Decius** 249-251 AD
 - The first empire wide, officially sanctioned persecution
 - 3000-3500 killed
 - Origen is tortured but survives
 - Foxes Book of Martyrs says: "By now the heathen temples of Rome were almost forsaken and the Christian churches were crowded."

- **Valerian** 253-260 AD
 - This persecution lasted 3.5 years
 - Lawrence of Rome wrote: "These are the precious treasures of the church. What more precious jewels can Christ have than those in whom he promised to dwell?"

- **Diocletian** 284-305 AD
 - He divided the Roman empire to make it easier to rule. (4 man tetrarchy – 2 in East, 2 in West)
 - Western capital was Rome. Eastern, capital was what would be Constantinople (Istanbul today)

- **Galerius Valerius Maximianus** 305-311 AD
 - Brutal persecutor but on his deathbed recanted declaring now it is best to allow Christians to meet freely and *"It will be their duty to pray to their god for our good estate."*

- **Constantius** 293-306AD
 - The father of Constantine
 - It seems he may have had sympathy toward the Christians and reluctantly went along with the persecution.

The Church in Smyrna

The Church in the Fire – 100AD – 313AD

PART 2 - Attacks from Within the church

Major Heresies

Major Heresies that Threatened the Church

NOTE: Most heretics in the early church held positions of influence in the Church prior to being labeled heretics. Some doctrines labeled “heretical” would be accepted by many Protestant denominations today.

- **Docetism**
 - Name comes from the Greek word meaning “to appear”
 - Jesus was a spiritual being and only appeared to have a physical body.
 - John addressed this error in 1 John 4:2

- **Gnosticism**
 - From the Greek word “*gnosis*” meaning “*knowledge*.”
 - Not a unified movement but basically believed the material world is evil and that salvation is achieved through gaining secret knowledge.
 - Many of the other heresies sprang from this idea.

- **Marcionism**
 - Seeing apparent differences between the OT God and Jesus in the NT, he rejected the OT god as an evil god that created an evil world and Jesus came to correct it.
 - So influential that this error was addressed by Justin, Irenaeus, Clement, Origen and Tertullian.

- **Universalism**
 - All people will eventually be saved.
 - God’s love is so great no one will be lost. Love wins!

- **Montanism**

- Mainly orthodox in doctrine but an emphasis upon the Holy Spirit and gifts made many uncomfortable.
- Primarily rejected more for being fanatical than heretical.

TRINITARIAN HERESIES

Many of the “heresies” dealt with the nature of the Trinity.

- **Adoptionism**

- Jesus was not the Son of God from eternity but was adopted by God at some point – likely after his successful confrontation with the devil in the wilderness.

- **Sabellianism, Modalism, Monarchianism**

- All three have similar roots. There is one God but different manifestations or modes
- God is one entity who changes modes as He sees fit. For example, He was God the Father in the OT, shifted into God the Son in the NT, and now operates as the Holy Spirit. He was the Father in creation, the Son in redemption, and the Holy Spirit in sanctification.
- Still taught today: “Oneness”

- **Unitarianism**

- Non-trinitarian but holding a variety of beliefs.
- Jesus Christ was inspired by God, was a great man, perhaps a prophet, perhaps even a supernatural being but not God himself.

- **Arianism**

- Jesus did not always exist but was begotten by the Father at some point in time so he is subordinate to the Father but still the Son of God.

These varying viewpoints forced church leaders to think through what was “Orthodox” teaching and what documents they would accept as inspired.

1

The Prisoner

As the chariot rumbled through the stone-paved streets of Smyrna, the prisoner could already hear the roar of the frenzied crowd in the arena. Scavenger dogs followed the chariot through the streets, barking wildly. Olive-skinned children scurried out of the way, their eyes wide with excitement. Nameless faces peered out of windows along the street.

Halting outside the massive walls of the arena, the guard brusquely dumped the prisoner out of the chariot as though he were a sack of garbage, injuring the prisoner's leg.

For weeks, the public had clamored for this man's arrest and execution. But he hardly looked like a dangerous criminal—a frail old man, his face etched with wrinkles. His hair and beard were as white as the clouds that dotted the Mediterranean sky that afternoon. As the aged prisoner limped into the arena under armed guard, word quickly spread through the crowds that this was Polycarp—the vile criminal whose death they had come to see. His crime? He was the local leader of the superstitious cult known as the Christians.

As the crowd roared with bloodthirsty excitement, the soldiers led the prisoner to the stand where the Roman proconsul was seated. As the proconsul stared at the limping old man, his face flushed with embarrassment. So this was the dangerous criminal who had caused such an uproar! Just a gentle old man.

The proconsul, his purple robe flapping in the breeze, leaned forward in his seat and privately addressed the elderly prisoner, saying, "The Roman government doesn't make war on old men. Simply swear by the divinity of Caesar, and I'll let you go."

"I can't do that."

"Well, then, simply shout, 'Away with the atheists,' and that will be sufficient." (Since the Christians had no temples or images of any god, many Romans assumed they were atheists.)

The prisoner calmly stretched out his wrinkled arm and turned in a circle with a sweeping gesture toward the hate-filled crowd. Gazing intently toward heaven, he shouted, "Away with the atheists!"

The proconsul was momentarily taken aback by the prisoner's response. Though he had done what was commanded, the proconsul knew from the reaction of the crowd that he dare not release Polycarp yet.

"Curse Jesus Christ!" he demanded.

For a few moments, Polycarp stared with his piercing brown eyes into the stern countenance of the proconsul. He then replied calmly, "For eighty-six years I've served Jesus, and he has never wronged me in any way. How, then, can I possibly curse my very King and Savior?"

The crowd, unable to hear the conversation, was growing impatient with the delay. So the proconsul anxiously urged the prisoner again, "Swear by the divinity of Caesar!"

"Since you keep pretending that you don't know what I am, let me simplify your task. I declare without shame that I am a Christian. If you'd like to learn what Christians believe, set a time and I will tell you."

Fidgeting nervously, the proconsul blurted back, "Don't try to persuade *me*, persuade *them*," pointing to the crowd.

Polycarp glanced at the faceless mob who were eagerly waiting for their bloody entertainment to begin. "No, I won't

cheapen the teachings of Jesus by trying to persuade such a throng."

The proconsul shouted angrily back, "Don't you know I have wild animals at my disposal? I will unleash them on you immediately unless you repent!"

"Well then, unleash them," Polycarp replied. There was no fear in his voice. "Whoever heard of repenting from what is good in order to follow what is evil?"

The proconsul was accustomed to intimidating even the strongest, most hardened criminals, but this old man was getting the best of him. He lashed back at the prisoner, "Since wild animals don't seem to scare you, know here and now that I will have you burned alive if you don't immediately denounce this Jesus Christ!"

Infused with the Holy Spirit, Polycarp was now beaming with joy and confidence. "You threaten me with a mere fire that burns for an hour and then goes out. Haven't you heard of the fire of coming judgment and of the eternal punishment reserved for the ungodly? Why do you keep delaying? Do whatever you want with me."

It wasn't supposed to have worked this way. The proconsul was supposed to be the mighty conqueror, with the prisoner on his knees begging for mercy. But this prisoner—an old man—had vanquished the proconsul. The proconsul sank back into his seat in humiliating defeat.

Because of the vastness of the stadium, heralds were sent to several different stations throughout the arena to announce what Polycarp had said. When his final statement was announced, a wave of fury swept the crowd. They would do with him what *they* wanted! Screaming for Polycarp's death, they spilled out of their seats into the corridors and through the exits. Running wildly through the city streets, they gathered wood from wherever they could find it. They looted stores and even stole the firewood piled inside the public baths. Then they thronged back into the arena, their arms laden with fuel for the execu-

tioner's pyre. They piled the wood around an upright stake, to which the soldiers began to nail Polycarp's limbs.

However, he calmly assured the soldiers, "Leave me as I am. The one who gives me the strength to endure the fire will also enable me to remain motionless against the stake without having to be secured." After allowing Polycarp to pray, the soldiers lit the wood.

By burning Polycarp, the people of Smyrna thought they would blot out his name forever and bring an end to the hated superstition called Christianity. But like the proconsul, they grossly underestimated the vitality and conviction of the Christians. Rather than intimidating other Christians, the death of Polycarp inspired them. Rather than disappearing, Christianity grew.

Ironically, what the Romans couldn't accomplish was eventually accomplished by professing Christians themselves. Today, the name of Polycarp has been largely forgotten, and the Christianity of his day is unknown to most westerners.

From
Chapter One

*Will the Real Heretic
Please Stand Up*

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Ignatius of Antioch

Early Christian Writer

? -c.108

- Arrested and taken to Rome
- On the way he wrote seven letters
 - ~ Ephesus
 - ~ Rome
 - ~ Philadelphia
 - ~ Smyrna
 - ~ Magnesia
 - ~ Tralles
 - ~ Polycarp
- Letter to Rome begged them to not interfere with his coming martyrdom because he was determined to be a "witness".
"Suffer me to be eaten by beasts, through whom I can attain to God. I am God's wheat, and I am ground by the teeth of wild beasts that I may be found pure bread of Christ."
- Antioch was known for assigning nicknames and that is where believers were first called *Christians*. Ignatius followed in the pattern of the city where he served as bishop. He was the first to use the terms:
 - ~ Christianity (*christianismos*)
 - ~ catholic (*meaning universal - katholikos*)
 - ~ eucharist (our communion celebration)
- In his writings it is evident he was familiar with the gospels of Matthew and John but deeply loved the writings of Paul. His letter to the Ephesians has many parallels to Paul's letter to them and he speaks highly of Paul.
- He describes himself as "set on unity". "Love unity and flee from division". To promote unity he was the first to suggest the church in a city ought to be overseen by a single bishop instead of a group of bishops.
- He also stressed Christian love. Advised Polycarp, as bishop of Smyrna, to care for widows and not be haughty toward slaves.
- Finally he warned against two current heresies.
 - ~ *Docetics* denied Christ's incarnation saying he was only a spirit who looked like a real man but did not really suffer or die. "If ... his sufferings was only a semblance ... why am I a prisoner? In that case I am dying in vain."
 - ~ Christians who emphasized the importance of the Jewish feasts and rituals. "For if we are living now according to Judaism, we confess we have not received grace."

Justin Martyr Defender of the Faith

c.100 - c.165

- Born c.100 AD in small town in Samaria (ancient Shechem)
- One of the earliest and most important of the Apologists.
- Studied various Greek philosophers in search for truth. Became student of Plato and Socrates.
- 133 AD - Conversion - Walking on beach encounters old man who recognizes Justin is a philosopher by the robes he wears. This elderly man impresses Justin with his dignity and humility. In conversation this man explains Jewish prophecies and shows Justin that the Christian way is superior to his Platonic views.
- Justin believed all truth was God's truth so he often referenced Greek philosophers and their concept of *Logos* in his defense of the faith. The same concept John refers to in his gospel. Even felt some of their truths were partial revelations since all truth comes from God. Continued to wear philosopher's robes.
- Instrumental in the church's developing awareness of the Trinity. Christ and God, though separate, are of the same essence, like a flame lit from another flame.
- Justin's life parallels Paul's in many ways:
 - Paul** was a Jew born in a primarily Gentile area (Tarsus)
 - Justin** was a Gentile born in primarily Jewish Shechem
 - Both well educated
 - Both used gift to convince Jews and Gentiles
 - Both martyred in Rome for their faith.
- Greatest work - *Apologia* - written to Emperor Antoninus Pius to convince him persecution of Christians was wrong.
- *Dialogues with Trypho* records Justin's attempts to convert a Jewish friend by showing him Jesus was OT promised Messiah. Justin explains that though the Jews hate Christians and spread false rumors about them that Christians love and pray for Jews.
- Once wrote, "You can kill us, but cannot do us any real harm." Stood true to this conviction till the end when he was arrested, tortured and beheaded along with six other believers.

Blandina Mother in Martyrdom

from
"Eusebius: The History of the Church"

• Blandina was filled with such power that those who took it in turns to subject her to every kind of torture from morning to night were exhausted by their efforts and confessed themselves beaten - they could think of nothing else to do to her. They were amazed that she was still breathing, for her whole body was mangled and her wounds gaped; they declared any one of the torments they had subjected her to was enough to kill her.

But this blessed woman, wrestling magnificently, grew in strength as she proclaimed her faith, and found refreshment, rest and insensibility to her suffering in uttering the words, "I am a Christian: we do nothing to be ashamed of".

• Blandina was hung on a post and exposed as food for the wild beasts let loose in the arena. Through her ardent prayers she stimulated great enthusiasm in other Christians who were also in great agony in the arena. When none of the beasts touched her, she was taken down to be killed at a later event. (But in God's plan she was being saved till later so she could) spur on her brother Christians - a small, weak, despised woman who had put on Christ, the great invincible champion, and bout after bout had defeated her adversary (the crooked serpent) and through conflict had won the crown of immortality.

• Blandina was again brought in, and with her Ponticus, a lad of about fifteen. Day after day they had been forced to watch the rest being punished and attempts were made to make them swear by the heathen idols. When they stood firm and treated these efforts with contempt, the mob was infuriated with them, so that the boy's tender age called forth no pity and the woman no respect. They subjected them to every horror and inflicted every punishment in turn, attempting again and again to make them swear by the idols, but to no avail.

Ponticus was encouraged by his sister in Christ, so that the heathen saw that she was urging him on and stiffening his resistance, and he bravely endured every punishment till he gave back his spirit to God. Last of all, like a noble mother who had encouraged her children and sent them before her in triumph to the King, blessed Blandina herself passed through all the ordeals of her children and hastened to rejoin them, rejoicing and exulting at her departure as if invited to a wedding supper.

After the whips, after the beasts, after the griddle, she was finally dropped into a basket and thrown to a bull. Time after time the animal tossed her, but she was indifferent now to all that happened to her, because of her hope and sure hold on all that her faith meant, and of her communing with Christ. The she, too, was sacrificed.

Perpetua

Courageous Young Woman & "Witness"

c. 200

- Married, 26 years old with nursing infant.
- Commanded to sacrifice to Roman idols.
- Upon refusal was placed in dungeon without her child.
- Kind guards allowed her out twice daily for fresh air and to nurse her child.
- At the trial, her father appeared, holding the infant, begging her to save her life for the sake of the child.
- Even the judge seemed moved saying,
"Spare the gray hairs of your father. Spare your child. Offer sacrifices for the welfare of the emperor."
- "I will not sacrifice. I am a Christian."
- All the Christians stood firm and were condemned to death as a show for the crowds at the next holiday celebration.
- Entered the arena with Perpetua singing a "hymn of triumph".
- All the men were killed by wild beasts. Perpetua and Felicitas, the two women were hung in nets and a wild bull let loose.
- Perpetua was tossed by the bull, tearing her robe. Felicitas was seriously wounded. Perpetua rushed to Felicitas' side to protect her. The bull refused to attack and they were dragged from the arena, angering the crowd.
- To appease the crowd, both were later brought back in to be killed by gladiators.
- Young man assigned to Perpetua was trembling, not accustomed to such horrific scenes. He weakly stabbed her several times.
- Seeing how upset the young man was, Perpetua guided his sword to a vital area and she won the crown of life.
(Revelation 2:10)

Irenaeus

Adversary of Gnostics c. 130 ~ c. 200

- As a youth he sat under the teaching of Polycarp.
Polycarp had sat under teachings of the Apostle John.
- Became Bishop of Lyon, France after previous bishop martyred.
- Researched and wrote definitive refutation of Gnostic teaching. Gnostics used Christian terms with radically different interpretations.
- He also wrote of the operation of the gifts in the church.

“Some drive out demons really and truly so that often those cleansed from evil spirits believe and become members of the Church; some have foreknowledge of the future, vision and prophetic utterances, others, by the laying on of hands, heal the sick and restore them to health; and before now, as I said, dead men have actually been raised and have remained with us for many years.”

“We hear of many members of the Church who have prophetic gifts and by the Spirit speak with all kinds of tongues, and bring men’s secret thoughts to light for their own good, and expound the mysteries of God.”

- *Against Heresies II and V*

- Marks a transition point toward rule by the church based in Rome. In his efforts to refute Gnosticism, the greatest threat to the pure teaching of the Church in his day, Irenaeus appealed to:

- Apostolic succession

(Gnostics claimed their “secret” teachings had been revealed only to them by the apostles themselves. Irenaeus showed all the apostle’s teachings were publicly proclaimed by them and in their writings, then passed from teacher to teacher openly so any deviation could be detected and corrected.)

- Value of Traditional teachings of the church for doctrine.

(Gnostic teaching not what had historically been taught. How could it have come from apostles?)

These ideas were later expanded to justify papal succession and church tradition as equal to or greater than Scripture, yet his own appeal was always to apostolic teachings as contained in the Bible.

- His NT corresponds nearly exactly to books we recognize. He quoted from all but three of our NT books. (3 Jn., James, 2 Pt.)
- Also emphasized man’s free will in responding to God’s grace in contrast to Gnostic teachings of determinism and predestination.

The Gnostics

"Knowledge Falsely So-Called" c.50 - c.220

- From Greek word *gnosis* meaning "knowledge".
- Existed in some form even before death of John c. 100 AD
Colossians 2:8, 18-19, 1 John & Jude attack Gnostic beliefs.
- Mix of Judaism, Christianity, Greek philosophy, mysticism.
Used Christian terms but defined them differently.
- Appealed to human desire to know something others do not.
- Many different "strains" and branches but generally taught:
 - The physical world is evil.
 - World created and is governed by angels, not God.
(God could not touch nor create this "evil" world.)
 - God is distant, not connected to this evil world.
 - Three types of people in the world
 - ~ Gnostic "Christians" are spiritual [pneumatikoi].
 - ~ "Regular" Christians are soulish [psychikoi].
 - ~ Heathen just earthly clods with no hope of salvation.
 - At death one faces a perilous journey past the seven planets, where the evil powers that govern this world dwell. Only by memorizing secret names & passwords can one find and force entrance into the realm of light.
 - Rival sects hated each other almost as much as they hated orthodox teachers and taught different names and passwords to ensure allegiance to their sect.
 - Redemption was
 - ~ predetermined by destiny, not a man's actions.
 - ~ granted to predetermined elect.
- To support their claims, they touted Gnostic gospels. These usually bore a disciple's name/portrayed Jesus teaching gnosticism.
- Though short-lived, due to inherent weaknesses and due to effective attacks by Paul, John, Jude, Irenaeus, Tertullian, Hippolytus and others, it had lasting effects upon the Church.
 - asceticism (physical body is evil so punish it.)
 - higher & lower orders of Christians (clergy / laity)
 - moved church toward centralized control
 - Positive: It forced Church to clarify doctrine and limit "canon" of Scripture - determine which writings were genuine and accepted as inspired (God breathed)

Tertullian

Developer of Western Theology c.150-c.212

- Born in Carthage (Northern Africa near modern Tunis, Tunisia).
- Cultured pagan upbringing, trained in philosophy, Greek, law.
- c.196 turned his powerful intellect toward Christianity and changed the thinking & literature of the Western church.
- Western church - Latin speaking - eventual HQ in Rome
Eastern church -Greek speaking-eventual HQ -Constantinople
- Till this point in time, most writers who influenced Christian thought came from an Eastern philosophical background (spoke Greek, viewed life from Greek perspective, tried to honor and draw from the philosophers-Plato, etc.).
- Spoke Greek but preferred Latin. Works reflect Latin speaking Roman practical, morals-oriented approach to theology.
- Disliked the philosophers, criticized those who honored them.
- Prolific writer - 30 books in 15 years - over 1,500 pages
- Wider scope of topics than any other ancient Christian writer.
 - Pastoral (encouraging martyrs to stand firm)
 - Practical Christian living (suffering, prayer, repentance)
 - To women (role in the church, dress, modesty, chastity)
 - Apologetics (opposed anti-Semitism, and heresies)
 - Doctrinal
 - ~Especially clarified the idea of *the Trinity* into much the same concept we understand it today -
 - ~ Three distinct *personas* equal in status/divinity
 - ~ Different in *gradus* (rank)-Father highest rank
 - ~ Jesus: fully God/fully man -2 natures/1 person
 - ~ Dispensationalist (History divided into three eras)
 - ~ OT - age of the Father
 - ~ Incarnation period - age of the Son
 - ~ Pentecost till end of time - age of Holy Spirit
 - ~ Adam's sin is passed on like a genetic trait
(W. church embraced this idea but the E. church held a more optimistic view of human nature)
- In his later years he aligned himself with the Montanist sect.

The Wit and Wisdom of Tertullian

- The more often we are mown down by you, the more in number we grow. The blood of Christians is seed.

Often quoted as "The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church."

- *Speaking of the pagan's response to the martyrs' behavior:*

"Look", they say, "how they love one another" (for they themselves hate one another); "and how they are ready to die for each other" (for they themselves are readier to kill each other).

Often quoted as "Behold how they love one another."

- The prayer of the just turns aside the whole anger of God, keeps vigil for its enemies, pleads for persecutors.

Prayer is the one thing that can conquer God.

- *Speaking against abortion (which is not a 20th century development)*

Indeed murder is forbidden so it is not permitted even to destroy what is conceived in the womb. To prohibit the birth of a child is only a faster way to murder; it makes little difference whether one destroys a life already born or prevents it from coming to birth. It is a human being..for the whole fruit is already present in the seed.

- He who lives only to benefit himself confers on the world a benefit when he dies.

- Certainly nothing is difficult for God: but if in our assumptions we so rashly make use of this judgment, we shall be able to invent any manner of thing concerning God, as that he has done it, on the grounds that he was able to do it.

- That is tacitly permitted which is forbidden without any infliction of vengeance (Good Parental counsel-No consequences=no obedience)

- What indeed has Athens to do with Jerusalem? Away with all attempts to produce a mottled Christianity of Stoic, Platonic and dialectic composition. (Perhaps) Christ made a mistake in sending forth fishermen to preach, rather than the sophists! (sarcasm)

- Speaking to those who claimed the gifts passed away with the apostles [You believe] that from the time of John (the last apostle to die), the Paraclete (*Gr-comforter* - NT word for HS) has grown mute. What kind of [belief] is it, that, while the devil is always operating and adding daily to the ingenuities of iniquity, the work of God should either have ceased or desisted from advancing?

Clement of Alexandria

“Creative” Theologian c.150 - c.215

- Early leader of school for converts and believer’s children.
- School in Alexandria, Egypt (Northern coast of Africa).
- Taught and promoted a life of virtue and character.
- Philosopher turned Christian who traveled Roman empire to learn under older and most respected Christian teachers.
- Prolific writer with many works still in existence.
- Eloquent writer who attempted to make the simple and popular style of Scripture more acceptable to educated readers of Greek philosophy by “secularized” presentation.
- Introduced allegorical method of Biblical interpretation
 - Verses have multiple meanings (2 - 5 senses)
 - Hidden meaning is to cover “pearls from swine”.
 - Hidden meaning more important than surface one.
- Allegory became primary method of interpreting NT. This method was rejected by Eastern church and prompted the founding of more “conservative” school in Antioch.
- Though he was effective in countering some gnostic claims his allegorizing of Scripture and, perhaps, efforts to “sophisticate” it, led to the seeds of many serious errors.
- Some of Clement’s errors:
 - pioneered the concept of purgatory.
 - ~ Saw life as a process of divine education but did not think it stopped at death.
 - ~ Fire faced by sinners does not destroy “the image of God”, only “wood, hay stubble” of sin.
 - Did not hold to universal salvation (all will ultimately attain salvation-fallen man and angels) but held optimistic view of eternal destiny of lost.
 - Opposed gnostics but similar views on some issues.

• Though Clement held views we consider heretical he was a highly respected teacher who loved God, sought to reach his culture and proclaimed godly living. Much of his writing still exists, is relevant and worth reading. For example:

- To be subjected to our lusts, and to yield to them, is the most extreme form of slavery. To keep those lusts in subjection is the only liberty.

- Loving one's enemies does not mean loving wickedness, ungodliness, adultery, or theft. Rather, it means loving the thief, the ungodly, and the adulterer.

- We are commanded to be lords over not only the wild beasts outside of us, but also over the wild lusts within ourselves.

- Not a single thing we possess is properly our own. We are truly owners of one possession alone-godliness. When death overtakes us, death will not rob us of this. But from all else, it will eject us.

- I am in the habit of *walking* on the earth, not *worshipping* it.

- Those who glory in their looks-not in their hearts-dress to please others. ...clothing that cannot conceal the shape of the body is not a covering ... clinging to the body as though it were the flesh ... avoid fabrics that are foolishly thin ...

- God desires the repentance, rather than the death of a sinner.

- (The Christian) impoverishes himself out of love, so that he is certain he may never overlook a brother in need, especially if he knows he can bear poverty better than his brother. He likewise considers the pain of another as his own pain. And if he suffers any hardship because of having given out of his own poverty, he does not complain.

- wealth can single-handedly puff up and corrupt souls of those who possess it ... a weight that ought to be removed ... as though it were a dangerous and deadly disease.

- The whole life of the spiritual man is a holy festival. His sacrifices are prayers, praises and readings in the Scriptures before meals. They are psalms and hymns during the meals and before bed-and prayers also again during the night. By these, the spiritual man unites himself to the divine choir.

• At least some of his non-orthodox views can be attributed to his allegorical method of interpreting Scripture.

• From Clement we can learn the importance of putting first emphasis upon what God clearly says without trying to “read between the lines” or “overly-spiritualize” God’s Word.

Montanism

Holy Spirit or Unholy Heresy? c.156 - c.560

- c.156 AD - Montanus, a convert to Christianity, begins to "prophesy under the influence of the Spirit".
- Prophesied fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit, a new era of prophecy, emphasis upon spiritual gifts and holy living. Claimed the church had become too institutional, worldly, and needed to return to its original fervor and spiritual emphasis.
- Mainly orthodox in doctrine but some aspects made leaders in the church at large uncomfortable and opposition followed.
- 177AD -Imprisoned Christians in Lyon send Irenaeus to Rome. Asks for & bishop approves leniency in dealing with Montanists.
- Soon after, opinion shifts and Montanists are excommunicated.
- Was Montanism a pure 2nd century Charismatic Renewal? Renewal mixed with flesh? Or outright heresy? Here are the major "facts" as we know them. What do you think?
- Movement was led by Montanus. Soon joined by two women, Prisca (or Priscilla) and Maximilla, who left their husbands to become leaders [prophetesses] in "New Prophecy" movement.
- Preached strict fasting, "holy" life-style, HS's leadership [thru prophetic utterances] over that of the clergy, Christ's soon return
 - ~ At this time the church voluntarily fasted Wed and Fri but Montanist fasts were compulsory & lasted longer.
 - ~ It is wrong to flee persecution; embrace it as God's will
 - ~ Wrong to remarry for any reason = excommunication
 - ~ There is no forgiveness for major post-baptismal sins
 - ~ Weren't necessarily opposed to hierarchy of church; just gave prophets more authority than was the norm. Collected their utterances ("oracles") & studied them.
 - ~ The New Jerusalem would soon descend on Earth.
- Not rejected by all the established church. Irenaeus didn't join them but suggested leniency lest persecution drive the authentic gift of prophecy from the church. Epiphanius, 4th century heresy hunter, found no wrong in their doctrine. Tertullian was their greatest defender and may have actually joined their ranks.

- Teachings & life-style that made many Christians nervous.
NOTE: These are outsider accusations. All may not be totally accurate.

~ Their doctrine was "divisive".

~ "Abnormal ecstasy" - Prophets sought & prophesied in a "frenzy, without engaging the natural mind".

~ When respected bishops or church leaders tried to "judge" prophecies, prophets refused to submit.

(NOTE: Tertullian, however, said, "communications [prophetic utterances] are examined with the most scrupulous care.")

~ False prophecies: *Maximilla* prophesied: At her death, no more prophets would come only wars, tumult and "The End". Some 13 years after her death, there was peace and no "End". *Prisca*: The new Jerusalem will descend on Pepuza (a town in Phrygia-where Montanism began) in the year 177 AD. Many went and waited for it.

~ Montanists prophesied in first person

~ Positions of authority afforded women in the church.

~ Quest for miraculous signs is good but the supreme miracle is conversion. Thus the supernatural occurs in the ministry of the Word and the sacraments.

~ Every believer already has all the gifts of the spirit. There is nothing more to be received.

~ Irrational, ecstatic experiences lead to pride.

(NOTE: Writing from a Montanist perspective, Tertullian does make a clear distinction between "soulish" and "spiritual" believers - a church within the church. This could easily lead to a "spiritual" pride, especially among the immature.)

- Positive results of the Montanist movement: Greater recognition of need to canonize Scripture & close off "new revelation".
- Negative Results: Suspicion and rejection of the authentic operation of the gifts, even book of *Revelation*. For the majority of Christians this locked the gifts out of church for 17 centuries.

"In studying groups that have been branded heretical, one must be extremely careful.. Most...of the information about them... was produced by their enemies."

Origen Scholar and Ascetic

c.185-c.254

- Born to Christian parents in Alexandria
- Father martyred (beheaded) when Origen was 17 years old.
- He wanted to join father, Leonidas, in martyrdom but mother hid his clothes so he could not go out. Instead he wrote to his father while in prison urging him to stand strong and not change his mind.
- After father's death family lost everything.
- Later he teaches Greek Literature to help mother and 8 siblings.
- 18 years old named president of catechumens' school at Alexandria where new Christians instructed in the faith.
- With team of scribes and secretaries he produced around 6,000 works including commentaries on nearly every book of Bible, first parallel translation and first systematic theology.
- Though famous and wealthy he lived ascetic life - one cloak, no shoes, up most of night studying or in prayer, slept on stone floor.
- Following in Clement's path he minimized the literal meaning of the Bible and looked for allegorical messages. Example: Jesus did not literally chase money changers from the temple. He said it was not the kind of thing Jesus would do. Instead, the story symbolized Christ in the ongoing ministry of purging the church of corruption.
- Arrested and tortured at age 64. Emperor Decian wanted to prolong his agony so ordered them not to kill him. He was to be burned at the stake but Decian suddenly died.
- Origen released but died soon (age 69) due to affects of torture.
- Three hundred years later, Church council condemned him as a heretic for "unorthodox" views. Note: He did not present these as dogma, only speculations and points for discussion
 - People existed before being born into this life.
 - Because of free will, Satan could repent and be saved.
 - Toyed with the idea of universal salvation.
- A man of prayer who loved God, loved His Word. A Biblical theologian who applied great intellect and discipline to His walk.

Origen Speaks

- You will observe the difference between the crowds, who simply "followed" Christ, and Peter and the others who "gave up everything and followed."

- Since we consider God to be both good and just, let us see how the good and just God could harden the heart of Pharaoh. Perhaps an illustration used in the epistle to the Hebrews may be able to show that by the same operation, God can show mercy on one man while hardening another. The earth drinks in the rain and produces crops *and* briars. The blessing of rain fell but since the land was neglected and uncultivated it yielded thorns and thistles. In the same way, the wonderful acts of God are like the rain.

The sun might say, "I both liquefy and dry up." For wax is melted and mud is dried by the same heat. The works of God in Egypt hardened Pharaoh (because of his own wickedness) and it softened the mixed Egyptian multitude, who departed with the Hebrews.

- It is *our* responsibility to live virtuously. God asks this of us as being our own doing - not as being dependent upon Him, nor on any other, nor upon Fate (as some think).

- Down to the present time, those whom God wills are healed by His name. There are still preserved among Christians (those who) expel evil spirits, perform many cures and foresee certain events.

- Evil thoughts are the wellspring of all sins.

- In comparison with God - and the righteousness that is in Him - no one (even the most perfect saint) will be justified. For example, we might say, no candle can give light before the sun. By that, we do not mean that the candle will not give out light, but only that it will not be seen when the sun outshines it.

- The honor that we pay to the Son of God, as well as that which we render to God the Father, consists of an upright course of life. The worshipper of God is he whose life is regulated by the principles and teachings of the Divine Word.

- If, indeed, there is anyone who can discover something better - and who can establish his assertions by clearer proofs from Holy Scriptures - let his opinion be received in preference to mine.

The Nicolaitans

Acts 6:5 (Deacons chosen)

They chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit; also Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas from Antioch, a convert to Judaism.

The Nicolaitans are the followers of that Nicolas who was one of the seven first ordained to the diaconate by the apostles. They lead lives of unrestrained indulgence. The character of these men is very plainly pointed out in the Apocalypse of John, as teaching that it is a matter of indifference to practice adultery, and to eat things sacrificed to idols.

- Irenaeus (c. 180) in his writing: *Against Heresies*

"They abandoned themselves to pleasure like goats, leading a life of self-indulgence."

- Clement of Alexandria (c. 200)

Nicolas has been a cause of the widespread combination of these wicked men. He was appointed by the apostles as one of the seven for the diaconate. However, he departed from correct doctrine and was in the habit of inculcating indifference as to both life and food. And when his disciples continued to insult the Holy Spirit, John reproved them in the Apocalypse as being fornicators and partakers of food offered to idols.

- Hippolytus (c. 225)

- From *The History of the Church* by Eusebius (c.324)

At this time the so-called sect of the Nicolaitans made its appearance and lasted for a very short time. Mention is made of it in the Apocalypse of John. They boasted that the author of their sect was Nicolas, one of the deacons who, with Stephen, were appointed by the apostles for the purpose of ministering

to the poor. Clement of Alexandria, in the third book of his Stromata, relates the following things concerning him.

"They say that he had a beautiful wife, and after the ascension of the Savior, being accused by the apostles of jealousy, he led her into their midst and gave permission to anyone that wished to marry her. For they say that this was in accord with that saying of his, that one ought to abuse the flesh. And those that have followed his heresy, imitating blindly and foolishly that which was done and said, commit fornication without shame."

"But I understand that Nicolas had to do with no other woman than her to whom he was married, and that, so far as his children are concerned, his daughters continued in a state of virginity until old age, and his son remained uncorrupt. If this is so, when he brought his wife, whom he jealously loved, into the midst of the apostles, he was evidently renouncing his passion; and when he used the expression, 'to abuse the flesh,' he was inculcating self-control in the face of those pleasures that are eagerly pursued. For I suppose that, in accordance with the command of the Savior, he did not wish to serve two masters, pleasure and the Lord.

- Eusebius (c. 324) Church History

According to this, Clement believed the Nicolaitans were falsely claiming Nicolas as their founder and instead of promoting sexual immorality Nicolas was a devout, moral man who saw denying the desires of the flesh as a way to grow spiritually.

What we do know from Revelation is the actions of the Nicolaitans were hated by the Lord and involved sexual immorality and eating meat sacrificed to idols. From Eusebius it sounds like they were a short-lived heresy that "lasted for a very short time."

From House Churches to Cathedrals

The first Christians in Jerusalem were gathering in the temple colonnades and “breaking bread in their homes.” As the Church grew, believers commonly met in the homes of the community’s prominent members.

Though houses came in various styles and sizes, an atrium in a Roman villa (or a spacious dining room of a Greek house) would accommodate the needs of the small Christian communities. The account of Eutyclus’ late-night plunge from his window seat suggests that, in Troas, the Christians met in the third-story dining room of a Greek house.

The earliest known church building, c.240, built in the Roman city of Duro-Europos (near today’s Syria Iraq Border) was originally a Roman-style house, built around a courtyard. A wall was knocked out to create the assembly hall, where 60–70 people could gather. Benches were installed around the walls of an interior courtyard. In yet another room, a canopied baptismal font was erected, flanked by frescoes of Adam and Eve, and the Good Shepherd—perhaps signifying the Fall and Redemption. The south wall of the baptistery was likely the focal point for celebrating Communion.

This church occupies a midpoint in the evolution from early house churches to the monumental buildings of the age of Constantine. Though it began as a private house, after renovation all domestic use ceased, and the building became property of the church. The early church’s belief in the imminent return of Christ discouraged church construction, as did the threat of persecution.

When Emperor Valerian ceased his persecution of Christians, in 260, his son Gallienus ordered all church property, including church buildings, to be returned to Christians.

Unlike the house churches, which looked outwardly like private dwellings, the churches erected during this period were large structures. They were designed to accommodate the throngs of new believers who swelled the church’s ranks. In some cases, Christian communities acquired property adjacent to the renovated house churches, tore down or modified their properties, and built spacious new prayer halls.

Church buildings attracted the ire of Emperor Diocletian during the last and greatest persecution of early Christianity (303–311). He ordered them all burned. After Constantine’s conversion (312–337) he rebuilt these churches in an even more splendid manner.

Music in the Early Church

In the ancient world, the normal way to praise a deity was through melodic words or chant. Clement of Alexandria wrote one of the earliest Christian hymns

Gather your children
Who live in simplicity.
Let them sing in holiness.
Let them celebrate with sincerity,
With a mouth that knows no evil,
The Christ who guides his children!

O King of the saints,
O sovereign Word
Of the Most High Father,
Prince of wisdom,
Support of toiling men,
Eternal Joy of the human family,
O Jesus, Savior ...

In about the year 112, Roman governor Pliny noted that Christians "met regularly before dawn on a fixed day to chant verses alternately among themselves in honor of Christ as if to a god." Though it is sometimes difficult to distinguish early Christian poetry from hymns, here are three brief selections that were likely sung by early Christians.

There is only one physician,
Of flesh, yet spiritual,
Born yet unbegotten, God incarnate,
Genuine life in the midst of death,
Sprung from Mary as well as God,
First subject to suffering, then beyond it,
Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Christ is risen: the world below is in ruins.
Christ is risen: the spirits of evil are fallen.
Christ is risen: the angels of God are rejoicing.
Christ is risen: the tombs are void of their dead.
Christ has indeed arisen from the dead, the first of the sleepers.
Glory and power are his for ever and ever. Amen.

May none of God's wonderful works keep silence,
night and morning.
Bright stars, high mountains, the depths of the seas,
sources of rushing rivers:
May all these break into song as we sing
to Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
May all the angels in the heavens reply: Amen! Amen! Amen!
Power, praise, honor, eternal glory to God, the only giver of grace.
Amen! Amen! Amen!

The Nicene Creed

We believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, begotten from the Father before all ages, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made; of the same essence as the Father. Through him all things were made.

For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven; he became incarnate by the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary, and was made human.

He was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate; he suffered and was buried. The third day he rose again, according to the Scriptures. He ascended to heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again with glory to judge the living and the dead. His kingdom will never end.

And we believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life. He proceeds from the Father and the Son, and with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified. He spoke through the prophets.

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church. We affirm one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.

We look forward to the resurrection of the dead,
and to life in the world to come.

Amen.

Background

The Nicene Creed is a statement of the orthodox faith of the early Christian church in opposition to certain heresies, especially Arianism. These heresies, which disturbed the church during the fourth century, concerned the doctrine of the trinity and of the person of Christ. Both the Greek (Eastern) and the Latin (Western) church held this creed in honor, though with one important difference: the Western church insisted on the inclusion of the phrase "and the Son" in the article on the procession of the Holy Spirit; this phrase still is repudiated by the Eastern Orthodox church.

In its present form this creed goes back partially to the Council of Nicea (A.D. 325) with additions by the Council of Constantinople (A.D. 381). It was accepted in its present form at the Council of Chalcedon in 451.

Jerome

Bible Translator (c. 345 – 420)

From the beginning of the church Christians believed it was important to have the Bible available in the language of the people. The New Testament was written in Greek, but as the western church, centered in Rome, developed, Latin was their primary language. There were many Latin translations but, unfortunately, most of the translators were not proficient in Greek so the translations were of poor quality.

From 366 to 385 Damasus was bishop of Rome. Though the bishop in Rome was held in great esteem, leaders in the Eastern church did not see the Bishop of Rome as superior to their bishops. Damasus wanted to free Western Christianity from the dominance of the East.

Greek had long been the accepted language of the church, but Damasus wanted the Western church to become clearly Latin. One way he could accomplish this was to have the Bible translated into Latin.

Damasus's secretary was named Eusebius Hieronymus Sophronius, better known as Jerome. He was trained in Latin and Greek and was one of the greatest living scholars.

Damasus suggested that Jerome produce a new Latin translation of the Bible, one that would throw out the inaccuracies of older translations. Jerome began his work in 382. When Damasus died in 384, Jerome moved from Rome to Bethlehem. In 405 he finished his translation.

The Apocryphal Books

Jerome noticed the Jewish Scriptures did not include the books we call the Apocrypha. Because they had been included in the Septuagint, he included them in his translation and they are, therefore, in "The Catholic Bible." But he made his opinion clear: These books should not be used for doctrine. Hundreds of years later, the leaders of the Reformation would go one step farther and not include them at all in the Protestant Bible.

His translation became known as the Vulgate (from the Latin *vulgus*, "common"). Jerome's enormous influence caused all serious scholars of the Middle Ages to highly regard his translation. Martin Luther, who knew Hebrew and Greek, quoted from the Vulgate throughout his life.

Jerome was easily offended and his caustic tongue and pen brought him into conflict with Augustine and others. One controversy, with Helvidius, concerned the perpetual virginity of Mary. Jerome's distaste for marriage would not allow him to believe Mary had other children. He felt the singular benefit of marriage was to bring more virgins into the world. Helvidius had the better Biblical argument, but Jerome's great influence still heavily shaped the Mariology of the Roman church.

Unfortunately, the Vulgate became so sacrosanct that eventually translating the Bible into common tongues was prohibited even when and where Latin was not commonly understood. Some were even martyred for translating the Bible into the language of the common people.

Much of this is from: *The 100 Most Important Events in Christian History* by A. Kenneth Curtis, J. Stephen Lang and Randy Petersen and *Great Leaders of the Christian Church*, edited by John D. Woodbridge

Augustine of Hippo

Philosopher & Theologian (c. 354-430)

Augustine, Bishop of Hippo (in modern day Algeria, North Africa) is one of the most important figures in Christian history. He is classified a saint in Roman Catholic, Lutheran and Anglican Churches. Though many Eastern Orthodox theologians disagree with his views on topics such as original sin, grace and predestination, he is still recognized as a saint by these churches as well. Many Protestants, especially Calvinists and Lutherans, consider him one of the theological fathers of the Reformation due to his teachings on salvation and divine grace.

Though his mother was a devout Christian, as a young man he rejected Christianity, led an immoral life and sought truth along several other paths. As a teacher in Milan he became acquainted with the bishop there, Ambrose of Milan. Ambrose enabled him to see that most of his objections to Christianity were based on mistaken ideas he had about Christianity.

In 386, in a villa outside of Rome, he underwent one of the more dramatic conversions in the history of the Christian church (recorded in his book *Confessions*, book 8).

After hearing a voice say, "*Take up and read; Take up and read,*" he says he picked up "the volume of the Apostle":

"I seized it and opened it, and in silence I read the first passage on which my eyes fell. No orgies or drunkenness, no immorality or indecency, no fighting or jealousy. Take up the weapons of the Lord Jesus Christ; and stop giving attention to your sinful nature, to satisfy its desires.' I had no wish to read more and no need to do so. For in an instant, as I came to the end of the sentence, it was as though the light of faith flooded into my heart and all the darkness of doubt was dispelled."

In 391 he was ordained a priest and returned to north Africa. Four years later, he was elected bishop of Hippo where he remained until his death in 430.

References: *Great Leaders of the Christian Church* edited by John Woodbridge; *The Story of Christianity* by Matthew Price and Michael Collins; *Exploring Church History* by Howard Vos; *Augnet.org* and *Wikipedia.org*

Interesting Bullet points of His Theology

- **Creation** – He believed God created everything simultaneously and not over a period of six days. The six-day structure had a spiritual, rather than physical meaning.
- **Eschatology** – Originally premillennial (God will establish a literal 1,000-year kingdom prior to the general resurrection) but later became amillennial (God rules the earth spiritually through his triumphant church.)
- **Original sin**- Earlier Christians taught Adam's sin created a moral weakness and so a propensity in man toward sin. Augustine was the first to say our guilt was inherited from Adam whereby an infant was born guilty of sin and eternally damned at birth.
- **Predestination** – Originally, he believed predestination was based on God's foreknowledge of whether individuals would believe or reject Christ. Later (perhaps as a reaction to Pelagianism) he said it was sinful (pride) to believe "we are the ones who choose God..." He was the first to teach that an individual's eternal destiny was a choice predetermined by God independent of that person's choice or decision. Explaining why Scripture says God desires all men to be saved he says, God is only referring to the predestined and says *all* "because every kind of men (all kinds) is among them."
- **Free will** - Augustine's earlier belief was God created humans and angels as rational beings possessing free will. Free will was not equally predisposed to both good and evil. A will defiled by sin is not considered as "free" because it is bound by material things. Sin impairs free will, while grace restores it. Later he changed his theology, teaching that humanity had no free will to believe but only a free will to sin.

The early Christians opposed this view that God foreordained every event including the eternal destiny of individuals. Only a few accepted it until the Reformation when Luther and Calvin embraced it.
- **Miracles** – Originally a skeptic he changed when he personally witnessed numerous healings – blindness, cancers, even several raised from the dead. He said if he were to write down all the miracles of healing that occurred "they would fill many volumes."
- **Just war** – Augustine coined the phrase a "just war." He taught Christians should be pacifists but peacefulness in the face of a grave wrong that could only be stopped by violence would be a sin. Defense of oneself or others could be necessary. The pursuit of peace must include the option of fighting to preserve it.
- **Slavery** – He taught slavery is a result of sin and led many clergy under his authority to free their slaves as a "pious and holy" act.

Patrick (c. 389 – 461?)

An escaped slave who was not even from Ireland became the nation's most famous missionary. Around 390, Patrick was born in Britain to Christian parents. He was casual in his faith until, at sixteen, he was kidnapped by pirates and taken to Ireland as a slave. There, much like the prodigal son, he worked on a pig farm and began to pray fervently. Escaping, he traveled two hundred miles on foot to the coast where a ship carrying a cargo of hounds took him on as a dog tender.

Back at home, in a dream he heard Irish children begging him to bring the Gospel to them, "Holy boy, we beseech you to come and walk among us once more." He was "struck to the heart" and immediately made plans to return to his land of previous captivity. Because he felt he needed more Biblical training he went to France to study in a monastery. Around 432 he returned to Ireland.

Previous missionaries to Ireland had seen little success. Patrick's years in slavery there prepared him so he knew how to preach and reach them. He converted most of the Irish, establishing around 300 churches and baptizing around 120,000 people. Though pagan Druid priests and hostile clan leaders often opposed him, the common people welcomed him and his message.

Using the nature that they had once worshiped, Patrick described the Trinity by comparing it to the shamrock. After thirty years of selfless ministry, Patrick died around 460. I think I lost it.

A Specially Prepared Vessel

Patrick frequently noted that his education was lacking because it was interrupted by his years in Irish captivity. This absence of great learning and the simplicity of his Latin bothered him. Likely, that is one reason he didn't rely on the established church, the hierarchical system of Rome, in his evangelism and church planting. Instead, the Irish church was organized around monasteries. Lacking the desire to establish church bureaucracies, Irish abbots encouraged their monks in the "real business" of the church - preaching, studying, and caring for the poor.

Years later, when missionaries from the Roman church came to Ireland, they discovered a thriving Irish faith. The priests and monks of Ireland were notable scholars and missionaries. The church impacted all levels of society. Though their monasteries were simple stone structures, learning and art showed the monks' amazingly vital piety.

A Lesson for Us

Kidnapped at 16 years old, "wasting" many years in slavery when he could have been preparing for ministry. These "tragic" events seem random and a handicap but, looking back, we see they were the Divine Hand of God preparing a unique vessel to reach "The Emerald Isle."

Columba (521 - 597)

Columba (which means “dove”) was born to Christian parents in December A.D. 521 in the part of Ireland known as Ulster. He was a Celt and his grandfather Conall was baptized by none other than Patrick himself. His parents were both from a royal line. As a child he was full of mischief, energy, and somewhat combative. Even as a child his passion for Christ was evident to all. His friends would often wait for him outside the little church where he daily went to read the Psalms.

Though a Christian, he had a quick temper that got him into trouble. At 40 years old he offended his cousin, the high king, in a dispute over some copied texts of Scripture. Unbelievably, that led to a battle where 3,000 men died. For his own safety and to do penance for his error, he left Ireland with twelve chosen, trusted friends. They set out for Scotland, planning to convert the same number of souls as those whose deaths he had caused.

Landing on Iona, a western Scottish island, they erected humble dwellings and a plank church, which they used as a base for their missionary efforts. Each monk had his own hut. Columba himself lived in the greatest austerity, sleeping on a bare rock with a stone pillow.

Iona became a base of operation from which missionaries spread out establishing many new monasteries in Europe. Vikings repeatedly ravaged the community but they rebuilt and continued.

Missionary Ministry and Miracles

One of the first missionary journeys Columba took after establishing his community on Iona, was in 564 to the fortress of Brude, king of the northern Picts, located on the banks of Loch Ness. Brude wanted nothing to do with missionaries so he bolted his gates shut. When Columba made the sign of the cross, and the gates flew open, the awestruck chieftain willingly listened to his message.

The Scots and Picts who lived in the area were very warlike. Columba used the influence he had to settle disputes and minimize the violence wherever he could. No doubt, this passion for peace was a result of the painful lesson he learned from his own experience as a young hothead in Ireland.

At age 75, after a day spent transcribing a Psalm, he rose from his hard bed to join his brothers at their traditional midnight service. Arriving ahead of them, and weakened from years of labor, he knelt before the altar, and collapsed. He revived briefly, gave the beloved monks a farewell blessing and died peacefully early Sunday morning, June 9, 597 AD.

His example of selfless living inspired countless Christians to live a more godly life and his message was reinforced by an abundance of miracles of power, prophecy and healing.

Boniface (c. 672 - 754)

Winfrith, who we know as Boniface, born in Wessex England, spent the first 40 years of his life as a teacher and poet in a Saxon monastery. During this time, the number of Celtic, Irish and Scottish missionaries was declining. Many English, who had been led to Christ by them, felt called to follow their example, and take the gospel to the still-pagan Germans on the European continent. The most famous of these was Boniface.

Donar's Oak

He travelled into the wild frontier lands of what are now the Netherlands, Austria, and Germany. His initial efforts were unsuccessful, but he persevered.

One of the obstacles Boniface faced was that the German people were very superstitious. As a result, many worshipped Christ to some extent, but were afraid to stop worshipping false gods such as Woden and Donar (also known as Odin and Thor). They feared their old gods would punish them if they committed themselves fully to the Lord Jesus.

Much of their worship centered around sacred groves and trees. Thus they continued to worship Donar's sacred oak, and adorn it with offerings and sacrifices.

In response, Boniface called all the people together and—in full view of everyone—chopped down Donar’s sacred oak tree. When he suffered no retaliation from Donar (Thor) he proved the superior power of his God over their false gods and many committed themselves fully to the Lord. Boniface and his companions used the oak’s wood to build a chapel.

This is the most famous of Boniface’s missionary victories, but his ministry lasted the rest of his life. He could have lived comfortably among his newly won flock, but he chose to continue reaching out to the fringes of Christendom to win more souls for Christ.

When he was 80 years old, on Pentecost Sunday, in Frisia, what is now The Netherlands, he was preparing for an open air service when a band of pagans attacked him. Others in his party prepared to fight but Boniface shouted, *“Cease, my children, from conflict... Fear not those who kill the body, but cannot kill the immortal soul... receive with constancy, this momentary blow of death, that you may live and reign with Christ forever.”* All were slaughtered.

“Let us die for the holy laws of our fathers. Let us not be dumb dogs, silent spectators, hirelings who flee from the wolf, but faithful shepherd, watchful for the flock of Christ. Let us preach the whole council of God to the high and to the low, to the rich and to the poor, to every rank and age, whether in season are out of season, as far as God gives us strength.”

- Boniface

The East West Schism (1054 AD)

Rome and Constantinople Part Ways

For many years, the churches in the East, headquartered in Constantinople (modern day Istanbul), and the churches in the west with headquarters in Rome, had been growing apart. What was a single church slowly separated into two distinct branches of Christianity.

The reasons for the division were many. The east used Greek as its language, the west used Latin. The east used leavened bread, the west unleavened for communion. They disagreed over the use of statues and icons, the date for lent, clergy in the east could marry and wear beards but those in the west could not. The east rejected the idea of purgatory. A clause about the Holy Spirit that the west inserted in the Nicene Creed was seen as heresy by the churches in the east. Neither side was willing to submit to the other.

When two strong leaders took the helm the schism became complete. Pope Leo IX sent a delegation to Constantinople to insist the Eastern Churches submit to Rome's authority. Michael Cerularius, the patriarch of Constantinople, refused to meet with them. They responded by placing a document of excommunication on the altar of St. Sophia Church in Constantinople. Cerularius retaliated by excommunicating Pope Leo IX.

Today we know the two streams of Christianity as the Catholic and the Orthodox churches.

Islam and The Battle of Tours (732)

If it were not for Charles Martel, we might all speak Arabic and prayer towards Mecca five times a day.

Muhammad was born around 570 in Mecca, Arabia. In 610 he said the angel Gabriel appeared and told him he was the messenger of God. His revelations were recorded in the Quran. At the time, Arabia was a diverse collection of tribes that were always warring with one another. Islam brought them together.

Over the next hundred years the Muslims conquered Arabia and many "Christian" lands including all of North Africa, Palestine, Persia, Spain, and parts of India. They were now threatening France and Constantinople.

Martel (which means "hammer") was the ruler of the Franks, one of the Germanic tribes that overran the western part of the Roman empire. He met the Muslim general Abd-er-Rahman at the battle of Tours. In a series of bloody battles, the Franks pushed the Muslims back into Spain, ending the Muslim advance into Europe.

Gerard the Great

While John Wycliffe was fighting church abuse in England, sending out preachers to carry his message and translating the Bible from Latin into English, a few hundred miles away in Holland, and in southern Germany a totally different kind of movement was underway. The people involved were not concerned with the high-church issues such as the authority of the Pope. They were more interested in issues of the heart, individual purity, and piety and direct communion with God.

Originally, the movement had no organization or leader. They were just various groups that sprang up emphasizing the inner Christian life and the ability of every Christian to communicate directly with God. They became known as the "friends of God."

Gerard Groote (pronounced *groat*) was born in Holland in 1340 to a wealthy merchant. Both parents were devout Christians who died in the black plague when he was 10 years old. Later his uncle sent him to study in Paris. Because he had a large inheritance he did not need to work and devoted his time to study and living a selfish, licentious life. At 32 years old a life-threatening illness brought about his conversion.

He gave up most of his possessions, turned his house over to be used in helping the poor and withdrew to a monastery where he stayed more than two years as a guest. Longing for a moral reform of the Church, he left the monastery and in 1380 was ordained a deacon and given authority by the bishop to preach wherever he wished. His concern was for the poor which, at that time, the church usually ignored. Before going into a town to preach, he would send someone ahead to post an announcement of his coming on the church door.

Because he preached simple messages on how to live your daily life according to the Scripture, his meetings were very popular with the common people. Many would stop their housework, close their stores and leave their fields to come here him preach for three hours. Then he would take a break and allow them to go home and have something to eat before they returned to hear the rest of his sermon.

He was deeply concerned about the corruption in the church and the low moral standards. Rather than just criticize, he often suggested constructive ways in which they could improve. Not surprisingly, his suggestions were not well received, and he was soon forbidden from preaching.

When an epidemic broke out in 1384, a friend became seriously ill. Though he knew the dangers of contracting the disease himself, he went to minister to this friend. Not surprisingly, he contracted it and at 44 years old he died.

It might appear Gerard was a good man, who influenced many of his time, but had little lasting influence or impact on the coming reformation of the church. Yet, eight years after his death, the school he established became well known, and a young man, Thomas a' Kempis, arrived to study there. Thomas collected the sayings of Gerard and others, and the sayings eventually became the basis for one of the best-known books ever written "*The Imitation of Christ*" - still popular today.

"*The Imitation of Christ*" greatly influenced Ignatius Loyola, founder of the Jesuits, and Erasmus who was an instrumental but less aggressive reformer than Luther and others.

Francis of Assisi (c. 1181 ~ 1228)

Born in Assisi to a wealthy textile merchant, when a war broke out, Francis enlisted and rode out to battle was captured and shortly after his release, became very ill. These experiences and a disturbing nocturnal vision made him question the value of his wealth.

In 1205, desperately seeking God's will for his life, Francis went on a pilgrimage to Rome. There he exchanged clothes with a beggar to experience poverty and the reality of destitution.

An impulse to care for the needy grew within Francis, but angered his father. When he sold his horse and some of his father's textiles to raise money to repair a church – in obedience to a message from heaven – his father dragged Francis before the local bishop. He was told to return all he owed his father. Francis stripped naked, handed his clothes and some property to his father and declared that God alone was his father.

In 1206 he left home, renouncing his father's wealth and his father disowned and disinherited him. Francis dedicated himself to a life of poverty. Any bit of food or clothing he had he would give to those who needed it. He became a beggar himself, unabashedly asking alms to share with the poor.

Founding of The Franciscans

In winter, 1208, listen to the commissioning of Jesus' disciples from Matthew 10, he heard that call as his own. He launched out as a barefoot preacher without money or knapsack proclaiming the kingdom of God.

His simple gospel of love and service generated a faithful following. The little band grew, taking the name friars minor ("little brothers") as it sought to identify with the poor and oppressed. For those willing to join him in renouncing wealth, he drafted a set of rules for living, the ground rules of the Franciscan Order. He and eleven companions journeyed to Rome to receive papal approval for their order and miraculously received it

By 1218, there were at least 3,000 followers of Francis. He had touched a nerve. The church had amassed power and wealth. The rich had gotten richer, with the church's blessing, while the poor were left to starve.

But Francis offered a new way of humility, untainted by greed. Many devout ones followed his example. Many more, who were unwilling to make those sacrifices themselves, admired the poor preachers and supported them with alms.

At the height of his fame, in October, 1226, Francis died. His last words were:

"I have done my duty; may Christ now teach you yours."

SOURCES: *Great Leaders of the Christian Church* edited by John Woodbridge
AND *The 100 Most Important Events in Christian History* by A. Kenneth Curtis,
J. Stephen Lang and Randy Petersen.

John Wyclif (c. 1330 – 12/31/1384)

The Morning Star of the Reformation

HIS WORLD

Wyclif (WICK-liff) was born in England at a time when the church was extremely wealthy and corrupt. The church owned about 1/3 of all the land in England. Most priests were illiterate and immoral. They learned Bible stories from their superiors then were supposed to repeat those to their congregations on Sunday. Clergy drunkenness was common and the priest could buy a license from the bishop to allow him to keep a concubine.

Superstition ruled the people. Relic worship, prayer to the saints, and the purchase of forgiveness was the norm. Excommunication by the Pope of an individual or an entire city ensured their eternal burning in hell.

Most of Wyclif's life he served at Oxford University as a student, teacher, and then President. While a teacher he also led a nearby church. He also served a time as a special member of parliament.

He became increasingly involved in church controversies of his time and, as a result, he attracted a number of followers, including members of the king's family. It's likely these connections are one of the things that allowed him to escape imprisonment and martyrdom at the hands of the pope.

Wyclif, or more likely his disciples and students, made the first translation of the entire English Bible. (Which is why William Cameron Townsend named the Bible translation society he founded in 1942 after him – Wyclif Bible Translators.)

SOME OF THE CONTROVERSIES

- Scripture should take precedent over church traditions.
- Scripture contains all that is needed for salvation and any other revelation, teaching or even declarations by the Pope must be tested by the Scripture.
- The Holy Spirit is capable of helping the average person understand the teachings of the Bible.
- Just because you are a priest, or even the pope, does not ensure your salvation. Only those who believe and live according to scriptural teachings are saved.

- Confession to a priest is not necessary before taking communion. God looks at the heart and confession to Him with a contrite heart is adequate preparation.
- During the Eucharist (communion) the bread and wine do not literally become the body and blood of the Lord Jesus. They are symbolic, just as when Jesus said “I am the vine” he did not literally become a vine.
- The authority of the pope should be limited and if he is abusive in his power the state has the right and obligation to remove him.

THE LOLLARDS

As opposition grew and he was even forbidden from preaching, Wycliffe sent out traveling preachers to spread his views. When churches were not open to them, they would preach on street corners and town squares.

Some of these were educated students from Oxford, but others had no degree. Their humility and simple, practical messages were in direct contrast to the self-seeking established clergy that often taught fable, superstition, myths.

Their enemies call them “Lollards,” which means “mumblers.” Even after Wyclif’s death on new year’s eve, 1384, these Lollards continued going and helped pave the way for the English reformation by spreading the English Bible and fueling discontent with the corrupt Roman church.

THE COUNCIL OF CONSTANCE (1415)

Some of the Lollards carried Wyclif’s message to what is today the Czech Republic. Their message awakened the Bohemian people and prompted a council to condemn two of its leaders – John Hus and Jerome of Prague – to be burned at the stake. The council also condemned 45 “errors” of Wycliffe and demanded that his remains be dug up, burnt and cast into the river. In 1428, 44 years after his death, that order was carried out.

Many of his controversial doctrines espoused by Wyclif were to become issues dealt with by the reformers such as Martin Luther and others a little more than 100 years after his death. Someone commented that his ashes were thrown into the river which carried them into the sea and so the ashes of Wyclif, like his teachings, are now spread throughout the whole world.

SOURCES: *Great Leaders of the Christian Church* edited by John Woodbridge AND *Early Reformers – Winds of Change* by Harold Fair AND *Wyclif- The Morning Star of the Reformation*, article in *Enrichment Magazine*, Spring 2003 by William Farley

Martin Luther (11/10/1483 – 2/18/1546)

The Just Shall live by Faith

Martin Luther was a monk and later priest who tried desperately to find peace with God through religion.

"When I was a monk, I wearied myself greatly for almost fifteen years with the daily sacrifice, tortured myself with fasting, vigils, prayers, and other rigorous works."

He became a professor at the University of Wittenberg, in Germany where he studied and taught students the books of Psalms, Romans, Galatians, and Hebrews.

He was concerned with the greed and opulence he saw in church leadership but his greatest concern had to do with the sale of indulgences which had increased due to the Pope's need for money to build St. Peter's Basilica in Rome. Hucksters went around promising that in exchange for a donation to the church the Pope would reduce your (or another's) time in purgatory

On October 31, 1517, he nailed his 95 theses to the church door in Wittenberg, Germany. This was not an act of defiance. It was a common way to request a debate on a topic. He did not question indulgences. He just questioned their effectiveness for the dead. He defended the Pope, and assumed the Pope would put a stop to this shady sale of indulgences. But the Pope and other church leaders didn't see it that way.

As tensions mounted, Luther had an encounter with God's Word in Romans. Suddenly he understood salvation is by grace through faith – not by prayers, fasting, pilgrimages or sacraments. Righteousness before God was not earned by works, but was a gift from God to us received by faith!

He was overjoyed but this led to even greater contention with Rome. Which way was he to go – the way of the Pope or the way of Scripture? He came to believe that we are to be subject to Scripture. He said, "A simple layman armed with Scripture is to be believed above a pope or council."

To protect his life, his friends kidnapped him and hid him for ten months. During this time he started translating the New Testament into German.

All the remaining years of his life were dedicated to helping the fledgling Reformation take hold. He died on February 18, 1546 in Eisleben, Germany – the city of his birth. When he died, over half a million copies of the "Luther Bible" were in circulation, and his works and writings had begun the Reformation

He would certainly say translating the Bible into the language of the common people was his greatest achievement. He once said:

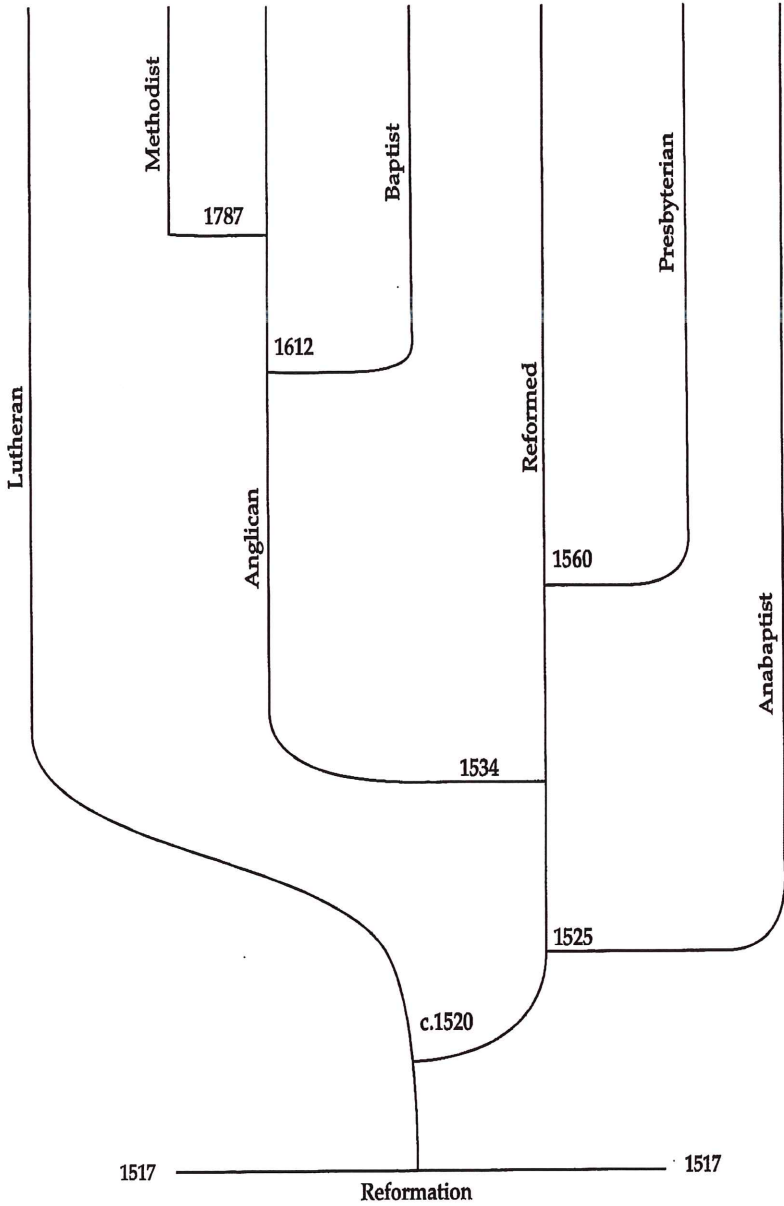
"Let them destroy my works! I deserve nothing better; for all my wish has been to lead souls to the Bible, so that they might afterwards neglect my writings. Great God! if we had a knowledge of Scripture, what need would there be of any books of mine?"

SOURCES: *Great Leaders of the Christian Church* edited by John Woodbridge
AND *ReasonableTheology.org* by Clayton Kraby

Four Major Reformers

	MARTIN LUTHER	ULRICH ZWINGLI	JOHN CALVIN	JOHN KNOX
DATES	1483-1546	1484-1531	1509-1564	c.1514-1572
BIRTHPLACE	Eisleben, Germany	Upper Toggenburg, Switzerland	Noyon, France	Haddington, Scotland
EDUCATION	Leipzig	Vienna, Basel	Paris, Orleans	St. Andrews
ENTERED PRIESTHOOD	1507	1506		1536
REPRESENTATIVE WRITINGS	<p><i>Ninety-five Theses</i> <i>On the Papacy at Rome</i> <i>Address to the German Nobility</i> <i>The Babylonian Captivity of the Church</i> <i>The Bondage of the Will</i> <i>Larger Catechism</i> <i>Smaller Catechism</i> <i>Lectures on Romans</i> <i>Lectures on Galatians</i> <i>Table Talk</i></p>	<p><i>Concerning Freedom and Choice of Food</i> <i>Sixty-seven Conclusions</i></p>	<p><i>Institutes of the Christian Religion</i> <i>Commentaries on 49 books of Scripture</i></p>	<p><i>The First Blast of the Trumpet Against the Monstrous Regiment of Women</i> <i>History of the Reformation of Religion within the Realm of Scotland</i></p>
NOTABLE FACTS	<p>Was influenced by Brethren of the Common Life. In 1505 entered Augustinian monastery. In 1508 began teaching at University of Wittenberg. In 1517 posted Ninety-five Theses. In 1520 was excommunicated. In 1521 was called to Diet of Worms. From 1521-1534 translated Bible into German. In 1525 opposed Peasants' Revolt. In 1525 married Katherine von Bora.</p>	<p>Was influenced by Erasmus. Entered priesthood as a respectable career. Opposed sale of mercenaries by Swiss. In 1518 was called to Zurich. His reformation went far beyond that of Luther. Some followers broke away to form Anabaptists, whom he persecuted. Was killed in battle against Catholic cantons.</p>	<p>Turned to Protestantism while studying law in Paris. In 1533 was forced to flee Paris. In 1536 was persuaded by Farel to help in reforming Geneva. Was forced out of Geneva, settled in Strasbourg, where he married. In 1541 returned to Geneva, led Reformation there. Protestant refugees from all over Europe came to Geneva, took Calvin's ideas with them.</p>	<p>Was influenced by Thomas Gwilliam, George Wishart. Spent 1½ years as a galley slave. In 1549 went to England, preached against Catholicism. In 1553 went to Geneva, influenced by Calvin. In 1558 published <i>The First Blast</i> just as Elizabeth ascended the throne. In 1559 returned to Scotland, led Reformation there.</p>

A Family Tree of Protestant Denominational Groups



Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758)

Jonathan Edwards is a key figure in American theology. He was converted at age 17 and at age 26 became pastor of a church in Massachusetts.

He left the church after a drawn-out disagreement over Communion. He did not believe that the Lord's supper was a "converting ordinance" and believed that only professing Christians should partake.

He played a dominant role in leading and guiding the great awakenings of 1735 - 1737 and 1740 - 1744. But his preaching style was not what you normally think of as a revival preacher. He did not rant nor get excited. The sermons were carefully written out, reasoned with the listener and contained doctrinal statements based upon solid biblical exegesis. By all accounts, he delivered them in a dry matter-of-fact, monotone.

After leaving the pastorate, he became a missionary to the Native Americans in Massachusetts in 1750. It was there that he published *The Freedom of the Will*.

He was a great Calvinist intellectual who masterfully integrated Christianity of the heart and of the head.

His untimely death occurred in 1758 as a result of receiving a smallpox vaccination.

John and Charles Wesley (1703-1791) (1707-1788)

John and Charles Wesley were together responsible, under God, for the formation of the Methodist movement. It started as a society within the Church of England, and the Wesleys wanted it to stay that way. But soon after their deaths Methodism separated from the established church and became a church in its own right.

The name Methodist came from the way they methodically conducted a club they formed with George Whitefield when students at Oxford University.

The Wesley brothers were sons of Samuel and Susanna Wesley. Their father was the Anglican rector of Epworth in Lincolnshire where they were both born. It was in May 1738 that the Wesleys each received assurance of salvation in a momentous experience of evangelical conversion. It lit the fire of evangelistic zeal in their hearts and sent them out, like Whitefield, on a mission to Britain in which they were involved till their deaths.

Charles was less active after the 1750s, choosing to communicate the gospel through writing of doctrinally sound hymns. John spent a lifetime in a saddle as a gospel outrider. It is said he covered more than 250,000 miles in all weathers.

He preached to gatherings from all strata of society. His objective: "I offer them Christ."

George Whitefield (1714 – 1770)

George Whitefield (pronounced WIT-field) was an Englishman who many consider the greatest evangelist since the apostle Paul. Though he was an ordained church of England clergyman, most of his preaching was done outdoors. Without electronic microphones or speakers he preached to thousands at a time, three to five times a day from the time he was 21 years old until his death at age 55.

His ministry took him to almost every county in England, to Wales, 15 times to Scotland and twice to Ireland. But he was particularly devoted to the American colonies, visiting seven times and evangelizing from New Hampshire in the north to Georgia in the south. He founded and supported an orphanage in Georgia.

He built and pastored, as much as his travels would permit, two large churches in London. He was the first leader of the Evangelical Revival that transformed Britain, and was the chief figure of the great awakening in America.

He and the Wesley's were friends in college, and though they had strong doctrinal differences, they remained friends for life. Whitefield was also close friends with Ben Franklin but, unfortunately, his evangelistic efforts never won Franklin to the Lord.

His messages were simple, so they could be understood by the poor and the unlearned, but he also ministered to the aristocracy of England. His message to all was, "You must be born again!"

This message brought the wrath of many upon him, but he met their opposition with kindness. He is buried beneath the pulpit of the first Presbyterian Church at Newburyport, Massachusetts.

Whitefield and the Wesleys

George Whitefield and the Wesleys (John and Charles) were close friends while students at Oxford and all three went on to be leaders in the great awakening. But they had times of sharp disagreement over doctrine. The Wesleys were Arminian which emphasized free will believing anyone can choose to follow Jesus. Whitefield was a Calvinist believing that only those God foreordained to salvation could be saved. However, all three led countless thousands to faith in Christ.

John Wesley called the Calvinistic interpretation of predestination a “monstrous doctrine” and “blasphemy.” Whitefield responded in a heated meeting. According to Wesley, “He (Whitefield) told me that he and I preached two different gospels; and therefore, he would not only not join with me or give me the right hand of fellowship, but was resolved publicly to preach against me and my brother (Charles), wheresoever he preached at all.”

In addition to their theological differences, there were some methodological issues as well. Wesley had a number of manifestations that occurred in his meetings, such as people falling out, crying out under conviction, and shaking. Whitefield was uncomfortable with these, and suggested that Wesley was inappropriately encouraging these manifestations.

Even though they never came to terms over their theological differences, they eventually regained their original love and respect for each other. One of Whitefield’s followers (who once asked him, “We won’t see John Wesley in the heaven, will we?” Whitefield humbly replied “Yes, you’re right, we won’t see him in heaven. He will be so close to the Throne of God and we will be so far away, that we won’t be able to see him!”

At one point, when Wesley appeared to be near death, Whitefield wrote him and said, “...a radiant throne awaits you, and ere long you will enter into your master’s joy. Yonder he stands with a massive crown, ready to put it on your head amidst an admiring throng of saints and angels.”

Wesley recovered and Whitefield eventually died first. At Whitefield’s request, Wesley preached at three memorial services held for Whitefield in London. Wesley spoke lovingly and respectfully of him saying, “There are many doctrines of a less essential nature with regard to which even the most sincere children of God...are and have been divided for many ages. In these we may think and let think; we may ‘agree to disagree.’”

The conflict between these two great men wasn’t the first time outstanding men of God clashed. In Acts 15, Paul and Barnabas had a painful split. Paul and Peter had a head-to-head confrontation (Galatians 2:11). Peter could have counted Paul as a life-long enemy. Instead, he later referred to “...our beloved brother Paul...” (2 Peter 3:15-16).

In reaching untold thousands with the gospel, Wesley was “convincing the free” while Whitefield was “harvesting the elect.” It is good to know what we believe and why but, at the same time, wisdom walks humbly and listens to opposing views because, “I could be wrong.” Someone once observed, “I’ve never learned anything from someone who totally agrees with me.” And, “If you and I agree on every point, one of us isn’t necessary.”

Though we may disagree with others on methods and our understanding of the Scripture, may we be kind and foster love above all else because without love all else amounts to zero.