

The Church Historically Traced

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In designing this chart, a consistent system has been sought. We believe it to be comprehensive for the close student of church history, yet simple and free from confusing details, so that the "common man" is greatly benefited by its study.

The material contained in this chart is almost as valuable in a study of the book of Revelation as it is in a study of church history, because Revelation contains the events of church history expressed in symbolic visions. The writer uses it for class instruction both in Church History and in Daniel and Revelation.

Attention is called to several helpful features: (1) Each century is clearly marked and numbered, thus enabling the student to know the general date of any given event. (2) The use of dotted lines leading from the "Reformation" to each major denomination has allowed the writer to avoid confusion or complication of design and at the same time indicate that there has been no lapse of time during the extent of the dotted lines. (3) The arrows leading from the major religious bodies to the "Restoration Movement" indicate a movement of people. (4) The dotted and circular line at the end of each religious group shows that said group still exists.

Because of conflicting dates given by the various leading historians, the writer has sought to furnish the student with the most authoritative. This conflict of dates is accounted for when the student keeps in mind that calendars have been changed frequently in past centuries; also, that the sources of church history are often indefinite as to the actual time of occurrence of some events. The difficulty lies in locating the best date to which the events may be assigned, not in determining whether or not they really occurred. Because false doctrines and innovations have crept in gradually and developed slowly, it is sometimes rather hard to know when one was considered "official".

According to the book of Revelation, this chart sets forth two Women and two Cities. "The Bride of Christ" ("Church In The Wilderness") is set forth in contrast to the "Mother of Harlots" (Rev. 17:5). Likewise, "The City of God" (the church) is placed in contrast to the city, "Mystery, Babylon the Great." The Bride of Christ and the City of God are the same, being composed of all the saints of all ages. The Mother of Harlots and Babylon the Great are identical, being composed of the Roman Catholic Church, the Greek Catholic Church, the various Protestant denominations plus the "Later Day Apostasies". Yes, two women and two cities—the pure and the corrupt—each representing the religion of Christ in contrast to the many counterfeit substitutions, and fakes of the devil, that old dragon.

THE CHURCH FROM WHICH HERETICS DEPARTED

If you do not have the chart "WHAT THE BIBLE TEACHES ABOUT THE CHURCH", compiled by Brother Donald G. Hunt and published by THE VOICE OF EVANGELISM, which may be ordered from Box 431, Ottumwa, Iowa, you should plan to get one. That

chart sets forth the church as it was established and as it functioned in Apostolic days. This chart (THE CHURCH—HISTORICALLY TRACED) follows the church from the close of Apostolic days through the vicissitudes of time and brings it to the present.

The church was made to undergo ten major persecutions, inflicted by twelve Roman emperors. These persecution periods are indicated by the twelve crosses located in the upper left-hand corner of the chart. These attacks upon the church served to keep it pure from hypocrites and pretenders.

Following these, a time of prosperity was ushered in through the influence of Constantine, sometimes called the first "Christian" emperor. Approximately 200 years after Constantine, corruption of morals and apostasy from the faith led the church to persecute and excommunicate all who refused to embrace its false doctrines and human ecclesiasticism. For its very existence, it was forced to flee into the "wilderness" of obscurity (Rev. 12:6).

At the close of approximately 1,260 years of obscurity and suppression, the church emerged. Darkness of superstition was dispelled when the light of God's Word was allowed, through the work of the Reformation, to penetrate into the hearts of honest people. Many were led out of the city of "Babylon" when they heard God call (Rev. 18:4).

The beginning of this wilderness experience for the church evidently began about 533 when Emperor Justinian issued a decretal letter giving authority and power to the pope to suppress all heresy. It is just as evident that the church commenced to come out of the wilderness when James O'Kelly (1793) began to preach the elements and principles of the Bible church that led people out of the corrupt city Babylon.

APOSTASY FROM THE CHURCH

The ecclesiastical system of Romanism developed gradually. No one man set down and planned the apostate developments. Rather, one thing led to another. To grow this monster, unbridled ambitions and undisciplined imaginations became the mother of invention.

By the Third and Fourth centuries, ecclesiasticism was pretty well shaped up. Preachers were called priests. The clergy of a city, territory, or diocese was ruled over by a bishop. By 325, Metropolitans (later known as archbishops) were elected. At that time also, the bishops of Rome, Alexandria, and Antioch were called super Metropolitans or Patriarchs (later called Cardinals). By the Fifth century, Alexandria, Jerusalem, Ephesus, and Constantinople had Patriarchs, but Rome had a Monarchical bishop (later called a Pope).

The rapidly with which apostasy introduced false doctrines even surpassed the development of ecclesiasticism. The Gnostics were the "Knowing Ones". They favored the Sadducees and, like them, corrupted the religion of God with pagan philosophies. The Ebionites, like the Pharisees of Jesus' day, were legalists. They introduced many Jewish elements into Christianity. The Monarchians were a sect that held peculiar ideas about

the Godhead. Manicheism was a little Christianity, stripped of all reference to the Jewish religion, and filled with Persian pagan philosophy. The Montanists, Novatianists, and Donatists were reactionary parties against the rest. The Montanists held to visions, dreams, the prophetic office, and exciting religious services. With the Ebionites, they also held to the Pre-millennial view of a thousand years earthly reign of Christ. The Novatianists and Donatists held but one common thing with the Montanists, that of purging the church of worldliness, compromise, and human additions; for this, they were persecuted.

Beginning with the theory of "Holy Ghost Baptism", prophets, visions, seasons of ecstasy, pre-millennialism, infant baptism, etc., many human doctrines were introduced, of which we have given a partial list of the most prominent ones (lower left-hand corner of the chart). Also, we have given the accepted dates of their "official" introduction or acceptance.

Most of these doctrines were introduced during the period entitled "Formation of Catholic Doctrine". The seven circles within that period indicate the seven General Councils recognized by both the Roman and the Greek Catholic Churches. The doctrines formed at this period are for the most part accepted by both Catholic bodies (The Roman or Western and Greek or Eastern). The Roman church recognizes twelve more Councils that were held throughout the years, of which the Council of Trent is the most significant, because it was at this council that most of the doctrines now practiced by the Roman Catholic Church were formulated into crystallized dogmas and made "official" and binding.

The development of the Papal (political-religious) power kept pace with the growth of the ecclesiastical element and the introduction of heretical teachings. As early as the middle of the Third century, Cyprian advocated Papal primacy, which means Roman control of religion by political policies. By the Fourth century, the clergy of Constantinople, Alexandria, Jerusalem, Antioch, and Rome sought control of the remaining churches. In the fifth century, Augustine dreamed up the Papacy, which was developed during the later centuries; his "birth-storm" was published in a set of books called "City of God". In the middle of the Fifth century, Leo claimed authority over other Patriarchs. In 533, Emperor Justinian declared John II to be "Lord of the Church". In 600, Gregory I (first real pope, though not so called) organized his papal army and fought wars on behalf of the church. In 607, Emperor Phocas made Pope Boniface III "Head of all the churches".

The Papal States were organized when Pepin (in 756) and Charlemagne (in 774) made contributions of land to the Popes. These continued in the power of Popedom until taken away in 1870 by Victor Emmanuel and Garibaldi, and returned to Italy.

The Papacy, unable to prove Papal authority by the Bible, forged two documents. By these, they attempted to prove that Roman emperors gave temporal authority, as well as religious, to the pope. These two were "Donations of Constantine" and "Pseudo-Isidorian Decretals". However, even the Catholics now confess that they were fakes and not authentic—BUT ONLY AFTER THEY SEWED THEIR PURPOSE OF SUPPORTING THE ANTI CHRIST!

Nicholas I (858-867) first used these to great advantage in gaining for the Papacy great political power and prestige. The Clunian Reform, launched from the Cluny monastery, Hildebrand and Humbert, two Cardinals, also used these forgeries to enhance the Papacy. Pope Leo IX, Nicholas II, and Alexander II as tools to develop the Papacy along the lines advocated in these documents. This led to the organization of the College of Cardinals, the purpose of which was to select the pope. Prior to this, popes had been placed in power by emperors.

Innocent III, using all of these advantages, developed the Papacy to its height (1198-1215).

The decline of the Papacy came when Boniface VIII undertook to maneuver political measures that he could not handle. As a result, he was deposed and sent into exile by the king of France (Phillip the Fair). This led to the "Babylonian Captivity", so styled because the popes for seventy years ruled from Avignon, France. This in turn led to three different men claiming to be popes, two in Rome and one in France. This is called the "Papal Schism". This embarrassing situation was remedied only when the Council of Constance was called to depose the three contending popes and to install Martin V. By this time, the Papacy was so weakened that it could scarcely resist the oncoming Reformation.

At the beginning of the Tenth century, there was an element in the Roman Catholic Church objecting to its policies and practices. The Albigenses broke from it because of doctrinal differences. Later, the Waldenses broke from it because of both doctrinal and practical differences. A crusade launched against the Albigenses by the Papacy annihilated them. Great persecution waged against the Waldenses rendered them almost extinct.

In the fourteenth century, John Wycliff translated the Bible into the common tongue and instituted an era of learning. This "Morning Star of the Reformation" was followed by John Huss and Savonarola who taught the Bible and freely exposed much Catholic doctrine. Though martyred, their work resulted in a great discontentment against Catholicism. When, in 1517, Luther locked his ninety-five theses on the Wittenberg, Germany Catholic Church door, all Germany, and later all the religious world, was set aflame either for or against Catholicism. Great efforts at reform were undertaken by such men as Luther and Melancthon in Germany, Zwingli and John Calvin in Switzerland, John Knox in Scotland, and Thomas Cranmer, Cromwell, and others in England.

From this Reformation, the Lutheran church of Germany resulted. In England, the Church of England came into being which in turn produced the Episcopal Church of America. The Congregational Church, called "Dissenters" and "Independents", broke from the Church of England as a result of the Puritan Movement. Due to a bogging-down of the religious life in the Church of England, the Wesley brothers produced the Methodist Church. Because of a formalizing of that denomination, the Holiness Agitation (a revival movement started by Finney, Moody, and others) produced the various Pentecostal and Holiness bodies. The Presbyterian group was started in Switzerland by John Calvin and in Scotland by John Knox. A desire for union on

the part of the Presbyterians and the Congregationalists led to the formation of the United Brethren—the union failed. The Baptist bodies resulted from the Anabaptists (a word which means "re-baptizers").

Before leaving this period of church history, let us call attention of several additional facts: (1) There have been four successive divisions and healings of Brethren between the Roman and Greek Catholics. The fifth division occurred in 1054 and has never been healed—nor is it likely that it will ever be. The main cause of it was over religious authority. (2) The Roman Catholic Church boasts that it is not divided like the rest of the religious bodies. That is both true and false. True, because when people differ from it, they are excommunicated ("boot them out"). And false, because there are exactly eleven other Catholic groups not including the Greek Catholics. The largest is called the "Old Catholics" and will be located at the lower right hand corner of the chart. (3) The crusades, ten in all, but seven Holy Land crusades, were mainly sponsored by and in the interest of the Catholic Church of Rome. They were designed for their own exploiting. (4) Against the Reformation, the Catholics warred with a Counter Reformation. They called the Council of Trent in order to effect a reformation in their own ranks and to systematize their doctrines in order to know what they did believe and teach. Ignatius Loyola organized the Jesuits, who soon gained control of educational centers, instituted new members in other lands, proselytized the terrible Inquisition called the "Reign of Terror", and laid far-reaching plans in behalf of the Apostolate Rome. (5) Between the Congregational and Presbyterian churches and below the United Brethren, you will notice five groups, all somewhat disconnected from other groups. There are many differences between the Russells and the Jehovah's Witnesses, so we have listed them separately.

RETURN FROM APOSTASY TO THE APOSTOLIC CHURCH

What history calls the "Restoration Movement" is in reality a misnomer, because the church needs no restoring—it is perfect. When it gets into a condition that needs restoring, it no longer continues to be the church. Rather, people who have departed from the church need to return to it. This return "movement" resulted in many people being led out of "Mystery, Babylon the Great." It resulted in the formation of many congregations patterned after the New Testament order.

However, not all was good, for soon much of the "movement" stopped moving and soon STAGNATED. This stagnation produced three "Later Day Apostasies".

(1) The largest portion of the stagnation formed into what is known as the "Christism Church". It is noted for its prayerlessness, preachlessness, pink-teas, and powder-puff preachers. (NOTE: No one should ever be guilty of trying to place the name "Church of Christ" on such congregations until they leave their apostate condition and become true churches of Christ in actuality.)

(2) In conjunction with the Christian Church arose the Disciples of Christ denomination. Lines were hard to draw for a number of years, but now they are very clear. The main difference is that one group is for the organized Society and the other is against. Three

things stand out in the development of the latter denomination. (a) All State Societies were developed in the eleven year period 1839-1850. (b) The first National Convention was called in 1849 and has been since perpetuated as the spawning ground for all anti-scriptural practices. (c) The six organizations from that date until 1919 were: American Christian Missionary Society (1849), Christian Women's Board of Missions (1874), Foreign Christian Missionary Society (1875), National Benevolent Association (1886), Board of Church Extension (1888), and Board of Ministerial Relief (1895). (d) All of these were dissolved in 1919 and reorganized into the United Christian Missionary Society. The denomination's headquarters are in Indianapolis, Indiana, at the present, with the official publishing house being located at St. Louis, Missouri, called Christian Board of Publication. This is the denomination in which your writer was reared, but out of which he came when he learned the truth as it is in Christ. For more detailed information about this denomination, the reader should purchase a copy of "ONE HOPE" by Mrs. C. E. Stark and sold by THE VOICE OF EVANGELISM, Box 431, Ottumwa, Iowa (cost: 50 cents).

(3) "Sectorian Churches of Christ" entry includes two groups, both of which call themselves "Churches of Christ", but which have practices that forbid them being so. (a) One group holds things of faith as matters of judgment. They call themselves "Churches of Christ", but when it comes to living a life apart from sin, they do not measure to the divine standard. They contend that such things such as dancing, movie-going, card-playing, use of tobacco, lodge membership, etc. are but matters of opinion and not faith, which things are governed by Bible principles, thus making them as much a matter of faith as though they were specifically NAMED in the Bible. (b) The second group binds things of judgment (such as communion sets, collection baskets, tinning forks, pianos, etc.) upon Christians as though they were matters of faith. The writer is not referring to those who might have a definite conviction about the above named matter, but those who make them TESTS OF FELLOWSHIP TO THE EXCLUSION OF THOSE WHO CONSIDER THEM AIDS AND MATTERS OF JUDGMENT. Such are factionists and should be avoided!

The Christian Church group is noted for being "Traditionists". It makes no difference whether it is in the Bible, or if they have never done it or have always practiced it, they are governed by the tradition of the "Christian Church", rather than by the Bible. The Disciples of Christ are "Rationalists", for they must test every teaching of the Bible and Bible conviction of Christians by human reason, which they consider the criteria of all knowledge. The other two groups called "Churches of Christ" are "Legalists" in that they must read about it by name in the Bible, or they will not be bound. Surely, if it is a matter of faith, we MUST read it in the Bible or not practice it. But, Bible PRINCIPLES do not effect them! The law of expediency has no regard in their thinking!

After carefully studying the chart, ponder the Word of God which Isaiah spoke and which is reproduced along the bottom of the chart (Isa. 55:8,9).