



NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA

FACULTY OF ARTS

DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES

COURSE CODE: CRS830

COURSE TITLE: EARLY CHURCH HISTORY

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CREDIT UNIT: 3

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COURSE GUIDE

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Introduction

Welcome to CRS830: Early Church History. Early Church History a one-semester course of 3 Credit, and is available for Master students of the Christian Theology Programme. The first part, Church History examines the Origin of the Church and its development to the time of the Protestant Reformation. Early Church History consists of 14 study units. The Course Guide introduces you to what the course is all about; course materials you will require, and information on how you can work your way through the material. It also highlights assignments (tutor – marked assignments) as part of the requirements for this course.

What You will Learn in this Course

The study of Church History will enable you to have insight to the unique heritage that belongs to the Christian faith. This uniqueness of Christianity is rooted in history; God became man and lived in time and space in the person of Christ.

You will also study and commit to memory, definitions of Church and of its History. In addition, you will acquaint yourself with values, benefits and purposes of Church History.

You will also learn the formation of Christianity, the various stages of development, trials and persecutions and the victory won in 380

A. D. when Christianity became the sole religion of the Roman Empire.

You will study the development of papacy, the establishment of monasteries and that of medieval learning and worship.

Finally you will discover through your reading and assignments, factors that led to the Protestant Reformation of the early 16th Century and also acquaint yourself with the major Protestant Reformers.

Course Aims

This course encourages you to:

- i. Study the birth of Jesus Christ, the Founder of Christianity in Bethlehem of Judea.
- ii. Study the atmosphere of the Jewish nation as charged with religious emotionalism and political discontent.
 - iii. Study the life of Jesus at about thirty years of age when John the Baptist proclaimed him the Messiah.
 - iv. Learn about Christ’s ministry of teaching and healing.

- v. Discover the events that led to Christ crucifixion, burial and resurrection.
- vi. Know the basic tenets of Christian faith and factors that made Christianity an accepted religion in most parts of the world.
- vii. Know the developmental growth of Christianity with its attendant chaos from the fourth century to the Reformation of the early 1500s

Course Objectives

By the end of this course, you should be able to

- i. Narrate the emergence and triumph of Christianity.
- ii. State the roles played by the Emperors in the development and stability of Christianity.
- iii. Describe the growth of papacy and abuses in the church that eventually led to Protestant Reformation.
- iv. Identify the role played by Church Fathers in fashioning the rules of faith.
- v. Describe the reconciliatory moves made by the Emperors and Popes.
- vi. List the motives behind crusades and their resultant effects on Christianity.
- vii. Describe the Christian Church and their activities during the Dark Ages.
- viii. Describe the invention of printing press and its effects on Christianity.
- ix. Describe the origin of some denominational churches and their founders.

Course Requirements

To complete this course you are required to read the study units, read suggested books and other materials that will help you achieve the objectives. Each unit contains self-assessment for assessment purposes. There will be final examination at the end of the course. The course should take you a total of about 15 weeks to complete. Listed below are the major components of the course.

Course Materials

- Course Guide
 - Study Units
 - Recommended Textbooks
- Assignment File

Study Units

There are fourteen study units in this course. Each unit should take you about two hours to work through. The fourteen units are divided into three modules. Two modules contain 5 units each while the last module contains 4 units.

These are arranged as follows:

Module 1 Ancient Church History – 30 – 100 A.D

Unit 1 The Birth of the Christian Church

Unit 2 The Growth and Expansion of the Early Church

Unit 3 Persecutions and Victories of the Church 100 – 313 A.D

Unit 4 Formation of New Testament Canon

Unit 5 The Church Fathers and the Growth of Liturgy

Module 2 The Imperial Church – 313 – 476 A.D

Unit 1	Reconciliatory Councils and Creedal Development
Unit 2	Rise of Monasticism and their developments
Unit 3	The Growth of Power in the Roman Church
Unit 4	The End of Western Roman Empire
Unit 5	Consolidation of Papal Power and the Rise of Islam
Module 3	The Medieval Church – 476 – 1453 A.D
Unit 1	The Holy Roman Empire
Unit 2	The Crusades
Unit 3	Invention of Printing Press and the Forerunners of the Reformation
Unit 4	Renaissance Period to the Dawn of Reformation

Each unit includes a table of contents, introduction, specific objectives, recommended textbooks and summaries of key issues and ideas. At intervals in each unit, you will be provided with a number of exercises or self – assessment questions. These are to help you test yourself on the materials you have just covered or to apply them in some way. The value of these self – test is to help you gauge your progress and to reinforce your understanding of the material. At least, one tutor – marked assignments will be provided at the end of each unit. The exercise and the tutor-marked assignments will help you in achieving the stated learning objectives of the individual units and of the course.

Textbooks and References

- Cairns, Earle. E. (1981). *Christianity through the Century: A History of the Christian Church*. (Rev. & Enlarged Ed.) Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House.
- Burns, Edward McNall Ralph, Philip Lee Lerner, Robert E. and Meacham. (1986). *Standish World Civilizations* (Vol.1, 7th Edition) New York: W.W. Norton & Company.
- Hurlbut, Jesse Lyman (1981). *The Story of the Christian Church*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House.
- Dowley, Tim (ed.). (1996). *Lion Handbook: The History of Christianity* Singapore: Lion Publishing Plc.
- Houghton, S.M. (2001). *Sketches from Church History*. Great Britain: The Barth Press.

Assignment File

All the details of the assignments you must submit to your tutor for marking will be found in this file. You must get a passing grade in these assignments in order to pass this course. In the assignment file itself and in the section on assessment within this Course Guide, additional information will be found.

There are ten (10) assignments in this course. They will cover:

- The Birth of the Christian Church (module1, unit 1)
- The Apostolic Church and the Church among the Gentiles (module 1, unit 2)
- The causes of Imperial persecutions and their stages (module 1, unit 3)
- The Council of Nicea of 325 A.D and the resolutions (module 2, unit 1)
- Causes of the rise of monasteries and their developments (module 2, unit 2)
- The Character of the Roman Church and the transfer of its Capital (module 2, unit 3)
- Factors that led to the down fall of Western Roman Empire (module 2, unit 4)

The Crusades and their effects on the consolidation of the Church
(module 3, unit 2)

The role of Printing press in the spread of the gospel (module 3, unit 3)

Forerunners of the Protestant Reformation and Renaissance (module 3,
units 3 & 4)

Assessment

The course will be assessed in two aspects. These are:

Tutor-marked assignments

Written examination

For you to do the assignments very well, it is expected of you to apply information, knowledge and techniques obtained from the course. You must endeavor to submit the assignments to your tutor for marking, before the deadlines given in the assignment file. The assignments will count for 30 % of examination, of which you will sit for at the end of the course, and will also count for 70% of your total course work. The examination will be of two hours duration.

Tutor-Marked Assignment

This course consists of 10 tutor-marked assignments. The best three assignments with the highest marks will be counted for you. You are encouraged to submit all your assignments. Each assignment counts 10% towards your total course mark.

In the Assignment file, you will find all the assignment questions for all units. To demonstrate your understanding of the course, do not depend only on information obtained from the units to answer the question. Go to the library, read and research very well to obtain more information on the course.

After completing each assignment, send it to your tutor. Try your best to get each assignment across to your tutor on or before the dates given in the Assignment file. However, if it becomes impossible for you to submit any of those assignments on time, please let your tutor know before the due date. After due consideration, you might be given an extension.

Final Examination and Grading

To prepare for this examination, revise all the areas covered in this course. Revision of all the exercise and the tutor-marked assignments before the examination will also be of help to you. The revision should start after you have finished studying the last unit. This final examination will be of three hours' duration. It has a value of 70% of the total course grade.

Course Marking Scheme

This table shows how the actual course marking is broken down

Assessment	Marks
Assignments	Four assignments, best three marks of the four count at 30% of course marks.
Final Exam	70 % of Overall Courses marks
Total	100 % of Course marks

Course Overview

The units, the number of weeks it would take you to complete them, and the assignments that follow them are outlined in the table below:

Unit	Title of Work	Duration (weeks)	Assignment
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	Course Guide	1	
Module 1			
1	The Birth of the Christian Church	1	Assignment 1
2	The Growth and Expansion of the Early Church	1	Assignment 2
3	The Persecutions and Victories of the Church	1	Assignment 3
4	Formation of New Testament Canon	1	Assignment 4
5	The Church Fathers and the Growth of Liturgy	1	Assignment 5
Module 2			
1	Reconciliatory Councils and Creedal Development	2	
2	Rise of Monasteries and Their Developments	1	Assignment 6
3	The Growth of Power in the Roman Church	2	
4	The end of Western Roman	1	Assignment 7
	Church		
5	Consolidation of Papal power and the Rise of Islam	2	
Module 3			
1	The Holy Roman Empire	1	
2	The Crusades	2	Assignment 8
3	Invention of Printing press and the forerunners of the Reformation	1	Assignment 9
4	Renaissance	1	Assignment 10
15	Revision		
16	Examination		

How to get the most of this Course

In distance learning, the study units replace the university lecturer. Thus one of the advantages of distance learning is that you can read the course materials at your own pace, at anytime and anywhere. Exercises to test your understanding of the material are provided in each unit. There is a common format for all the units. The first item is the introduction to what the unit will be introducing you into. The introduction also shows you how a particular unit is related to other units and to the course as a whole. After the introduction, you will see the objectives. The objectives indicate what you are expected to achieve after studying the unit. So you should keep it handy so as to constantly check or monitor yourself in terms of achieving those objectives.

The main body of the unit guides you through the required readings from other sources. Exercises, as was mentioned before, are provided at intervals throughout the reading materials. Answers to those exercises are provided at the end of each unit. Don't try to skip any of the exercises. Try to do them as you meet them while reading. This will help to do your tutor marked assignments and also to prepare you for examinations.

The following is a practical strategy for studying the reading materials. If you encounter any problem, contact your tutor and he/she will be available to help you out.

Read this Course Guide thoroughly.

Provide a timetable for yourself and take note of the time you are required to spend on each unit and always stick to the timetable

Facilitators/Tutors and Tutorials

There are 8 hours of tutorials (eight hours) provided to support this course. The dates, times, and locations of these tutorials will be made available to you, together with the name and address of your tutor.

Your tutor will mark the assignments. Take note of the comments he might make and remember to send your assignments before the deadline. In case you will not meet the deadline, make sure you notify your tutor. The tutor will return your assignments to you after he must have marked them.

Try your best not to skip any of the tutorials. This is because that is the only chance you have of meeting your tutor and your fellow students. And your tutor will more easily solve problems encountered while reading the course materials.

Summary

CRS830 intends to introduce you to the world of Church History. By the time you complete this course, you would have known the major stages of the developments of Christianity from the Early Church or Ancient History of the Church, from 5 BC – AD 590, to the Medieval Church, AD 590 – 1517. Therefore, the successful completion of this course will aid you to answer these questions without much difficulty:

What is the nature of Church History?

What are the benefits of Church History?

How did the formation of the Church come into existence?

Why did Christians become subjects of imperial attacks?

What led to the formation of Creeds and Liturgy?

What were the roles of the Church Fathers in the Canonization of the Scriptures?

How did Christianity become the sole religion of the Roman Empire?

What led to the development of monasteries?

What led to the conduction of the Crusades?

How did the invention of the Printing Press affect the spread of Christianity?

Who were John Wycliffe, Jerome and John Huss?

How did the Renaissance prepare the way for the Protestant Reformation?

The questions are inexhaustible. There are more you can answer. We wish you success with the course and hope that you will find it both helpful and interesting. In the longer term, we hope you will enjoy your acquaintance with NOUN.



MAIN COURSE

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MODULE 1 ANCIENT CHURCH HISTORY - 30 – 100 A.D

Unit 1	The Birth of the Christian Church
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- Unit 2 The Growth and Expansion of the Early Church
- Unit 3 Persecutions and Successes of the Church 100 – 313 A.D
- Unit 4 Formation of New Testament Canon
- Unit 5 The Church Fathers and the Growth of Liturgy

UNIT 1 THE BIRTH OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

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- 4.0 Conclusion
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The first unit will introduce you to the definitions of 'Church' and that of 'Church History' itself. It will discuss the birth, ministry, death, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ; planting of Christianity and the Church. This unit is very important because it sets the pace for other subsequent units of this course. Therefore, the specific objectives and outline below are what you should expect to learn from this unit.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- explain the origin of the Christian Church
- analyse the teachings and miracles of Jesus Christ
- describe the unity that existed in the Early Church.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Definitions of Church

Definition of the word 'Church'

The word Church (*ekklesia*) comes from two Greek words; "*ek*" meaning "out" and "*kaleo*" meaning "to call". This is the Greek word that was used to translate the Hebrew word *kahal* in the Septuagint (LXX). It has to be noted that *kahal* is used in Hebrew to denote the assembly of the Israelites. In Christian usage, the term signifies a gathering of people who were once in darkness of false religions or teachings but now called out into the marvelous light of the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, the Church is a body of people who believe in Jesus as the Messiah and who joined to the organization originated by Him (SDA Bible Dictionary, 1976)

Note that Jesus Christ Himself mentioned the word, "Church", twice in the Bible. The first one is "Matthew 16:18 "On this rock, I will build my Church". The second is Matthew 18:17 "Tell it to the Church".

The Apostle Paul also mentioned in his teachings that the Church of God is one. According to him, this Church is not human organization; it is God's workmanship (Eph. 2:10), created in accordance with His eternal purpose in Christ. Therefore, Pauline doctrine of the Church, is that of the household or family of God (Eph. 2:19), consisting of those who are adopted by God as sons and heirs in Christ (The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia)

3.2 Definition of History

History may be defined as interpreted record of the socially significant human past, based on organized data collected by scientific method from archaeological, literary, or living sources (Earle E. Cairns, 1981)

3.3 Definition of Church History

Based on the definition of History above, Church History could be defined as the interpreted record of the origin, progress, and impact of Christianity on human society based on organized data gathered by scientific method from archeological, documentary, or living sources. Early Church History is therefore the interpreted, organized story of the redemption of man and the earth.

3.4 Benefits of Church History

Perhaps, from the outset, you should know the benefits one will derive from the study of Church History. Some of the primary values (Cairns 1981) are as follow:

- i. It links the past factual data of the Christian gospel with the future proclamation and application of that gospel in a present synthesis that create understanding of Christianity's great heritage and inspiration for its further proclamation and application.
- ii. It sheds light on historicity and claims of the over three hundred Christian blocs in Nigeria
- iii. It demonstrate how Christianity has influenced the lives of people from history by transforming them into new creations through the gospel message despite the threats of secularism.
- iv. The study of Church History provides edification and inspiration or enthusiasm that will stimulate high spiritual life.
- v. The study of church History helps to broaden the mind of a Christian so as not to be biased about other Christians and their church denominations hence promoting unity and oneness.

3.5 The Birth of Jesus Christ

Christianity as a religion did not start when Emperor Constantine pronounced it as a "Religio Licita" through the "Edict of Milan" in AD 313. Rather, it began subtly right from the time of Jesus Christ and practically through the activities of his disciples after his death. The foundation of Christianity was laid primarily by Jesus Christ while the Apostles and disciples of Jesus Christ consolidated this effort thereby transforming it into a full blown religion where converts were made and churches became established afterward". It is important to note that Jesus Christ did not come to establish a religion but to save man from his sins. It was as a result of his earthly ministry and the activities of his disciples after his death that made the people of Antioch to refer to the disciples as those whose behaviours were like Christ's own, hence the likely coining of the term "Christianity" (Acts 11:20-26). But the new religion only became widespread during the chaos of the third century and only triumphed in the Roman Empire during the invasion, secession, plague, and economic

collapses that the empire experiences in the 4th Century of the fourth century. At the time of its humble beginnings nobody could have known that Christianity would be decreed the sole religion of the Roman Empire by the year 380 (Edward M. Burns: 1986).

The books of Matthew, Mark and Luke have clearly documented the details about the birth of Christ. Matthew, in his own account says that when Jesus' mother, "Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they started to live together, she was found to be with a child from the Holy Spirit". Her husband was not pleased with it; he therefore planned to divorce her secretly. At that point, the Lord appeared to him in a dream not to leave Mary, because the child in her womb was from the Holy Spirit. "She will bear a Son and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." (Matt.1:18-21) Jesus was born soon after the encounter with an angel of the Lord at Bethlehem of Judea in the time of King Herod. The wise men from the East came to pay homage to the newborn King and that ignited the wrath of King Herod, who became jealous and suspicious of any rival ruler in his own domain. The angel of the Lord warned the parents of baby Jesus to take him to Egypt. They were there until the death of Herod. Then, the family was instructed again to leave Egypt and they came to the district of Galilee, where they made their home in a town called Nazareth (Matt.2: 1-23).

Luke, also in his account, agreed with Matthew as he gave his own supportive evidence that Jesus did live with his parents at Nazareth. He added, "The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom, and the favour of God was upon him". Every year his parents went to Jerusalem for the festival of the Passover. And when he was twelve years old, he went with his parents for the festival. At the temple, he discussed the Scriptures freely with the teachers. It was at the temple, for the first time, that he made his mission on earth known to his parents, even though, they did not understand. From that age twelve, till age thirty, he was with his parents at Nazareth and was obedient to them (Luke 2:41-52)

As stated earlier, while Jesus was growing up, Judea was under Roman rule. The atmosphere of the country was charged with religious emotionalism and political discontent. Some of the people, notably the Pharisees, concentrated on preserving the Jewish law and looked forward to the coming of a political messiah who would rescue the country from Rome. Most extreme of those who sought hope in politics were the "Zealots", who wished to overthrow the Romans by the use of arms. Some groups, on the other hand, were not interested in politics at all. Typical of these were the Essenes, who hoped for spiritual deliverance through asceticism, repentance, and mystical union with God. The ministry of Jesus was clearly more allied to this pacific orientation (Edward M. Burns: 1986).

3.6 The Ministry of Jesus Christ

In the fifteenth year of the reign of Emperor Tiberius, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was the ruler of Galilee, and his brother Philip the ruler of Iturae, that the word of the Lord came to John, son of Zechariah in the wilderness. He went throughout the region proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. Many responded positively and were baptized. And as the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah; John answered all of them by saying, I baptized you with water, but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals, He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. Shortly after that, Jesus appeared before John and was baptized. The Holy Spirit descended upon him in a bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son, the Beloved, with you I am well pleased". He was about thirty years old when he

began his ministry (Luke 3:1-23). He soon gathered his twelve disciples who labored side by side with him for the next three years. His career, according to Edward M Burns (1986) was a continuous course of preaching and teaching and of healing the sick, "casting out devils", restoring sight to the blind, and raising the dead. He not only denounced shame, greed, and licentious living, but also set the example himself by a life of humility and self-denial. Burns said that Christ believed that he had a mission to save humanity from error and sin. He added that his preaching and other activities eventually aroused the antagonism of some of the Chief Priests and conservative rabbis. They disliked his caustic references to the legalism of the Pharisees, his contempt for form and ceremony, and his scorn for pomp and luxury. They feared also that his active leadership would cause trouble with the Romans. Therefore they planned for his arrest and crucifixion.

3.7 The Crucifixion and Burial of Jesus Christ

Perhaps, the crucifixion of Jesus marked a great climax in Christian history. In one of his visits to the temple, Jesus drove away the money changers (Matt 21:12 and temporarily restored order there. The Chief Priest and temple officers were not pleased. They planned to eliminate him. When the opportunity came, they went through one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him. Jesus was arrested at the Garden of Gethsemane and brought before the rulers for trial. Accordingly, they brought him into the highest court in Jerusalem, where he was solemnly condemned for blasphemy and for setting himself up as "king of the Jews" and turned over to Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor, for execution of the sentence. They had to do this because they had no legal powers to execute anybody.

It was nine o'clock in the morning on Friday when they crucified him. When it was noon, darkness came over the whole land until three o'clock in the afternoon. Jesus Christ committed his spirit into his Father's hand and breathed his last and the curtain of the temple was torn into two, from top to bottom. He died on the cross between two thieves on the hill of Golgotha outside Jerusalem.

His body was later laid at the tomb made by Joseph of Arimathea. In the third day, early in the morning, Jesus resurrected. He appeared, first to Mary, then to the eleven disciples. Their hope that was previously shattered because they thought that they would never see him again now rekindled. The rest of his followers were quickly convinced that he had risen from the dead and that he was truly a divine being. With their courage restored, they organized their little band and began preaching and testifying in the name of their Risen Lord.

3.8 The Core of Christ's Teachings

There has never been a complete agreement among Christians as to the precise teachings of Jesus of Nazareth. The only dependable records are the four Gospels, but the earliest of these was not written until at least a generation after Jesus' death. According to the beliefs of his orthodox followers, Jesus revealed himself as the Christ, the divine Son of God, who was sent on this earth to suffer and die for the sins of humanity. They were convinced that after three days in the tomb, he had risen from the dead and ascended into heaven, whence he would come again to judge the world. The Gospels at least make it clear that he included the following among his basic teachings:-

- the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of humanity;
- the Golden Rule;
- forgiveness and love of one's enemies;
- repayment of evil with good;
- self-denial;

- condemnation of hypocrisy and greed;
- opposition to ceremonialism as the essence of religion;
- the imminent approach of the end of the world; and
- the resurrection of the dead and the establishment of the kingdom of heaven.

Recent research tends to emphasize the last two of these points as being at the center of Jesus' mission (Edward M. Burns: 1986).

3.9 The Church at Pentecost

It will interest you to note that the official day for the establishment of the Christian Church came after the death of Jesus Christ. Therefore, the Christian Church began its history as a world movement on the Day of Pentecost, in the late spring of the year 31 A.D., fifty days after the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, and ten days after his Ascension. During the ministry of Jesus, his disciples believed that he was the long-looked-for Messiah of Israel, the Christ. According to Hurlbut, these two words are the same, "Messiah" being Hebrew, and "Christ" being Greek; and both meaning, "The Anointed One," and the Prince of the Heavenly Kingdom. The Church began in the city of Jerusalem, and apparently was limited to that city and its immediate surroundings during the earliest years of its history. A reading of the first six chapters in the Book of Acts shows that during this early period the Peter acted as the leader of the Church. Though he was not officially appointed, on every occasion Peter comes to the front as the planner, the preacher, the wonder-worker and the defender of the infant church. Hurlbut also confirms that this was not because Peter was the divinely-appointed pope or ruler; but as the result of his promptness in decision, his readiness of speech and his spirit of leadership. By the side of Peter, the practical, we see John, the contemplative and the spiritual, rarely speaking yet ever held in high honor by the believers. In a church of comparatively small numbers, all in one city, all of one race, all absolutely obedient to the will of their ascended Lord, and all in fellowship with the Spirit of God, little government was needed; but that little was given by the twelve apostles as a body, Peter being their spokesman. A sentence in Acts 5:13, intimates the reverence in which the apostles were held, both by the believers and the people (Jesse Lyman Hurlbut: 1981).

3.10 The Gospel Testimony

You need to know that the Church at Pentecost was bestowed with the gift of tongues in order to quickly disseminate the gospel to many nations, tribes and tongues. The new Church was also endowed with the apostolic miracles to confirm their divine approval. Therefore, there was a need of testimonies to the goodness of the Lord being manifested amongst the new sets of believers. Hurlbut adds that the weapon of the church through which the world was to be won, was the testimony of its members. According to him, Peter and all the apostles, and all the church gave their testimony to the gospel. When the church had one hundred and twenty members, and the spirit descended upon them, all became preachers of the Word. Hurlbut further states that as the numbers were multiplied, the witnesses multiplied, for every member spoke as a messenger of Christ, there being no distinction between clergy and laity. According to this topic, you realize by now that toward the close of this period, Stephen has risen to such eminence as a preacher. This universal testimony was a potent influence in the rapid increase of the church.

Hurlbut further confirms the necessity of the miraculous in the apostolic Church. He says that in the beginning of this mighty effort, a handful of plain people, without arms or social prestige, and with all the powers of the national church and state arrayed against them, undertaking to transform a nation, - some super-natural help

was needed; and it came in the form of "mighty works". The apostolic miracles have been named "bells to call the people to worship". You will do well to have your Bible with you and read the third chapter of Acts of the Apostles. There you will read of a work of healing wrought at the Beautiful Gate of the Temple, immediately followed by a multitude of people listening to Peter and submitting to Christ. Also, in the fifth chapter, there is the record of a miracle of judgment: the sudden deaths of Ananias and Sapphira at Peter's rebuke, as a warning against selfishness and falsehood. Read the first eight chapters of the Acts of the Apostles and you will be amazed to see an efflorescence of divine power, in the cure of many diseased people. This power was not limited alone to Peter, Stephen or other apostles, rather the Lord wrought "wonders and signs" through all of them. These mighty works attracted attention, awakened inquiry, and opened the hearts of multitudes of faith in Christ.

3.11 The Spirit of Oneness in the Early Church

Perhaps, you may want to refer to the Spirit of oneness in the early Church as a "modern day communism," where every property is held in trust for the betterment of the immediate community. There was a very strong cord of unity that bounded the community together in love. May be, you can also acquaint yourself with the views of Hurlbut (1981) as presented below. He says that the love of Christ glowing in the hearts of these people called forth also a love for their fellow disciples, a unity of spirit, a joy in fellowship, and especially a self-denying interest in the needy members of the church. You may read for more details from the Acts of the Apostles Chapter five, of how rich disciples surrendered their properties to the less privileged ones without compulsion. Hurlbut says that, it was tested in a small community, all-dwelling within one city; and in a highly selected people, all filled with the Holy Spirit, in character aiming to reproduce the principles of the Sermon on the Mount. He said that, that practice arose in the expectation of a speedy return of Christ, at whose coming earthly possessions might be no longer needed. However, the system developed its own moral evils, as the dishonesty of Ananias and Sapphira. The spirit of this liberal giving is to be commended, though, with its own weaknesses, as every system operated by human organization.

3.12 The Fall of Jerusalem

Without any question in one's mind, you are following the trends in the Early Church. By now you should be able to understand how the Early Church cared for its poor and needy without any decrees. The membership of the early church soon included the Hellenistic or the Grecian Jews, and the non-Jews who were from outside Jerusalem. Interestingly, before the death of the Apostle Paul, the Gentiles were more in number among Christians. It was not long when a sharp distinction between Palestinian or home Jews and the Grecian or Hellenistic Jews and the non-Jews arose. The background of this crises came from the fact that the Jewish nation considered herself as the custodian of the oracles of God and that she was duty bound to tutor other nations. Therefore, it was difficult for her to comprehend the idea of being under the domination of another nation, particularly, a Gentile nation as Rome. Maybe, you need to be reminded that when Christ was born, the Jewish nation was under the Roman Empire along with other nations. Hurlbut (1981) says that, among the many provinces under the rule of Rome, the only land discontented and disloyal was Judea. He says that, the Jews, by putting their own interpretation upon their prophetic writings, believed that they were destined to conquer and govern the world, and having that confident expectation submitted unwillingly to the yoke of the Roman emperors. It must be admitted also that many of the Roman procurators or governors utterly failed to

comprehend the Jewish character and were needlessly harsh in their dealings. About 66 A.D. the Jews broke out into open rebellion, hopeless from its very beginning, for what could one of the smallest provinces, whose people were untrained in war, accomplish against an empire of a hundred and twenty million people, with a quarter of million disciplined and seasoned soldiers? Moreover, the Jews themselves were broken into factions, which fought and slaughtered each other as fiercely as their common enemy Rome. Vespasian, the leading Roman general, led a great army into Palestine, but was called to Rome to take the imperial throne, and left the conduct of the war to his son Titus. After a terrible siege, made more terrible by starvation and civil strife within the walls, the city was taken and destroyed.

3.13 Doctrinal System and Institution of the Church

The following could be considered as the doctrine and practice of the early Church. Hurlbut says that

- i). Baptism was everywhere the rite of initiation into the church, mainly by immersion; although there is definite mention, in 120 A.D., of baptism by pour
 - ii) The Lord's Day was generally observed, though not with strictness as a day absolutely set apart. As long as the church was mainly Jewish, the Hebrew Sabbath was kept; but as it became increasingly Gentile the first day gradually took the place of the seventh day. Before the end of St. Paul's ministry, the Church was already meeting on the first day of the week, and in the "Revelation" that day is called "The Lord's day".
 - iii) The Lord's Supper was universally observed. This began as a service in the home, like the Jewish Passover, out of which it was an outgrowth. But among the Gentile churches, the custom arose of celebrating it at a meeting of the church, as a supper to which each member brought some share of provision. St. Paul rebuked the church at Corinth for abuses that had crept into this method of observance. By the end of the century the Lord's Supper was everywhere a service held at the meeting-place of the Christians, but (probably on account of the persecutions) not in public. All, except the members of the church were excluded from this celebration, which was held as a "mystery".
 - iv) The recognition of Easter Sunday, as the anniversary of our Lord's resurrection was sanctioned and was regularly observed, but was not by this time acknowledged universally.

Also the following is the simple order of service of the early Church.

- i) The Old Testament Scriptures were read, and portions of the apostolic letters, also of the gospels.
- ii) The psalms of the Bible and Christian hymns were chanted
- iii) Prayers, unlike those in the synagogues, were spontaneous
- iv) Addresses were freely given by the member and visiting brethren.
- v) At the close of the service frequently the Lord's Supper was observed

In almost every aspect, the church of the first days was faultless. It was strong in faith and testimony, pure in character and abundant in love. But its one defect was lack of missionary zeal. It needed the stimulus of sharp persecution to send it forth on its world-wide mission; and that stimulus was soon received.

4.0 CONCLUSION

In this unit, you have learnt the definitions of Church History and the benefits one could derive by studying the subject. You have also learnt the facts about the birth, ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The last point was the formation of Christian Church that began on the day of Pentecost. Without mincing words, this Unit has aroused your interest in studying Church History.

5.0 SUMMARY

The following is a summary of the major points in the unit:

Church History began with the activities of Jesus Christ, the Rock, upon whom the church is built. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost was a clear manifestation of the approval of the Trinity that the Church of God is the agent of salvation. The Spirit of Unity in the Early Church made its witness effective.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. What are the four major benefits one can derive from the study of Church History?
2. When did the Church of Christ begin its history as a world movement?

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS

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UNIT 2 THE GROWTH AND EXPANSION OF THE EARLY CHURCH

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

From the first unit, you have acquired the knowledge of the birth of the Christian Church and her leaders who worked hard to nurture the infant Church. In this unit, you will study the growth and expansion of the early Church. One of the major points is the establishment of churches through the ministries of the Apostles in Samaria and Antioch. This unit also has an exciting account of Paul's missionary journeys and their joyous ends. Therefore, we need to encourage you to take notice of the successive stages of the expansion of the Early Church.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

After completing this unit, you should be able to:

- narrate the story of Stephen
- identify the contribution of Philip to the growth of the Christian Church
- narrate the invitation of Peter to Joppa and Caesarea
- narrate the first Council of the Apostolic Church at Jerusalem
- describe the supportive ministry of Barnabas to Saul
- analyze the four journeys made by Paul
- describe the persecution of Emperor Nero.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Stephen's Preaching, Death and Saul's Involvement in the Persecution

You will notice that the Christian Church that began in a small way, and then later became enlarged on the day of Pentecost harvested peoples of various backgrounds with diverse cultural heritage. As you read the sixth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, you will easily discover that the infant Church had a problem in her hands to resolve. The immediate problem was that of neglect or marginalization. There was a complaint in the church at Jerusalem, that in the distribution of the funds for the poor, the families of the Grecian Jews or Hellenists were neglected. The apostles called the church together, and proposed that a board of seven men be chosen for this service. This plan was adopted, and of the seven men appointed, the first named was Stephen, "a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit." Others were Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon Parmenas, and Nickolaus. They had these men stand before the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them. (Acts 6:5-6). Hurlbut said that, although Stephen was chosen for the church's social ministry, he soon

attracted the notice of people as a preacher. From the accusation against him when the Jewish rulers arrested him, and from the tenor of his address at the trial, it is evident that Stephen proclaimed Jesus as a Saviour not only for Jews, but also for Gentiles of every nation. Stephen was the first in the church to have the vision of a world-wide gospel; and it was that which caused him to become the first Christian martyr.

Among those who heard Stephen, and were aroused to anger by his utterances, thoroughly repugnant to the Jewish mind, was a young man from Tarsus, on the coast of Asia Minor, named Saul. He had been educated in Jerusalem under the great Gamaliel and was an accredited rabbi or teacher of the Jewish law. Saul approved of their stoning of Stephen and planned for more ruthless measures against the Christian Church. He therefore instigated others to join him in persecuting the young believers. The account of the havocs against the Church is described in Acts 8:1-3.

That day, a severe persecution began against the Church in Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout the countryside of Judea and Samaria. But Saul was ravaging the church by entering house after house; dragging off both men and women, and committed them to prison. (Acts 8:1-3). Hurlbut said that, the Jerusalem Church was broken up for the time, and its members scattered abroad. But wherever they went to such places as Samaria, Damascus, or even as far as Antioch in Syria, they became preachers of the gospel, and established churches. Thus did the fiery hate of Saul prove an aid to the expansion of the Church (Hurlbut: 1981).

3.2 The Ministry of Philip in Samaria

You will recall that, during the persecution at Jerusalem that was co-headed by Paul, the believers ran for their dear lives into every direction. As they scattered them throughout the region they preached the gospel and more souls were added into the fold. One of the displaced people was Philip. You should recall that he was one of the deacons elected to care for the poor in the church. He escaped to Samaria where he found refuge. Philip immediately proclaimed the Messiah to them as the Saviour and the Way, therefore his ministry was blessed and approved by the Lord. The crowd with one accord listened eagerly to what was said by Philip. They heard and saw the signs that the Lord God performed through him. Unclean spirits crying with loud shrieks came out of many who were possessed, and many others who were paralyzed or lame were cured. There was great joy in the city of Samaria and environs (Acts 8:5-8). Hurlbut described the Samaritans as a mixed people, who were neither Jews nor Gentiles and as a result were held in contempt by the Jews. The action of Philip who was a Grecian Jew preaching to Samaritans showed his freedom from the narrow Jewish spirit. Interestingly, Philip established a church at Samaria, which was duly recognized by the Apostles Peter and John. Therefore, Samaria became the first church outside the pale of Judaism, yet not quite a church of Gentile members. Philip after this preached and founded churches in the coast cities of Gaza, Joppa, and Caesarea. These were Gentile cities, but all having a large Jewish population. Here the gospel would of necessity come into contact with the heathen world.

3.3 Peter's Invitation to Joppa and Caesarea

As the Christian Church began to grow and expand, there came a need for coordination and supervision. Therefore, Apostle Peter went from one new group to another encouraging the new believers to be steadfast and have total commitment to their new found faith. In one of his visits, he came to "the saints living in Lydda",

where he found Aeneas, a man who had been bedridden for eight years, for he was paralyzed. Peter then called on Jesus Christ for an immediate release from the sickness. His prayer was answered as Aeneas got up to his feet. The news of that miracle spread around like wildfire throughout Lydda and Sharon and nearby villages, even to Joppa. Many converts joined the Church as a result of the sign.

Now in Joppa, there was a disciple called Tabitha, which in Greek was Dorcas. She became ill and died. Peter was in the same vicinity; he was called upon to minister to the church at Joppa. You should understand that the apostolic miracles were not to be displayed or showcased by the disciples. When signs and miracles happen, they are to strengthen the faith of members and to confirm the strength and power of the Almighty God. Peter promptly responded to the call and prayed for the restoration of the life of Tabitha. The Lord answered and Dorcas was brought back to life and many believed in the Lord (Acts 9:32-43). Interestingly, Peter continued preaching at Joppa for some days while resided with one Simon, a tanner. Hurlbut said that for Peter to stay with a tanner would show that Peter was already emancipated from the strict rules of Jewish custom; This portrayed that men of that trade were ceremonially "unclean". As stated above, Peter resided with Simon at Joppa where he continued with his itinerary. One day, he fell into a trance at noon and he saw the heaven opened and something like a large sheet coming down, being lowered to the ground by its four corners. In it were all kinds of four-footed creatures and reptiles and birds of the air. Then he heard a voice saying, "Get up, Peter; kill and eat". Peter refused bluntly. The voice said to Peter again, what God has made clean you must not call profane. As Peter was pondering upon the vision, the messengers from Cornelius arrived and delivered their message and the Lord told him to go with the delegation from Cornelius. Under direction of the Spirit, Peter went to Caesarea, preached the gospel to Cornelius and his friends, and received them into the church by baptism: the spirit of God testifying divine approval by an outpouring, similar to that on the Day of Pentecost. Thus a divine sanction was given to preaching the gospel to Gentiles and their acceptance in the church.

3.4 Saul's Conversion

Maybe you need to take your Bible now and read the ninth chapter of Acts of the Apostles, to acquaint yourself with the life of Saul who persecuted the Christian church at her infancy. Paul obtained a letter from the High Priest to punish Jews who were at Damascus, who still belong to the Way, and bring them bound to Jerusalem. Paul's opposition, according to Hurlbut, had been especially bitter against a doctrine, which made all men equal before God, where there is no more difference between Jews and Gentiles in His sight.

As Saul went for the onslaught of the believers, the Lord met with him on the road and he was arrested, as it were, by Him through a vision of light around him. That was the moment of his conversion. About this time, possibly just before Peter's visit to Caesarea, Saul, the persecutor, was accepted into the fellowship of the church. Immediately, he began preaching the crucified and risen Lord whom he met and spoke with on his way to Damascus. Saul at once adopted Stephen's views, and was a greater than Stephen in carrying onward the movement for a church open to all men, whether Jews or Gentiles. In all the history of Christianity no single conversion to Christ carried with it such momentous results to the whole world, as that of Saul the persecutor, afterward known as Paul the Apostle.

3.5 The Church at Antioch

Following the trends of events closely, you will soon understand the stages of the spread of the Early Church. As stated earlier, the initial persecution of the church

during the stoning of Stephen had aided the spread of the Gospel throughout Palestine. It was said that some of the members of the young church at Jerusalem escaped to Damascus, while others fled three hundred miles to Antioch, the capital of Syria, of which great province Palestine was a part. At Antioch these faithful members went into the Jewish synagogue, and there, gave their testimony to Jesus as the Messiah. It was also said that in every synagogue a place was set apart for Gentile worshippers. Many of these people heard the gospel at Antioch and embraced the faith of Christ; so that in that city a church grew up wherein Jews and Gentiles worshiped together as equals in privilege. Acts 11:22 said that when news of this condition, reached Jerusalem, the mother church was alarmed and sent a representative to examine this relation with the Gentiles. Fortunately, the choice of a delegate fell upon Barnabas, the broad-minded, open-hearted, and generous members of the church

He went to Antioch, and instead of condemning the church for its liberality he rejoiced in it, endorsed the movement, and stayed at Antioch to participate in it. Barnabas had shown his confidence in Saul before. The Bible says that Barnabas went to Saul's home in Tarsus, about a hundred miles from Antioch, mostly by water, brought Saul with him to Antioch, and made him an associate in the work of the gospel. It will be said also that the church at Antioch arose to such prominence that there for the first time the followers of Christ became known as "Christians" – a name applied not by Jews, but by Greeks, and found only three times in the New Testament. Interestingly, at that time, prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. One of them named Agabus stood up and predicted by the spirit that there would be a severe famine over the entire world and this took place during the reign of Claudius. Therefore, the disciples at Antioch sent relief to the poorer saints in Judea at the time of famine; and its leaders and teachers were eminent men in the early church (Hurlbut 1981).

3.6 The First Missionary Journey of Barnabas and Paul

The ministrations of Barnabas and Paul among the Gentiles encouraged the Christian Church to grow in leaps and bounds. Certainly, the journey of Barnabas and Paul was richly blessed with a bumper harvest of souls. The Gentiles were glad and praised the Lord for knowing Him, the only true God. Therefore, as many as have been called in to the light of the Son of God became believers, and the Word of God spread throughout the region (Acts 13:48-49). Prior to the above experience in the Church, Hurlbut said that the Gentile members of the church were only those who had themselves sought admission. But now, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and by the appointment of the elders, the two greatest leaders in the church at Antioch went forth on an evangelistic mission to other lands, seeking both Jews and Gentiles with the gospel. As you read the story of this first missionary journey you will notice certain features in the effort, which became typical of all the later enterprises of Apostle Paul. It was undertaken by two workers in unison, at first "Barnabas and Saul," but soon changed to "Paul and Barnabas," or "Paul and his company," showing Saul or Paul as the leading figure. Because of the socio-political structure of Palestine at that time, it was customary for a Jew to have two names: one would be Jewish and the other would be Roman or Greek. So for the Apostle, Saul was his Jewish name and Paul his Roman name. The two missionaries took with them as helper a younger man, John Mark, although he forsook them in the middle of their journey. It was also said that Barnabas and Paul chose as their principal fields of labor the large cities, visiting Salamis and Paphos in the island of Cyprus, Antioch and Iconium in Pisidia, Lystra and Derbe in Lycaonia. Wherever it was possible, they began their work by

preaching in the synagogue, for therein every Jew had a right to speak, and especially an accredited rabbi, as Paul, coming from the famous school of Gamaliel, would be welcome. Moreover, through the synagogue they would reach not only the devout Jews, but with them the serious, God-fearing Gentiles. At Derbe, the last city visited, they were quite near Antioch, from which they had set forth. But instead of passing through the Caecilian Gates and returning home, they turned westward, retraced their steps, revisited the churches which they had founded on their outward journey, and appointed over them elders according to the plan of the synagogue. You shall find these methods of work followed in all the after-journeys of Apostle Paul (Hurlbut 1981).

3.7 The Council at Jerusalem

The Council at Jerusalem could be considered as the first Council of the Christian Church where resolutions were arrived at in favour of the official extension of the Gospel to the Gentiles.

You would agree with me that in every society or organized group of people two types are always represented: the conservative, looking to the past, and the progressive, looking toward the future. It was said that the ultra Jewish element in the church held that there could be no salvation outside of Israel; hence, that all the Gentile disciples must receive circumcision and observe Jewish regulations (Acts 15:5). The progressive teachers led by Paul and Barnabas declared that the gospel was for Jews and Gentiles upon the same terms of faith in Christ without regard to the Jewish law. It was written that between these two parties a great controversy arose, threatening a division in the church. Finally a council was held in Jerusalem to consider the question of Gentile membership, and frame a ruling for the church. It is noteworthy that in this council not only the Apostles, but the elders, and "the whole church," were represented. Paul and Barnabas, with Peter and James, the Lord's brother, took part in the debate (Acts 15:16 -18). With this decision the period of transition from a Jewish Christian Church to a church for people of every race and land, was completed, and the gospel could now go forward on its ever-widening way. The outcome of that debate is as follows:

- (i) The Jewish ceremonial law was binding upon Jews only, and not upon Gentile believers in Christ.
- (ii) The Jews should not trouble the Gentiles who are turning to the Lord.
- (iii) The Gentiles should only abstain from things polluted by idols.
- (iv) They are to abstain from whatever has been strangled and from blood (Acts 15:20)
- (v) Therefore, it will be said that by the decision of the Council at Jerusalem, the church was free to enter upon a larger work for the bringing of all people, of every race, and in every land under the realm of Jesus Christ. Jewish members of the church were expected to continue in their obedience to the Jewish law, though such leaders interpreted the regulations broadly as St. Paul. But Gentiles could enter the Christian fold by simple faith in Christ and a righteous life, without submission to legal requirements (Hurlbut 1981).

3.8 The Second Missionary Journey of Paul (Acts 15:36 to 18:22)

It was said that after the Council at Jerusalem Paul set out on a second missionary journey. With Silas or Silvanus as his companion, he went forth from Syrian Antioch, visited again for the third time the churches on the mainland founded on his first journey, reached the coast of the

Aegean Sea at Troas, the site of ancient Troy, and crossed over into Europe, bringing the gospel to that continent. They established churches at Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea in the province of Macedonia; a small one in the cultured city of Athens, and a strong one at Corinth, the commercial metropolis of Greece. From Corinth Paul wrote two letters to the church at Thessalonica that were his earliest extant epistles. Then he sailed eastward across the Aegean Sea for a brief visit to Ephesus in Asia Minor; then over the Mediterranean to Caesarea; went up to salute the mother church at Jerusalem; and returned to his starting point at Syrian Antioch. It may surprise you that Paul in his journey of three years by land and sea had covered more than two thousand miles, and had planted the church in at least seven important cities – probably in many more – and had opened the imperial continent of Europe to the gospel. Without missing words, you would have seen God in action in the life of Paul. Therefore God can use anyone who will surrender himself or herself to the infilling of the Holy Spirit.

3.9 Paul's Third Missionary Journey (Acts 18:23-21:17)

According to Hurlbut, Paul rested for a brief period and then Paul began his third missionary journey again from Antioch, but destined to end in Jerusalem, with himself a prisoner in the hands of the Roman government. His only companion in the beginning was Timothy, who had joined him on his second journey, and remained to the end his faithful helper and "son in the gospel"; but quite a number of fellow-traveler were with him before the close of this journey. He began by visiting the churches in Syria and Cilicia, doubtless including his birthplace, Tarsus; then passed over his old route, calling for the fourth time upon the churches of his first journey. But after crossing the province of Phrygia, instead of turning northward to Troas, he went southward to Ephesus, the metropolis of Asia Minor. Here he stayed more than two years, (Acts 19:9-10), the longest at any place in all his journeys. God did extraordinary miracles through Paul so that when the handkerchiefs or aprons that had touched his body were brought to the sick, their diseases left them and the evil spirit came out of them. In addition, many of those who became believers confessed and disclosed their evil ways and sins. A number of those who practiced magic gathered their books and burnt them completely. The price of the magic and incantation books was fifty thousand silver coins. The word of the Lord grew mightily and prevailed. Paul's ministry won great success, resulting, not only in the founding of the church at Ephesus, but also in planting the gospel throughout the province. The seven churches of Asia were formed either directly or indirectly by Paul. Following his method of revisiting his churches, from Ephesus he sailed to Macedonia, called upon the disciples in Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea, also those in Greece. He was led to return by the same route for a final visit to those churches; sailed to Troas, and thence along the coast of Asia Minor. At Miletus, the seaport of Ephesus, he sent for the elders of that Church and gave to them a touching farewell address. He then continued his voyage again to Caesarea, and climbed up the mountains to Jerusalem. It was also recorded that Paul's third missionary journey ended at Jerusalem while worshiping in the Temple. He was attacked by a Jewish mob and subsequently rescued by Roman soldiers, and, for his own safety, placed in the castle named after Mark Anthony. It should be noted that the third missionary journey was as long as the second, except for the three

hundred miles between Jerusalem and Antioch. Its greatest outstanding results were the church at Ephesus, and the writing of two of the most important epistles of St. Paul; one to the church at Rome setting forth the principles of the gospel as preached by himself; and the other, the Epistle to the Galatians, where he identified the importance of "Grace" compared to "Law".

3.10 Paul's Fourth Missionary Journey (Acts 27, 28)

Perhaps it will interest you that, for more than five years after his arrest; Paul was a prisoner, for a short time in Jerusalem, then for three years in Caesarea, and for at least two years at Rome. As for his fourth missionary journey, his itinerary included the perilous voyage from Caesarea to Rome, and the equally perilous voyage from Caesarea to Rome as St. Paul's fourth journey. This shows that even when he was in bonds Paul was still a missionary, employing every opportunity to preach the gospel of Christ. The immediate cause of the voyage was his appeal as a Roman citizen from being tried by the Procurator of Judea to fair hearing at the Emperor's Court at Rome. His companions were Luke and Aristarchus. There was also on board a group of convicted criminals taken to Rome for slaughter in the gladiatorial games, soldiers to guard them, and sailors to work the ship. The biblical accounts said that on that long and perilous voyage, all these fellow-travellers with the apostle were preached to by him. Also that at Sidon, and Myra, and Crete, where the vessel paused, Paul was able to proclaim Christ to the people there. Happily, Paul won to the faith many in the island of Melita (Malta), where after the storm, they remained there for three months. (Acts 28:1-11) At last Paul arrived at Rome, the goal of his hopes for many years. Though he was a prisoner awaiting trial, he had the privilege of hiring his own house wherein he lived, though chained to a soldier. His first effort was, as always, to reach the Jews, and he held an all day meeting with them. On discovering that only a few of the Jews were willing to accept the gospel, he turned to the Gentiles. For two years his house was a church wherein many were converted including the soldiers of the Praetorian Guard. But his greatest work in Rome was the writing of four epistles, which are among the treasures of the church namely Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon. There is good reason to believe that after two years in prison, Paul was acquitted and set at liberty.

It could be said that Paul's three or four years of liberty was a continuation of his fourth missionary journey. He also visited Colosse and Miletus and the island of Crete, where he left Titus in charge of the churches; and Nicopolis on the Adriatic Sea, north of Greece. Tradition states that at this place he was arrested, and sent again to Rome, where he was martyred in 68 A.D. Three epistles were likely written at this period: They are Timothy, Titus, and Second Timothy, his last letter, written from his prison at Rome (Hurlbut 1981).

3.11 Emperor Nero's Persecution

It was said that, in the year 64 A.D. a large part of the city of Rome was destroyed in a great conflagration. It was generally believed that Nero, who could be described as the worst of all the Roman emperors was responsible for it. When Emperor Nero was charged with the crime by common report, he denied. And in order to clear himself, Nero declared that the Christians have set fire to the city in order to realize their belief that God is going to destroy the earth by fire.

Therefore the Emperor began a terrible persecution, where thousands of Christians were tortured and put to death, among them was Apostle Peter by crucifixion, in the year 67 A.D. and Apostle Paul by being beheaded, in the year 68 A.D. It was recorded by Hurlbut that it is one of the "the revenges of history," that the gardens of Nero, where

multitudes of Christians were burned as "living torches," while the emperor drove his chariot among them are now the seat of the Vatican palace, the home of the Roman Catholic pontiff, and of St. Peter's Church, the largest edifice of the Christian faith.

4.0 CONCLUSION

You are now concluding the study of an important period in the history of the Christian Church, which, although brief – only fifteen years, from about 35 to 50 A.D. – yet of paramount importance. At that time was settled the great question, whether Christianity should remain an obscure Jewish sect, or should become a wide open religion to the entire world. When this brief period began, the gospel was limited to the city of Jerusalem and the villages around it, and every member was an Israelite either by birth or adoption. But by 50 A. D when it ended, the church was deeply planted in Syria and Asia Minor, and was reaching out toward Europe. Also, its membership was no longer exclusively Jewish, but was predominantly Gentile. The language spoken in its assemblies in Palestine was Hebrew or Aramaic, but in a far wider area Greek was the tongue of its people. You have noticed the successive stages in this expanding movement. The constant struggles between the Jews and the Christian Gentiles are adequately mentioned. Finally, the voyage of Paul to Rome is well discussed and the great persecution of Emperor Nero was also treated.

5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, you have understood the following facts from this unit:

- The event that led to the selection of the first seven deacons.
- The contents of the sermon preached by Stephen.
- Paul of Tarsus and his involvement in the death of Stephen.
- The resultant effects of the preaching of Philip at Samaria.
- The resurrection of Dorcas by Peter at Joppa
- The conversion of Saul on the road to Damascus
- The significance of Antioch to the spread of Christianity
- Barnabas and Paul visited Gentiles
- Missionary journeys of Paul and his final voyage to Rome
- The first imperial persecution of Nero

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. What was the nature of the complaint in the Early Church at Jerusalem that led to the appointment of the first seven deacons?
2. How did Paul "get arrested" on the way to Damascus?
3. What was the Council at Jerusalem all about?
4. Who was the Emperor Nero?

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UNIT 3 PERSECUTION AND VICTORIES OF THE CHURCH

CONTENTS

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- 2.0 Objectives
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 - 3.2 Persecution of Emperor Trayan 98-161 A.D.
 - 3.3 Persecution of Emperor Marcus Aurelous 161-180 A.D.
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 - 3.5 The Joyous End of Imperial Persecutions
 - 3.6 The Freedom and its Abuses
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Readings

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The most prominent fact in the history of the church through the second and third centuries is the persecution of Christianity by the Roman emperors. While this condition was not continuous, it was often repeated for years at a time, and liable to break forth at any moment in terrible forms. It lasted in the fourth century until 313 A.D., when the Edict of Constantine, the first Christian emperor, ended all attempts to destroy the Church of Christ. The fact is remarkable that during this period some of the wisest and best of the emperors were the most active in the persecution of Christianity, while some of the worst emperors were lax in their opposition or remitted it altogether. Before narrating the history, let us investigate some of the Reasons why Christianity and Christians were so much persecuted by the reigning emperors until Constantine's edit of Milan in 313 AD. A number of causes may be named for the antagonism of the emperors to Christianity.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- identify the causes of imperial persecutions
- list the stages of persecutions
- state the importance of the Edict of Emperor Constantine
- describe the joyous end of the persecution
- list the resultant abuses of the freedom.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 The Causes of Imperial Persecution

3.1.1 Exclusiveness of the Nature of Christianity

Perhaps, one of the most important reasons for the imperial persecution of the Christian Church was the nature of its exclusiveness. For instance, Christianity opposes all worship except to his own God. On the contrary, however, animism was hospitable to new forms and objects of worship. There are many objects of worship in Animism and the religion would

not object to accommodating new objects of worship, not even Jesus Christ". However, the disciples rejected anything that may demean the esteem of Jesus Christ. It was said that, one Emperor wished to place a statue of Christ in the Pantheon, a circular temple in Rome, where all the important gods were worshiped. But the Christians rejected the offer with scorn. They would not have their Christ recognized merely as one of many deities. Hurlbut said that, when the people of a city or a province desired to promote trade or immigration, they would build temples to the deities worshiped in other lands, in order that the citizens of these lands could have a place of worship. Thus in Pompeii we find a temple to Isis, an Egyptian goddess, erected to increase the commerce of Pompeii with Egypt, and make Egyptian traders feel at home.

3.1.2 Business Interest

Another factor that led to the persecution of the Christian Church was that of business interest. You will certainly understand that the love of money is the root of all evils. Incidentally, business interests often promoted or excited the persecuting spirit. Could you remember the experience of Paul at Ephesus when he was thrown into danger of death through the riot incited by Demetrius the silversmith? Unfortunately, very often the rulers were influenced to persecute the Christians by people whose financial interest were effected by the progress of the church; such as the priests and lay-servants of the idol temples, image makers, sculptors, architects of the temples, and others whose living depended upon the heathen worship. Therefore, in those days, it was not difficult for those who hated the Christians to raise the cry, "The Christians to the lions!" when such people found their craft in danger, or covetous officials longed for the property of wealthy Christians.

3.1.3 Emperor Worship

The refusal of Christians to involve themselves in Emperor Worship was another reason that led to their persecution. They held unto, "Thou shall have no other god beside me" You should not make any graven image and you should not worship them. These were the commandments written and observed by the early Christians. Therefore, they could not subscribe to statue worship. It was said that, in some prominent place of every city, images of the reigning emperor are erected and incense was offered to the images as to a god. It may be that in one of St. Paul's earliest epistles there is a guarded reference to this form of idolatry. Christians refused to render worship to such images because they already worship Jesus. As a result of their resolve not to worship images and other gods, they were referred to by the state and other people as disloyal and angry people who would cause a revolution if not checked properly.

3.1.4 Equality in the Christian Church

The practice of equality among the Church members also invited persecution to the Church. Christians believed that they were made by God and also equally redeemed by the blood of Jesus and that at the foot of the cross, all ground is level. Therefore, Christianity looked upon all men as equal. The religion made no distinction in its membership and its services. Interestingly, a slave might be chosen as bishop in the Church. This was abhorrent to the minds of the nobles, the philosophic, and the ruling classes. For the reason deduced above, the Christians were regarded as "levelers" anarchists, and saboteurs of the social order already in place hence they were categorized as enemies of the state.

3.1.5 Idol Worship

Christians had conflicts with heathens who engaged themselves in idol worship. True believers abhorred all forms of idols and rejected worshipping idols. It was said that at

Rome, by then, idol worship was interwoven with life in every department. Images were erected in every house to receive adoration; libations were poured out to the gods at every festival. In addition with every civic or provincial ceremony the images were worshiped. The Christians found it difficult to take part in such forms of worship. Hence the heathens regarded them as unsocial, morose, atheists, having no gods, and haters of their fellow men. Without question, such an unfavorable perception by people in general, was but a step to persecution.

3.1.6 Judaism Recognized

You need to understand that Christianity was not a recognized religion until about 313 A.D. Therefore, at the commencement of the practice of Christianity, Christians were regarded as somehow connected with the Jews, and since the government recognized Judaism, Christianity was able to exist and operate unnoticed under the umbrage of Judaism” without being persecuted. This was because Christianity shared some similarities with Judaism but after the destruction of Jerusalem, in 70 A.D., Christianity stood alone with no laws to protect its followers from the hatred of their enemies, as the church has completely severed its relationship with Judaism. It thus became an illegal underground sect. Consequently:

- i) They met either before sunrise or at night, often in caves or catacombs underground.
- ii) The secret meetings of Christians aroused suspicion.
- iii) False reports went abroad of lascivious or murderous rites performed among them.
- iv) Moreover, the autocratic government of the empire was jealous of all secret cults or societies, fearing disloyal aims.
- v) The celebration of the Lord’s Supper, from which outsiders were excluded, was often made a ground for accusation and persecution.

3.2 Persecution of Emperor Trajan

Now that you have known some reasons for the persecution of the Christian church, it will then be appropriate for you to study a few major imperial persecutions of the Christian Church from the reign of Nero to the time of Constantine in 313 A.D. During the second and third century, and especially in the opening years of the fourth century, to the year 313 A.D., the Christian religion was forbidden and its votaries were outlawed. Yet most of the time the sword of persecution was sheathed, and the disciples were scarcely interrupted in their religious observances. During the periods of comparative rest they were at most time liable to sudden danger, whenever a provincial governor saw it fit to execute the edicts, or when a prominent Christian became too bold for their tolerance. He further stressed that there were several periods, of shorter or longer duration, when throughout the empire, the church was exposed to the fiercest persecution. We have noticed the persecutions in the first century, by Nero (66 – 68) and Domitian (90 – 05). He further contended that these were simply outbreaks of frenzy and hate, with no

reason except the rage of a tyrant who would roar for a moment. But from 250 to 313 A.D. the church was subjected to a systematic, relentless, empire-wide series of attempts by the government to crush the ever-growing faith.

It was also said that from the reign of Trajan to that of Antoninus Pius (98 – 161 A.D.) Christianity was not recognized, yet was not severely persecuted. Under the four emperors, Nerva, Trajan, Hadrian and Antoninus Pius (who with the next in succession, Marcus Aurelius, were known as "the five good emperors"), no Christian could be arrested without a definite and proven complaint, and the spirit of the age was to ignore the Christian religion. Yet when charges were made and Christians refused to recant, the rulers were compelled, even unwillingly, to enforce the law and put them to death.

Perhaps, one of the most prominent among the martyrs to the faith during those reigns was Simeon or Simon. According to Mark 6: 3, he was the successor of James as the head of bishop of the church in Jerusalem. He was said to have attained the age of one hundred and twenty years. However, during the reign of the Emperor Trajan, He was crucified by order of the Roman governor of Palestine in 107 A. D. The second prominent matter to consider is that of Ignatius, bishop of Antioch in Syria. He was said to be more than willing to be killed for the sake of Jesus Christ and that of the gospel. Therefore, on his way to Rome, Ignatius wrote letters to the churches, hoping that he might not lose the honor of dying for his Lord. He was thrown to wild beasts in the Roman amphitheatre, around 106 and 110 A. D. Although the persecution during these reigns was less severe than that falling upon the church soon afterward, you should however, be aware that there were many martyrs beside these two distinguished men of the Cross.

3.3 Persecution of Emperor Marcus Aurelius

Having read about the persecutions under Emperor Trajan you may now study the second stage of persecution with better understanding. It was said that the very best of the Roman emperors, and one of the finest ethical writers, was Marcus Aurelius, who reigned from 161 to 180 A. D. His equestrian statue still stands before the site of the ancient Capitol in Rome. Though he was a good man and a just ruler, he was a bitter persecutor of the Christians. It was confirmed that Marcus Aurelius sought to restore the old simplicity of Roman life, with the ancient religion. He thereafter opposes the Christians as innovators. Therefore for those reasons, many thousands of the believers in Christ were beheaded or devoured by wild beasts in the arena. You, however, should acquaint yourself with only prominent matters among the multitude of the martyrs during those years. The first one to consider was Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna in Asia Minor, who was killed in 155 A. D. We have the following testimony in favor of his courageous stand that when Polycarp was brought before the governor and commanded to curse the name of Jesus Christ, he answered, "Eighty and six years have I served him and He has done me nothing but good; and how could I curse him, my Lord and Savior!" The record said that few minutes after that heroic act, Polycarp was burnt to death.

Perhaps the second martyr you should know was Justin Martyr. It was said of him that he had been a philosopher, and continued teaching after his acceptance of Christianity. He was considered to be one of the ablest men of his time, and a foremost defender of the faith. Accordingly, his books, still extant, give much valuable information concerning the church in the middle of the second century. Perhaps, his martyrdom took place at Rome in 166 A. D.

You know that God works in wondrous ways and no one can understand his wisdom. It may interest you to note that after the death of Marcus Aurelius, 180 A. D., a period of confusion followed, with weak and worthless emperors, who were too busy with civil wars or their own

pleasures to pay much attention to the Christians. But after the relative peace of twenty-two years, there reigned one of the wicked Emperors. It was said that Septimius Severus began in the year 202 a fierce persecution, which lasted until his death in 211 A. D. Severus was described as morbid and melancholy in nature. He was a strong disciplinarian, striving vainly to restore the decaying religions of the time. It was also said of his reign that everywhere persecution raged against the church, but it was the most severe in Egypt and North Africa. One of the martyrs was Leonidas, the father of the great theologian Origen who was beheaded in Alexandria. Also, in Carthage, Perpetua, a notable lady with her faithful slave Felicitas, was torn in pieces by wild beasts 203 A. D. It was said that Emperor Septimius Severus, earned for himself the title “Anti-Christ” because of his bitterness against the Church.

Happily, for the next forty years, after the death of Septimus Severus the Church was left unnoticed under the numerous emperors who followed in rapid succession. For instance, Emperor Caracalla (211 – 217 A. D.) conferred citizenship upon every person who is not a slave throughout the empire. Incidentally this was a benefit to the Christians, as they could no longer be crucified or thrown to wild beasts, unless they were slaves. But very sad to note that with the reign of Decius that lasted for only three years (249 – 251) fierce persecution broke out anew. Fortunately, shortly after his death, the slaughter of Christians ended for a time. Interestingly, more than fifty years of comparative rest followed the death of Decius, although there came at times, brief periods of persecution. It was recorded that under Valerian, in 257 A. D., one of the Church Fathers, celebrated Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage and Roman Bishop Sextus, who was one of the great writers and church leaders of the period, were put to death.

However, the last, most systematic and most terrible persecution of all the series took place in the reign of Diocletian and his successors, from 303 to 310 A. D. Hurlbut confirmed that in the series of edicts it was ordered that every copy of the Bible should be burnt, that all churches – which had arisen, throughout the empire during the half-century of comparative rest from persecution – should be torn down, that all who would not renounce the Christian religion should lose their citizenship and be outside the protection of law. He added that in some places the Christians assembled in their churches, which were set on fire and burned with all the worshipers within their walls. It is said that the emperor, Diocletian, erected a pillar to commemorate the extermination of Christianity– yet within seventy years Christianity became the official religion of the court, and the empire. Happily soon, after the above atrocities, Diocletian abdicated the throne in 305 A.D. Even, though, Diocletian’s subordinates and successors, Galerius and Constantius, continued the persecution for six years though less in its intensity. Finally Constantine, the son of Constantius, as co-emperor, who was not at that time a professing Christian, issued his memorable Edict of Toleration 313 A. D. By this law Christianity was sanctioned, its worship was made lawful, and all persecution ceased, not to be renewed while the Roman Empire endured.

3.4 The Edict of Emperor Constantine

Perhaps, you should understand the historical background to the Edict of Milan of 313 A.D. Church historians believed that shortly after the abdication of Diocletian, in 305 A.D., four aspirants after the imperial crown were at war. The two most powerful rivals were Maxentius and Constantine whose armies met in battle at the Milvan Bridge over the Tiber, ten miles from Rome, in 312 A.D. Maxentius represented the

old heathen persecuting element while Constantine was friendly to the Christians although at that time not a professed believer. It was said that Constantine claimed to have seen in the sky a shining cross bearing the motto, "Hoc Signo Vincas" – "By this sign thou shalt conquer," and afterward adopted it as the insignia of his army. The victory was with Constantine, and Maxentius was drowned in the river. Soon afterward, 313 A.D., Constantine promulgated his famous Edict of Toleration, which officially put an end to the persecutions. However, not until 323 A.D. did Constantine become sole emperor and then Christianity was favored. Interestingly, the Emperor Constantine's personal character was not perfect. As another human being with defects, it was ascribed to him that though generally just, he was occasionally cruel and tyrannical. It has been said that, "the reality of his Christianity was better than its quality." It was said that he delayed his baptism until just before his death, in the prevalent opinion of his time that baptism washed away all sins previously committed. Without any dispute, Emperor Constantine was certainly a wise politician, if not a great Christian; for he had the insight to ally himself with the movement, which held the future of his empire.

3.5 The Joyous End of Imperial Persecutions

In the period you are now studying, the most striking fact, and the most potent for good and also for evil, was the victory of Christianity. You will recall that during the course of your study, in the year 305 A.D. when Diocletian abdicated the imperial throne, the Christian religion was sternly prohibited-its profession was punished with torture and death, and against it all the power of the state was called into exercise. However, in, less than eighty years afterward, in 380 A.D., the Emperor Theodosius made Christianity to be recognized as the official religion of the Roman Empire, and a Christian emperor held supreme authority over the Empire.

Therefore it should be stated that from this sudden change of relations between the empire and the Church, world-wide and far-reaching results followed. As stated above, some of them are good and evil, both to the church and the state. Now you can readily see herein the new attitude of the government brought benefits to the cause of Christianity.

- i) The first thing to notice was that all persecutions of the Christians ceased at once and forever. For more than two hundred years. At no time had Christians been safe from accusation and death, and for such a long period, as we have seen. But from the publication of Constantine's Edict, in 313 A.D., until the Roman Empire ended, the sword of persecution was not merely sheathed; it was buried.
- ii) Secondly, things that will catch your attention were the church buildings that were restored and re-opened everywhere. In the apostolic period, meetings had been held in private houses or in hired halls. Afterward, during the times of cessation in the persecutions, church buildings began to arise. As mentioned previously, that in the last persecution under Diocletian, many of these building were destroyed and the authorities seized others. All left standing was now restored, and the cities reimbursed the societies for those, which had been demolished. It is said that from this time the Christians were free to build churches; and edifices began to arise everywhere. In their plan, they followed the form and took the name of the Roman *basilica* or court-room: a rectangle divided into aisles by rows of pillars, having at one end a semi-circular platform with seats for the clergy.

Constantine set the example of building large churches in Jerusalem, Bethlehem, and his new capital, Constantinople.

- iii) The third benefit of the Imperial Edict of 313 A.D. was the cessation of the official sacrifices. The record has it that, although the worship was still tolerated, the officials' sacrifices ceased. The fact that such a radical change away from the universal customs celebrated by the societies and communities could be so speedily accomplished shows that the official sacrifices were not being observed voluntarily but compulsively.
- iv) The fourth gain was that temples once used for heathen worship were converted to churches for the worship of God. It was noticed that in many places the temples were converted to churches. This was especially the case in cities. While in remote country places heathen beliefs and worship lingered for generations. The word "pagan" originally meant "country dweller," but it came to mean, and still means "heathen."
- v) The other benefit from the edict was that the Church started receiving financial support from the State. You will remember that throughout the empire the temples of gods had been supported mainly from the public treasury. These endowments were now bestowed upon the churches and the clergy. At first gradually, but soon more generally and more liberally, the public funds were enriching the church, and the bishops, priests, and other officials in the Christian worship were receiving their support from the State. That however, could be considered a welcome endowment to the church, but eventually was considered a questionable benefit.
- vi) Perhaps, one of the most important benefits was the new status that was accorded clergymen. By the virtue of their sacred office, clergymen were soon exempted from public duties obligatory upon all citizens. They were set free from taxes; all accusations against clergy were tried before ecclesiastical courts. Soon the clerical office became a privileged office rising above the law of the land.
- vii) The last gain to consider is the observance of Sunday the first day of the week which was proclaimed as the day of rest and of worship; and its observance soon became general throughout the empire. For instance in 321 A.D., Constantine forbade the courts to be held on Sunday, except for the purpose of giving freedom to slaves; and on that day soldiers were commanded to omit their daily military exercise. But the public games were continued on Sunday, tending to make it more a holiday than holy day.

From the recognition of Christianity as a favored religion many gains came to people as well as to the church. One of them was the spirit of the new religion that was infused into many of the ordinances enacted by Constantine and his immediate successors. However, in spite of the successes above, the period of the religious toleration also ushered in a lot of excesses that eventually resulted into certain changes, though some of them have been interpreted to be abuses in the Church.

3.6 Changes and Abuses associated with the Freedom granted Christianity

Perhaps as stated above, while the triumph of Christianity resulted in much that was good, inevitably the unification of the State and the Church also brought in its train, many evils.

- (i) The first thing to consider was the establishment of Christianity, as the state religion since the Emperor became a Christian.
- (ii) Everybody sought membership in the church and nearly everybody was received. Both good and bad, sincere seekers after God and hypocritical seekers after gain, rushed into the communion.
- (iii) Coupled with that mad rush was that ambitious, worldly and unscrupulous men sought office in the church for social and political influence.
- (iv) Therefore without mincing words, the moral tone of Christianity in power was far below that which had marked the same people under persecution.
- (v) The other evil effect was that the services of worship increased in splendor but were less spiritual and hearty than those of former time.
- (vi) The forms and ceremonies of paganism gradually crept into the Christian worship.
- (vii) In addition, some of the old heathen feasts became church festivals with change of name and of worship
 - (viii) About 405 A.D. images of saints and martyrs began to appear in the churches, and they were adored, and worshiped.
 - (ix) The adoration of the Virgin Mary was substituted for the worship of Venus and Diana.
 - (x) The Lord's Supper became celebrated as a sacrifice than as a memorial.
 - (xi) Thus the office holders of the position of Elder were being elevated from being preachers to priests.
 - (xii) The Church began to conform to the practices of the world than for the world to conform to the ideals and virtues in the Church.
 - (xiii) The humility and saintliness of an earlier age was succeeded by ambition, pride, and arrogance, among churchmen.

With the above picture, you could see that the tide of worldliness swept uncontrolled over many professed disciples of their lowly Lord. They joined the world and lost their savor. However, notwithstanding we have those of pure spirit like Monica the mother of Augustine and the faithful ministers such as Jerome and John Chrysostom.

4.0 CONCLUSION

Having gone through this unit, you would have noticed that persecution of the Church aided the spread of Christianity. You might have also observed that Christians made it a part of their life style to suffer martyrdom. It was becoming a fashion for one to lay down his life for the sake of the gospel. You have also studied the circumstances that led to the freedom granted the Christian Church in 313 A.D., 321 A.D. and 380 A.D. You have also noticed that series of abuses crept into the church. Hurlbut said that, if Christianity could have been allowed to develop normally without state-control, and the State could have continued free from the dictation of the Church, both State and Church would have been the better by dwelling apart. But the Church and the State became one when Christianity was adopted as the religion of the empire, and out of the unnatural union arose two evils, one in the eastern, and the other in the western provinces. In the East, the State dominated the Church until it lost all energy. In the West, as we shall see, the Church gradually usurped power over the State, and the result was a contention between the Church and the State

5.0 SUMMARY

Without any shade of doubt, you are now better informed of the following points from your study of this unit:-

- 1) Major causes of the imperial persecution
 - (a) Exclusiveness of the nature of Christianity
 - (b) Business interest
 - (c) Emperor worship
 - (d) Idol worship
 - (e) Recognition of Judaism
- 2) Persecution of Emperor Trajan 98-161
- 3) Persecution of Emperor Marcus Aurelius 161-180 A.D.
- 4) The edict of Emperor Constantine 313 A.D.
- 5) The benefits of the freedom granted the Church:
 - (a) Persecution came to an end.
 - (b) Church buildings were restored back to Christians and new ones were opened.
 - (c) The official sacrifice ceased.
 - (d) The Church began receiving grants from the State.
 - (e) The observance of Sunday: it was made an official day of rest
 - 6) The abuses of the freedom
 - (a) The establishment of Christianity as the State religion.
 - (b) People flocked into the church for public recognition, but not for salvation.
 - (c) Christians soon clamour for church positions.
 - (d) Worship services became worldly and less spiritual.
 - (e) Practice of veneration of saints was observed in the church.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. What were the major causes of the Imperial Persecution of the Christian Church?
2. Discuss the changes the Edict of Emperor Constantine 313 A.D brought to the Christian Church.

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UNIT 4 THE NEW TESTAMENT CANON, HERESIES, AND DOCTRINAL DEVELOPMENT

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 New Testament Defined
 - 3.2 The Origin of the New Testament
 - 3.3 Contents of the New Testament
 - 3.4 The Division of the Bible into Chapters and Verses
 - 3.5 Canonization of the Books of the New Testament
 - 3.6 Moratoria Fragment

- 3.7 Sects or Heresies
 - 3.7.1 The Gnostics
 - 3.7.2 The Ebionites
 - 3.7.3 Manichaeans
 - 3.7.4 The Montanists
- 3.8 Beliefs of the Early Christian Church
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Readings

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This unit deals with the 27 books of the New Testament, how they were written, handed over to the Christian Church, and became tools for instructions. You will also learn about how the Church Fathers arrived at the collection of books currently in New Testament. Also in this unit, you will be introduced to the simple form of the Christian worship of the first three centuries.

The issue of false teachers in the early church who, went about with their strange doctrines will also be discussed.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- identify most of the authors of the books of the New Testament.
- describe the circumstances surrounding the production of the book
- identify the factors that led to Canonization of the New Testament books and its stages
 - describe the stages of canonization
 - describe the Gnostic heresy
 - describe the Ebionite heresy
 - describe the Manichaean heresy
 - describe the Montanist heresy
 - state the simple doctrine or belief of the Early Church.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 New Testament Defined

The New Testament Canon is referred to as the 27 books that are general accepted as the genuine works of the disciples of Jesus Christ and others who heard about Jesus' ministry and cared to write it down. These works are known as the Gospel books. The gospels books are of Mathew, Mark, Luke and John. There is also the the book of the Acts of the Apostles. The New Testament also included the Epistles by the Apostles such as Apostles Paul, John, Peter, Jude, and James. as well as the book of the the Hebrews. Perhaps, you should know the origin of the word "Testament". The Bible Encyclopedia says that the name Testamentum which was erroneously adopted in the Old Latin version as a translation for the Greek "diatheke" was used in the Septuagint (LXX) as a rendering for the Hebrew "berith" which means "covenant". Therefore, the germ of the idea of an old and new covenant seems to have been found in Paul's reference to the reading of the old covenant in 2 Corinthians 3:14, RSV. So far as is known, the first Christian writer to use the designation "Novum Testamentum", "New Testament", was Tertullian (60-230 A.D.) Afterwards, the usage was adopted and generally accepted by other Christian writers (The SDA Bible Dictionary Vol. 8, 1979).

3.2 The Origin of the New Testament

After the definition of the New Testament, the next thing for you to know is the origin of the 27 books and their authors. Hence, the need for the following detailed study about their production needs to be considered. The earliest documents in the NT, however, in the judgments of today's scholars, are some of Paul's letters. In them there is no reference to any written Gospel, and it is believed that most of them were written before the gospels. The Biblical evidence suggests that the bulk of these letters were dictated rather than actually penned by the apostle Paul. He would, however, at the end write a personal greeting and gives his own authenticating signature, as suggested by the conclusion of 2 Thess: "I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand. This is the mark in every letter of mine; it is way I write" (Ch. 3:17, RSV; cf. 1 Cor 16:21). Unfortunately, the original autographs of all these letters, as of all the other books of the Bible, have been lost. However, the first letter written to the Thessalonians (1 Thess.) is usually regarded as the earliest of Paul's letters. It is said that the book was written from Corinth about A.D. 51. Second Thessalonians (2 Thess.) followed a few months later. The two great Corinthian letters were produced about A.D. 57, and Galatians and Romans between A.D. 57 and 58. The so-called prison epistles, Colossians, Philemon, Ephesians, and Philippians were written while Paul was a prisoner of Rome, between A.D. 61 and 63. Therefore, on the basis of the theory of a second imprisonment in Rome, the Pastoral letters (1 Timothy, Titus and 2 Timothy) would be dated still later, between A.D. 64 and 66. These letters reveal Paul's sense of authority. He writes the Corinthians, "If anyone thinks that he is a prophet or spiritual, he should acknowledge that what I am writing to you is a command of the Lord" (1 Cor 14: 37, RSV). Whoever disregards the instructions he gives, he writes the Thessalonians, "disregards not man but God" (1 Th. 4:8, RSV). He believes that he has the Spirit of God (1 Cor 7:40). He was not only an apostle chosen and commissioned by the risen Christ (Acts 9:1,2) but a prophet, as well, who had received many visions and revelations of the Lord (Acts 9:15, 22:15; 26:16-18; Rom 1:1; 1 Cor 9:1,2). In addition, these letters constitute a new and distinctive type of religious literature. They have the outward form of an ordinary Greek letter. In the hands of the great apostle the usual epistolary form became a powerful means of religious inspiration and instruction. Even Paul's enemies admitted: "His letters are weighty and strong" (2 Cor 10:10, RSV). They were, and still are, a forceful and powerful means of spreading the Christian faith.

Although the exact date of the production of the Gospels is not known, it apparently was not before the sixties of the First Century. Most scholars today believe that Mark (Mk.) was the earliest and John (Jn.) is the latest of the four Gospels. While Mark was not one of the 12 apostles, he was, according to early Christian writers, a companion and interpreter of Simon Peter. In addition, we were told that John Mark was also closely associated with the Early Church in Jerusalem, because his mother's home was a gathering place for Christian (Acts 12:12). According to early Christian tradition, Mark got much of the information for his Gospel from the keen-eyed observations and recollections of Simon Peter. This Gospel was written in Rome to preserve the deeds and the words of Jesus, in part, at least, as Peter proclaimed them.

The Gospel according to Mathew was probably written in Antioch in Syria. It was based largely upon a collection of the sayings of Jesus, probably written down by Apostle Mathew himself, plus the material found in Mark. Interestingly, the Gospel according to Luke was written particularly for Greek readers by Luke, the beloved physician and travel companion of Paul. It is the first volume of a narrative on the beginnings of Christianity from the birth of John the Baptist to the 2-years'

imprisonment of Paul in Rome (A.D. 61-63). Scholars refer to this 2-volume work as Luke-Acts of the Apostles (Lk. – A cts). Luke was not an eyewitness (Lk 1:1-4).

Toward the end of the First Century, John, the last surviving apostle of Jesus in the days of His flesh, recorded his remembrances of Jesus' life and sayings, together with his meditations on them, in such a way as to supplement the earlier Gospels. This Gospel has appropriately been called "Love's Memory of Love Incarnate." (S.D.A. Bible Encyclopedia Vol. 8).

3.3 Contents of the New Testament

You need to know that the Gospels are books of faith containing the good news of God's provision for man's salvation through Jesus Christ, while the Acts of the Apostles presents an account of the beginnings of the Christian Church. Also Paul's letters were originally written to specific churches and individuals to meet particular religious needs, but under the inspiration of God they have had abiding value for all Christians in all ages. And without any doubt, the same is true of the general epistles of Peter, James, John, and Jude. The book of Revelation, with its symbolism, presents the final victory of Christ and His kingdom over the forces of evil. These books though written in the First Century, have had a message for Christians in every age, and speak with special force today to you.

It is said that the majority of New Testament scholars throughout Christian history have agreed that the original language of the NT was Greek. However, to many of the writers of the New Testament, Greek was a secondary language, hence a few scholars have advocated that the 4 Gospels and part of Acts were originally written in Aramaic, the native tongue of Jesus and the Apostles.

Unfortunately, it is said that the autographs, that is, the original documents in the authors' own handwritings, have all disappeared. These were written probably on papyrus, a fragile substance (*see* Writing Materials) that could not survive long in damp climates. Of the copies of these autographs only a few from the first 3 centuries, have survived. Before the age of printing, copies were laboriously written out, such copies being called manuscripts (Latin *manuscriptum*, "written by hand"). But since there are no perfect copyists, there are no two manuscripts of the NT exactly alike. Gradually, through repeated copying, various mistakes crept into the text of the NT; however, there was none of so serious a nature as to affect any major doctrine. Where variant readings exist it is the task of the modern scholar to determine if possible the original authentic reading. This is the science of textual criticism, and you may join hands to authenticate – original manuscript.

3.4 The Division of the Bible into Chapters and Verses

Other Bible Encyclopedia has furnished the following information about the division of the Bible into chapters and verses. It is said that, originally the books of the Bible were not divided into chapters and verse. Divisions of the book of the NT into various sections were made as early as the 4th cent. Our modern chapter divisions were made in the early 13th century by Stephen Langton, of the University of Paris and afterward, Archbishop of Canterbury. Verse divisions were not made until the age of printing. It is also confirmed that no Greek manuscript has them. However, in 1551, Robert Estienne, while making a horseback journey from Paris to Lyons, divided his Latin New Testament into 7,959 verses. It is said that his object in making the verses was apparently twofold. Firstly, he was preparing a concordance to the NT which his son Henry finally published in 1594, and hence desired small divisions for ready reference. Secondly, he was preparing to publish a NT with the Greek in the center, and Erasmus' Latin translation on one side Jerome's on the other, the verse divisions of which would afford a

ready comparison of the exact words. Henry Estienne says that his father did the work *inter equitandam*, while riding", which probably means during intervals on the journey. If the verses were actually made while he was on horseback some of the unfortunate divisions may be due to the jogging of the horse at the wrong place. Estienne's 4th edition of the Greek NT, which appeared in 1551 in 2 small volumes at Geneva, was the first to contain the verse divisions. The earliest English NT to have them was William Whittingham's translation of 1557, published at Geneva.

3.5 Canonization of the Books of the New Testament

The Greek word "kanon" means "measuring rod". Its technical usage in the church was to describe the books read publicly in the congregations and regarded as having special authority. The early Christians accepted as reliable, only these books written by an apostle or a companion of an apostle. To be recognized as canonical a document had to have a wide acceptance among Christians throughout the Mediterranean world. They judged a work on the basis of content, its inner consistency, its harmony with the rest of Scripture, and its general harmony with Christian experience.

Hurlbut said that the establishment of these books, as the canon or rule of faith, possessing divine authority, was not immediate. He added that not all these books were accepted everywhere as inspired Scripture.

Some of them, notably Hebrews, James, II Peter and Revelation, were accepted in the East, but rejected for many years in the West. He explained that, on the other hand some books that are not part of the books in the Bible we read today were accepted and read in the East, such as the Shepherd of Hermas, the Epistle of Barnabas, the Teaching of the Twelve Apostles, and the Apocalypse of Peter. By slow degree the New Testament books as we now have them took the rank of Scripture, and the other books dropped out of use in the churches. Hurlbut argued that the Councils that were held from time to time did not choose the books to form the canon; they ratified the choice already made among the churches. No precise date can be given for the full recognition of the New Testament as it is at present, but it cannot be placed earlier than 300 A.D. (Hurlbut, 1981).

The Bible Encyclopedia also gives further insight to the development of the New Testament Canon. It is said that by the beginning of the second century, at any rate, a collection of Paul's writings, bearing the name *Apostolos*, "The Apostle," began to circulate. The letter from the church at Rome to the church at Corinth, most probably written by Clement toward the end of the last decade of the first century, contains the admonition, "Take up the epistle of the blessed apostle Paul...".

It is clear, then, that by the middle of the second century, two great collections of Christian documents had been formed: the Gospel and letters of Paul. When the 4 (four) Gospels became a single corpus, Acts was separated from Luke's 2-volume work and left by itself. But it shared the same authority and prestige as Luke's Gospel. Besides, it provided the sequel to the Gospels, as well as gave an appropriate introduction to Paul's letters. Hence it became the connecting link between the 2 collections. These 2 collections, with Acts as the vital link between them, constitute the solid core of the NT canon.

It is also said that, the letters of Paul evidently formed the literary pattern for the 7 other epistles: Jas, 1 and 2 Pet, 1, 2 and 3 Jn, and Jude. These so-called catholic, or general, epistles apparently made their canonicity individually and were recognized. There is no evidence that they were formed into another collection. Rather they seem to have been individually added to the *Apostle* as their canonicity was recognized. Revelation is in a category by itself, though after presenting the introductory vision of the transcendent Christ, it contains seven (7) letters addressed to churches in Asia Minor. The writer was conscious of being a prophet and that his messages were a product of divine revelation (Rev. 22:6,7). It was therefore to be read publicly in church (ch 1:3). Nevertheless it was not at once universally accepted as canonical.

Again, it is stated that the appearance of heretics and heretical books in the church hastened the process of canonization. Marcion, about A. D. 140, sought to reform the church, which in his view had become polluted with Judaism. He completely rejected the OT and held that even the teachings of the Twelve Apostles were contaminated with Jewish ideas. Therefore, according to him, the only genuine apostle, he held, was Paul. Hence he formed a canon consisting of Luke (the Gospel), purged of its Jewish accretions, plus ten epistles of Paul (the *Apostolikon*), excluding the pastorals and Heb. To these he added a treatise of his own called *Antitheses*. Without missing words Marcion's limited canon forced the church to take a stand on the matter of religious books. The church of the second century was fully persuaded that the OT was Christian Scripture, that there were four authoritative Gospels, not one, and that thirteen, not ten epistles of Paul were to be accepted, and that other general epistles were to be included.

3.6 Muratorian Fragment

Interestingly as recorded, the earliest extant list of the NT books accepted by the church is contained in the Muratorian Fragment, a

mutilated extract of a canon made at Rome about 180 A. D. It not only consists of a list of books but also contains statements regarding the authorship, destination, occasion, and purpose of each.

It is said that Irenaeus, who was originally from Asia Gaul, Tertullian from the Church of North Africa and Clement of Alexandria (the trio being the foremost Church Fathers of the second century) are in general agreement with the Muratorian Fragment on most of the books to be accepted as canonical: The four Gospels, thirteen letters of Paul, Acts, 1 Pet., 1 Jn, and Rev. The inclusion of the "minor catholic epistles" – James, 2 Pet., 3 Jn, and Jude – was disputed for many years. This was true of Hebrew in the West. While Revelation was accepted in the West, its place in the canon was disputed in the East. There were some books that are outside the canon today that at one time were on the fringes of the NT, such as the Epistle of Barnabas, the Shepherd of Hermas, and the Didache.

It will interest you to note that the 4th century was marked by authoritative pronouncements by bishops and councils regarding the limits of the canon. For instance Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria, and the leading theologian of the Eastern church, included in his 39th festal letter addressed to his bishops a list of the books of the Bible, the first ever list to contain the 27 books of the Bible of the NT exactly as we have them. "These," he declared, "are springs of salvation, so that the thirsty can fill himself... and in these alone is the good news of the teaching of true religion proclaimed; let no one add to them or take away from them." It should be noted that this letter is important, for his influence extended over all Greek – speaking churches in the East, among whom there were doubts concerning the canonicity of Revelation and several other epistles.

May be you should know that there was no general Council of the Church before the 16th cent. Council of Trent made a pronouncement on the canon. Decisions by local councils, however, were made, which were binding in the provinces represented, and would be regarded as more or less normative in other areas where they were sent. For example, a small Council was held at Laodicea in 363, but there is considerable doubt regarding the genuineness of the final canon giving the list of NT books. Also in 382 A.D., a Council of Rome declared the acceptance of several epistles including Hebrews, formerly doubted (Revelation was not doubted in the West). In North Africa the Council of Hippo, in 393 A.D., and the third Council of Carthage, in 397 A.D., ratified this canon and placed all other books to a place in the canon. The canon was now regarded as fixed and inviolable.

Finally, you should note that the Church did not create the canon or confer canonicity upon its books. The initiative in the production and collection of the sacred books rested with God. The Church could only recognize and receive in faith the documents produced by divine inspiration. The development of the canon was a gradual process, presided over by the Spirit of God. True, regional Church Councils passed upon the canon of scripture, but the reasons for accepting the present canon lie deeper than the authority of these Councils; they are based upon conviction that the hand of God led in the formation of the canon.

3.7 Sects or Heresies

Hurlbut said that, Christians of the second and third centuries battled not only against a persecuting heathen world, but also against heresies and corrupt doctrines within their own fold. We can notice only a few of the most important among the sects of that period. The first to be considered is the Gnostics.

3.7.1 The Gnostics

Hurlbut said that The Gnostics (derived from the Greek word *gnosis*, "knowledge") are not easy to define, because they are so varied in their doctrines in different localities and at different periods. Most of them arose in Asia Minor- that hot-bed of wild imaginations- and were a grafting of Christianity upon paganism. Gnostics believed that out of the supreme God emanated a large number of inferior deities, some beneficent, others malignant; and through these, the world with its mingled good and evil, was created; that in Christ as one of these "emanations," the divine nature was for a time indwelling. The worse still, they interpreted the Scriptures in an allegorical manner, making every statement mean whatever the interpreter saw fit. Even though they flourished throughout the second century, they also disappeared with it.

3.7.2 The Ebionites

The second sect to consider is the Ebionites: The Ebionites (from a Hebrew word meaning "poor") were Jewish Christians who insisted that the Jewish laws and customs should be observed. As stated earlier in this paper, the Ebionites rejected the writings of Apostle Paul, because these books recognized Gentiles as Christians. They were despised by the Jews as apostates, and found little sympathy from the Gentile Christians, who, after 70 A.D., were dominant in the church. The Ebionites gradually dwindled away in the second century.

3.7.3 Manichaeans

The third sect for our consideration is the Maniches or Manicheans, who were of Persian origin. They were named after their founder Mani, who was put to death in 276 A.D. by the Persian government. His teachings were that the universe is two kingdoms, one of light and one of darkness, each striving for mastery in nature and in man. Mani assumed he could create a sense of balance between Christianity and Zoroastrianism. The Manichaeans rejected Jesus, but believed in a "celestial Christ". They were severe in asceticism, and adjured marriages; were persecuted by both the heathen and the Christian emperors. Augustine, the greatest theologian of the church, was a Manichean before his conversion.

3.7.4 The Montanists

The fourth group is the Montanists, named after founder, Montanus. Perhaps, they should scarcely be classed among the heretical sects, though the church condemned their teachings. The following are their characteristics that may show that they were not harmful to the existing Christian dogma in place at that time:

- (i) It is said that they were Puritans, claiming to return to the simplicity of the primitive Christians.
- (ii) It is said that they believed in the priesthood of all true believers, and not in orders of the ministry
- (iii) They also sought for strict disciplines in the church
- (iv) They held to prophetic gifts as the privilege of disciples, and had many prophets and prophetesses in their membership.

Interestingly, Tertullian, one of the greatest among the early fathers, embraced their views, and wrote in their defense. However, there are other beliefs of the Montanists that made them to be declared as heretics. Some of them include:

- i. Proclaiming himself as the coming *Paraclete* (Comforter) foretold by Jesus in John 14:12-18
- ii. HIS claim to invent an era of the Spirit better than that of Christ and His apostles.

- iii. Uttering inordinate prophecy inconsistent with those in the scripture
His claim that he and his two prophetesses have the power to forgive sins

3.8 Beliefs of the Early Christian Church

Perhaps, it is safe to state that the doctrines of the Early Christian Church were very simple and practical. They often summarized what they believed. Tim Dowley says that, these summaries varied according to the contexts in which they were used, the writers or churches, which produced them, and the errors or attacks they had to resist. In addition to statements made at baptism (for example, Acts 8:37) and solemn commands (for example, Acts 3:6 and 2 Timothy 4:1), scholars have discovered summaries of the teaching of the apostles (for example, 1 Corinthians 15:3 and 4), as well as statements of belief in hymn form:

*(Christ) appeared in human form,
Was shown to be right by the Spirit,
And was seen by angels
He was preached among the nations
Was believed in the world
And was taken up to heaven.*

For instance, some formulas mention Christ alone, for example: 'Jesus is the Christ' (for a Jewish setting) or, more widely: 'Jesus is Lord' (1 Corinthians 12:3). Persecutors often demanded that Christians should curse Christ and say: 'Caesar is Lord'. Other formulas include God the Father too (1 Corinthians 8:6; 1 Timothy 2:5), while forms naming Father, Son and Spirit appear in baptism (Matthew 28:19), worship (2 Corinthians 13:14) and summaries of doctrine (Ephesians 4:4-6).

Tim Dowley says that, one important outline of basic Christian beliefs in the late second and early third centuries were the 'Rule of Faith'. Origen described it as: 'the teaching of the church preserved unaltered and handed down in unbroken succession from the apostles'. In reality it indicated what particular writers or churches taught, especially against heretics, but also to new converts, as the central message of the Bible. The Rule was also known by several other names: 'the faith', 'the tradition', 'the preaching' and the 'Rule of Truth'. It claimed to represent an apostolic tradition of teaching, and was even appealed to in the dispute over the Christian *Pascha*.

However, later writers, such as Ignatius, Aristides, Justin Martyr and Irenaeus recorded more elaborate declarations of faith. It is said that Irenaeus' own was the first clearly identifiable Rule. Its main content was as follows: ...this faith: in one God, the Father Almighty, who made the heaven and the earth and the seas and all things that are in them; in one Christ Jesus, the Son of God, who was made flesh for our salvation; and in the Holy Spirit, who made known through the prophets the plan of salvation, and the coming, and the birth from a virgin, and the passion and the resurrection from the dead, and the bodily ascension into heaven of the beloved Christ Jesus, our Lord, and his future appearing from heaven in the glory of the Father to sum up all things and to raise up anew all flesh of the whole human race

That was the beginning of the doctrinal development of the Christian Church, and as stated earlier, meant to defend the faith and instruct new believers.

4.0 CONCLUSION

This unit has helped you to know the background to the production of your New Testament. The 27 books that are finally selected are considered as the inspired words from the Lord. They are good for instructions, edification and teaching. Now that you have the basic understanding of the origin of your New Testament Bible, you will do well to move to the unit where you shall study the life of the Church Fathers and their involvement in the Formation of Liturgy and Creeds.

5.0 SUMMARY

Having gone through this unit, you would have understood the following points:

- (i) The composition of the books of the New Testament and their authors.
- (ii) The New Testament Canon was of gradual process.
- (iii) Christian Local Provinces with their Church Fathers, made their decision as to which books to be accepted into the New Testament Canon.
- (iv) Some of the heretical groups were the Gnostics who were followers of a variety of religious movements in the early Christian centuries, the Ebonites, the Manichaeans and the Montanists.
- (vi) The simple teachings of the Early Christian Church as presented.

6.0

TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

Discuss the following:

1. The origin of the New Testament
2. The canonization of the books of the New Testament as a gradual process
3. The early Christian Church and heresies
4. The development of the beliefs of the early Christian Church.

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS

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UNIT 5 THE CHURCH FATHERS AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF LITHURGY

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- 1.0 Introduction
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7.0 References/Further Readings

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This unit discusses the lives and contributions of the Church Fathers to the growth and stability of the Early Church. In the previous unit, you have studied that the early Christian Church faced both internal and external foes.

For instance, the Imperial Persecutions came from outside the Church and were beyond the Christians' control. Perhaps, the most damaging battle against the Church was the internal one, manifested in false teachings, or spurious philosophies that went contrary to the Gospel. These fathers, through their preaching and writings, fought gallantly to preserve the purity of the Early Christian Church. Therefore, in this unit you will appreciate more, the unique role played by the Church Fathers to handover the Christian Church to generations after them.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit you should be able to:

- narrate the life and time of John Chrysostom
- identify the achievements of Theodore in the area of exegesis
- narrate the story of Eusebius of Caesarea, the father of Church History
- list the contributions of Ambrose to Christian growth
 - narrate the story of Augustine, the prince of all Church Fathers
 - identify Jerome and his contributions to the Church
 - describe the growth of liturgy in the Church.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Church Fathers Defined

The term Church Fathers designates the orthodox theologians of the church during the first several centuries after Christ. Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia describes the term as the "name given by the Christian church to the writers who established Christian doctrine before the 8th Century".

They defended the truth of God's Word against heretical teachings. They were leaders raised up by God to preach true doctrine and practice. In their writings you will find the history, teachings, and traditions of the Early Church. Therefore, the Church Fathers whose work came before the Council of Nicaea were known as Ante-Nicene fathers, whether they were apostolic fathers, apologists or polemicists. These Apostolic Fathers had to fight against an enemy that destroyed limb and life, an enemy threatening the body of Christ, his Church, from without.

After them came the earlier and later Church Fathers who lived between the Council's of Nicaea 325 A.D. and Chalcedon 451 A.D. The outstanding ones lived in the era of external quiet, during the reign of Constantine the Great and his successors. But despite its quietness, it was also an era in which destructive and heretical doctrines were taught, for the enemy from within tried to destroy the Church by leading it into gross error. One of these enemies was Arius, who denied the Godhead of the Lord Jesus; he taught that Christ was created and that he was not the eternal Son of the Father. Therefore, in this unit, you will also study Post-Nicene Fathers. The first to consider is John, who was later known as Chrysostom.

3.2 Chrysostom (ca. 347-407) – Expositor and Orator

John was called Chrysostom shortly after his death because of his eloquence. He literally deserved the name which means "golden-mouthed." John was born about 347 A.D. into a wealthy aristocratic family of Antioch. His mother was Authusa, who became a widow at the age of twenty, but refused to remarry in order that she might devote all her time to her son's education.

It is said that Chrysostom lived a pure, simple life that was a rebuke to his highly placed wealthy parishioners in Constantinople. Extremely ascetic in his insistence on simplicity of life and inclined to mysticism, he did not always possess tact; but he did have a courteous, affectionate and kindly nature. Though he was a giant in moral and spiritual stature, he was short and thin. His emaciated, baldhead, and piercing bright eyes made a lasting impression on his hearers (Cairns: 1981).

Chrysostom was said to be a student of the friend of Emperor Julian. This man gave him a good training in the Greek classic and the rhetoric that laid the foundation for his excellent speaking ability. For a time he practiced law, but after his baptism in 368 A.D. he became a monk. After his mother's death in 374 A.D, he practiced a severely ascetic life until 380 A.D. During this time he lived in a cave on a mountain near Antioch. Ill health stopped this severe regime (Cairns: 1981).

Perhaps some years of study under Diodorus of Tarsus had something to do with his ability as an expositor. About 640 of his sermons are still extant, and even a reading of the cold print gives one some idea of his sermons which are expositions of Paul's Epistles.

He taught that there must be no divorce of morals and religion; the Cross and ethics must go hand in hand. It is little wonder that he was and still is hailed as the greatest pulpit orator the Eastern Church ever had. John was ordained in 386 A.D., and preached some of his best sermons in Antioch until 398 A.D. In that year he was made the patriarch of Constantinople. He held this position until Empress Eudoxia finally banished him in 404 A.D. because he had denounced her extravagant dress and her placing a silver statue of herself near Saint Sophia, where he preached. He died in exile in 407.

3.3 Theodore (ca. 350-428) – Exegete

Another noted church father you will now study is Theodore of Mopsuestia. Theodore has been rightly called "the prince of ancient exegetes". In Cairns (1981), Theodore is said to have studied the Scriptures- for about ten years- under Diodorus of Tarsus. This good education was made possible by his birth into a wealthy family. He was ordained a presbyter in Antioch in 383 and became the bishop of Mopsuestia in Cilicia about 392 A.D.

He opposed the allegorical system on a thorough understanding of the grammar of the text and the historical background of the text in order to discover the meaning of the writer. He also gave careful attention to the text in its immediate and its more remote contexts. This type of study made him an able commentator and theologian. Some of his major contributions are commentaries on such books of the Bible as Colossians and the letters to the Thessalonians. Perhaps it should be stated that both he and Chrysostom had a healthy influence on the interpretation of the Bible in their day. Therefore, without dispute, their work was a marked contrast to the strained interpretations of Scripture that resulted from the use of the allegorical method of interpretation.

3.4 Eusebius (ca 265-ca.339) - Church Historian

The third Church Father you will study is Eusebius. Cairns (1981) states that Eusebius of Caesarea was one of the most widely studied of the Church Fathers. Eusebius of Caesarea has as much right to the title of "Father of Church History" as Herodotus has to the title "Father of History". It is said that after having a good education under Pamphilus at Caesarea, Eusebius helped his friend Pamphilus to build up his library in that city. According to Cairn, Eusebius was an assiduous student and read everything

he could obtain that might help him in his research. He excerpted widely from both profane and sacred literature. Much literature of his day that might otherwise have been lost has been preserved because these excerpts were quoted in his works.

Eusebius' personality was one that fitted him for such scholarly pursuits. He was of a gentle and agreeable disposition and disliked the quarrels engendered by the Arian heresy. He was given a place of honor at the right hand of Constantine at the Council of Nicaea and, like him, preferred a compromise between the parties of Athanasius and Arius. It was the Caesarean Creed, put forth by Eusebius of Caesarea that the Council of Nicaea modified and accepted. The following is considered as his achievements to the history of the Christian Church;

- (a) His greatest work is *Ecclesiastical History*, a survey of the history of the Church from apostolic times until 324. His purpose was to make a record of the past trials of the church at the end of its long period of struggle and the beginning of its era of prosperity. This work is especially valuable today because Eusebius had access to the fine library at Caesarea and the imperial archives.
- (b) Eusebius also wrote the *Chronicle*, a universal history from the time of Abraham until 323 A.D. The "Chronological Canons," which is a part of the *Chronicle*, provided the conventional chronological framework for medieval history. His *Life of Constantine* was written somewhat as an appendix to this *History* and is an excellent, though somewhat laudatory, source of information concerning the doings of Constantine as they were related to the church. He also wrote a laudatory biography of Constantine.
- (c) The historical work of Eusebius was continued by two successors Socrates and Sozomen who did not always measure up to the high standard of reliability set by him. Together with Eusebius, these men are the chief ecclesiastical authorities for the history of the ancient church (Earle E. Cairns; 1981).

Now that you have studied the lives and achievements of the above Church Fathers, who were of the Eastern origin, or who served there, you will also do well to study briefly lives of the following Church Fathers from the West. These are, Ambrose, Jerome and Augustine.

3.5 Ambrose (339-397 A.D.)

Perhaps, firstly, you should study the life, time and achievements of Ambrose. In S.M Houghton (2001) Ambrose is said to be the son of a Roman governor in Gaul (France). Educated in the law in Rome he entered the Emperor's service and was stationed in the province in which the city of Milan stands. It is also said that, while he was there the bishop of the city died and a division arose among the people over the choice of a successor. Probably certain of the people wanted a bishop who held the heresy of Arius, while others wanted a bishop who held to the doctrine formulated by the Council of Nicea. As there was the probability that a riot might ensue, Ambrose, as governor, attended the gathering and spoke to the people, urging them to conduct themselves in an orderly and Christian manner. Suddenly the voice of a child (as was supposed) was heard, saying 'Let Ambrose be our bishop'.

It is said that from all sides the cry was heard, 'Ambrose is our bishop, Ambrose is our bishop'. The startled governor responded to the call, even though he had not yet submitted to Christian baptism. He felt that

it came from God; he was baptized, taken into the Christian ministry, and confirmed in the office of bishop in little more than a week.

Ambrose was a true gentle man. He was a man of courage who stood firm for the right. He was an eloquent preacher full of grace and pleasant words. He will however, forever be remembered for one event in particular. It concerned the Emperor Theodosius who made Christianity the sole religion of Romans in his EDICT of 380 A.D. Though a professed Christian and a member of the church he had massacred 7,000 of the city of Thessalonica, as punishment for a rebellion in which Roman officers had been killed. It is said that after that ugly incidence, Ambrose wrote a letter condemning the act. Afterwards the Emperor came to worship at Milan and intended to present himself at the Lord's Table.

But Bishop Ambrose, had earlier made up his mind not to receive the Emperor at the Lord's Table, he therefore quickly met him at the entrance to the church building, and said: 'How will you lift up in prayer the hands still dripping with the blood of the murdered? How will you, with such hands, receive and bring to your mouth the body and blood of the Lord? Get out of here, and do not dare to add another crime to the one you have already committed'.

And because Ambrose stood his ground, the Roman Emperor made public confession of his sin and sought forgiveness. It is said that, eight months passed before he was received at the Lord's Table. Therefore, in token of his submission he also issued a law that henceforth the death sentence against a man should never be carried into effect until thirty days after it was pronounced.

3.6 Jerome

The second Western Church Father for your study in this unit is Jerome. He was born in Dalmatia and later settled in Bethlehem in 386A.D. Jerome lived during the same period as Augustine. It is said that as a youth he spent time in the Catacombs around Rome translating the many inscriptions. Besides Latin, he acquired an excellent knowledge of Greek, and was one of the few western scholars who gave attention to the Hebrew language. In fact he became one of the chief scholars in the early Church. His greatest work was to translate the Bible from Hebrew and Greek into Latin. Much of this work was accomplished at Bethlehem. The title of the translation is known as the Vulgate (that is, the Bible 'in common use') and was the version used throughout the Middle Ages in the Roman Catholic Church. It was the first book to be printed when movable type was invented in the middle of the 15th century. In the 16th century the famous Council of Trent termed it 'authentic'. Jerome also opposed the Pelagius heresy with much vigour. He died in or about the year 420 A.D. (S.M. Houghton; 2001).

3.7 Augustine

The last Church Father you will study for now is Augustine of Hippo. Regis. S.M Houghton (2001) rated him as the greatest of all the Church Fathers. According to him, Augustine shines forth as a bright star in the firmament of Early Church history. He was born in 354 in the province of Numidia, North Africa, not very far from ancient Carthage. It is said that, Patricius, his father, was a pagan, but his mother, Monica, was a woman in whom all the virtues of a Christian mother were found in abundance; she excelled in the fervour of her faith, the tenderness of her affection, and the constancy of her love.

On the contrary, Augustine's father's only concern for his son was that he should excel in intellectual matters. He knew that his son was highly gifted. He arranged for him to complete his studies in the city of Carthage, but there Augustine found the temptations of life too much for his ardent, sensual nature. He became completely ensnared by the

vanities of the world. It is said that at that point in time, Monica, however, prayed ceaselessly for her erring son. For long it seemed as if her prayers were not heard, and that all her entreaties, admonitions and instructions were lost upon him. In addition it is said that Monica had specially prayed that her son might not be allowed to leave Africa for Italy, for she feared that temptations to sin might be even greater there than in Carthage. Yet in spite of her prayers her son went to Italy. She feared the worst, but God meant it for the best. After a time spent in Rome, Augustine went to Milan, and in the providence of God he became acquainted with Ambrose who took much interest in him. The sermons of the bishop impressed him greatly. He began to study Scripture and, by the light of the Holy Spirit, to understand the nature of sin and grace. The struggle within his heart became painful in the extreme.

It is reported that, at the age of thirty-one, Augustine was in a garden in Milan, weeping and calling to God for deliverance from sin. He despaired of himself. Suddenly he heard the voice of a boy or girl from a neighbouring house repeating in a kind of chant, 'Take and read; take and read'. Without delay he took up the New Testament, and read Romans 13, verses 13-14, the first words on which his eyes fell: 'Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ and make not provision for the flesh to fulfill the lusts thereof'. It is said that almost at once every shadow of doubt melted away. As it were, there and then Augustine passed from death to life. We were told that immediately, he went to tell his mother what had happened. She was close at hand, for she had followed him to Italy. Finally, her mourning was now turned into joy, and she blessed the Lord who was able to do exceeding abundantly above all that she had asked or thought (S.M. Houghton; 2001).

Afterwards Augustine wrote his *Confessions*, one of the most famous books of all time, in which he describes the way the Lord led him out of sin and doubt into grace and truth. In Italy he had become a teacher of rhetoric, but now he returned to Africa, intending to live in seclusion. This, however, was not the will of God for him. Instead, he was led to become bishop of a town called Hippo Regis, in Numidia, and his splendid talents were devoted to the building of the Church of God in the West. He died at Hippo in the year 430 A.D.

Perhaps, one of his major roles in the Christian Church was his involvement in Pelagius controversy. It is said that, Pelagius a British monk, was a dangerous man, for he taught false doctrines. He denied original sin and asserted that Adam's sin did not affect the entire human race. Man he claimed, is not born sinful, but is able to do that which God requires of him, if he only wills to do so. In addition, it is said that Pelagius taught that the ability to be saved is found in the lost sinner's heart if he will but use it. He really denied the necessity for a 'birth from above', for the inward work of the Holy Spirit, and for the intervention of the unmerited grace of God. Salvation is 'not of works lest any man should boast' (Eph. 2:9) but Pelagius' teachings were virtually a denial of this great truth. Augustine was his most powerful opponent and his writings on these themes have been influential in nearly every period of Church history since that time. Augustine will be remembered as a man of who had deeper spiritual insight into the scriptures than any other of the Church Fathers. It is said of him, that never was a man more determined and fearless in the defense of the truth he rendered immense service to the kingdom of God. Perhaps, it should be stated here

that Martin Luther and John Calvin, and indeed the whole Church, under God stand deeply in his debt (S.M. Houghton; 2001).

3.8 Development of the Liturgy

In this last part of unit five, you will now study liturgy, which is a fixed form of public worship used in Church. Perhaps, you need to remind yourself of the Edict of Constantine of 313 A.D. that granted freedom to Christians. Unfortunately, that freedom led to the practical union of the Church and the State under Constantine and his successors. This eventually led to the secularization of the Church. According to E. Cairns (1981) the Patriarch of Constantinople came under the control of the emperor, and the Eastern Church became a department of the State. He further states that, the influx of pagans into the church through the mass conversion movements of the era contributed to the paganisation of worship as the Church tried to make these barbarian converts feel at home within its fold. He also said that through this influx of pagans, many of whom did not become more than nominal Christians, caused the Church to call upon the state to help enforce discipline by the use of its temporal power to punish ecclesiastical offenses. Cairns expressed that in 529 A.D., Emperor Justinian, of the Eastern segment of the empire ordered the closing of the Academy at Athens. Up until that time, pagan Greek philosophy had been taught there. In addition, discipline became lax within the church because its resources were overtaxed in handling the many converts who had been only partially converted from paganism.

Cairns further contend that the influx of new converts and the growth of Episcopal power also brought changes in the worship of the church. If the barbarians who had been used to worshipping images were to find any real help in the church, many church leaders believed that it would be necessary to materialize the liturgy to make God seem more accessible to these worshipers. Therefore, the following is the development of liturgy in the Christian Church as presented by Cairns (1981):

- (i) The veneration of angels, saints, relics, pictures, and statues was a logical outcome of this attitude. Cairns therefore concludes that connection with the monarchical state also led to a change from a simple democratic worship to a more aristocratic, colorful form of liturgy with a sharply drawn distinction between the clergy and the laity.
- (ii) Sunday became one of the major days in the Church calendar after Constantine decided that it was to be a day of civic as well as religious worship.
- (iii) The festival of Christmas became a regular practice in the West about the middle of the fourth century, with the adoption of the December date that had been previously used by the pagans.
- (iv) The Feast of Epiphany, which in the West celebrated the coming of the Magi to see Christ and in the East Christ's baptism, was also brought into the Church calendar.
- (v) Accretions from the Jewish sacred year, the gospel history, and the lives of saints and martyrs led to a steady expansion of the number of holy days in the church calendar.
- (vi) There was also an increase in the number of ceremonies that could be ranked as sacraments:
 - (a) Augustine was inclined to believe that marriage should be regarded as a sacrament.
 - (b) Cyprian held that penance was vital to the Christian life.
 - (c) With the increased gap between the clergy and the laity, it was almost necessary to consider ordination in the light of a sacrament.
 - (d) Confirmation

- (e) Extreme unction came to be looked on as having sacramental value about 400 A.D.
- (vii) The early theological development of the doctrine of original sin contributed to the importance of infant baptism. By the beginning of the third century, Tertullian and Cyprian considered infant baptism an accepted fact. Augustine especially emphasized the importance of baptism.
 - (viii) The Lord's Supper occupied the central place in the thinking of the worshipper and the order of the liturgy. In fact, it was in the process of becoming a sacrifice as well as a sacrament. Cyprian thought that the priest acted in Christ's place at Communion and that he offered "a true and full sacrifice to God the Father". The *Canon of the Mass*, which Gregory I altered slightly, emphasized the sacrificial nature of the Communion service. By the end of the sixth century all the seven acts that the Roman Catholic Church regards as sacraments were in use and had an exalted position in worship. Sacerdotalism, the belief that the substance of the ordinance is efficacious through the priestly celebrant, steadily gained ground. This led to an increasing emphasis on the separation of the clergy and the laity.
 - (ix) The veneration of Mary
 - (a) The veneration of Mary, the mother of Jesus, developed rapidly in 590 A.D.
 - (b) This led to the adoption of the doctrines of her immaculate conception in 1854 A. D.
 - (c) It also gave birth to the doctrine of her miraculous assumption to heaven in 1950 A.D.
 - (d) The false interpretation of Scripture and the mass of miracles associated with Mary in the apocryphal gospels created great reverence for her.
 - (e) The Nestorian and other Christological controversies of the fourth century resulted in the acceptance of Mary as the "Mother of God" and entitled her to special honors in the liturgy.
 - (f) Clement, Jerome, and Tertullian had ascribed perpetual virginity to Mary.
 - (g) Augustine believed that the mother of the sinless Christ had never committed actual sin.
 - (h) Monasticism, with its emphasis on the virtue of virginity, strengthened the idea of the veneration of Mary.
 - (i) These and other considerations led the Roman Church to give special honor to Mary.
 - (j) What at first was merely acknowledgment of her exalted position as Christ's mother soon became belief in her intercessory powers because it was thought that the Son would be glad to listen to the requests of His mother.
 - (k) The prayer of Ephraim Cyrus before 400 is an early instance of a formal invocation to Mary.
- (l) By the middle of the fifth century she was placed at the head of all the saints. Festivals associated with her also sprang up in the fifth century. The Feast of the Annunciation on March 25, which celebrated the angelic announcement of the birth of a son to her; Candlemas on February 2, the celebration of her purification after the birth of Christ; and the Assumption on August 15, which

celebrates her supposed ascension to heaven, were principal festivals.

- (m) In the sixth century Justinian asked her intercession on behalf of his empire. By 590 A.D. she had a unique position in the worship of the Roman church.
- (x) The veneration of saints
 - (a) The veneration of saints grew out of the natural desire of the church to honor those who had been martyrs in the days when the church had been severely persecuted by the state.
 - (b) Furthermore the pagans had been accustomed to the veneration of their heroes; and when so many pagans came into the church; it was almost natural for them to substitute the saints for their heroes and to give them semi divine honors.
 - (c) Up to the year 300, celebrations at the grave involved only prayers for the repose of the soul of the saint.
 - (d) By 590 A.D prayer for them had become prayer to God through them.
 - (e) This was accepted at the Second Council of Nicaea. Churches and chapels were built over their graves.
 - (f) Festivals associated with their death gained a place in the church calendar.
 - (g) Legends of miracles associated with them develop rapidly.
 - (h) The traffic in relics, such as bodies, teeth, hair, or bones, became so great a problem that it was ordered to stop in 381 A.D.
- (xi) The use of images and pictures in worship expanded rapidly as more and more untutored converts came into the church. Both images and pictures materialized the invisible reality of deity.
- (xii) Thanksgiving or penitential processions became a part of worship after 313 A.D.
- (xiii) Pilgrimages, at first to Palestine and later to the tombs of notable saints, became customary. Constantine's mother, Helena, visited Palestine in her old age and was supposed to have found the true cross.
 - (xiv) Government aid and freedom of worship under Constantine led to extensive building of churches.
 - (xv) The earliest singing in the church had been conducted by a leader to whom the people gave responses in some antiphonal singing, in which two separated choirs sing alternately, developed at Antioch. Ambrose introduced the practice of antiphonal singing at Milan, from whence it spread through the Western church.
 - (xvi) Special vestments for the priests came as the people gave up the Roman type of dress, while the clergy retained it in the church services.
 - (xvii) During this era there arose a special sacerdotal hierarchy under a dominant Roman bishop, the tendency to increase the number of sacraments and to make them the main avenues of grace, and the movement to elaborate the liturgy. These things helped to lay the foundation for the medieval Roman Catholic Church.

4.0 CONCLUSION

Now that you have done a study of some of the Church Fathers, you should be motivated to make your own positive influence felt in the lives of others within your immediate community, your study group in the class and by extension, the Church of God.

The Church Fathers through their selfless and sacrificed living, bequeathed to your generation, the history of the Christian Church, which is of an inestimable value. Therefore, your life must have positive impact that will lead many to God and worship both in spirit and truth.

5.0 SUMMARY

The main points in this Unit are as follows:

1. The Church Fathers fought both enemies of the Christian Church within and outside the fold.
2. The Post Nicene Church Fathers that were of the Eastern origin are: i. Chrysostom ii. Theodore iii. Eusebius Caesarea.
3. Western Post Nicene Church Fathers were:
 - i. Ambrose
 - ii. Jerome
 - iii. Augustine
4. Some of the services or liturgical practices of Christian Church:
 - i. Sunday became one of the major days in the Church Calendar
 - ii. The festival of Christmas became a regular practice in the West about the middle of the fourth century.
- iii. The feast of Epiphany was brought into the Church Calendar
- iv. An increase in the numbers of ceremonies that could be ranked as sacrament (a) marriage (b) penance (c) ordination (d) confirmation (e) extreme unction
- v. Doctrine of infant baptism
- vi. The Lord's Supper occupied the central place in the thinking of worshipper and the order of liturgy.
- vii. The veneration of Mary, the mother of Jesus
- viii. The veneration of saints grew out of the natural desire.
- ix. The use of images and pictures in worship expanded rapidly.
- x. Government and the freedom of worship under Constantine led to extensive building of Churches

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

Kindly discuss the life and achievement of Augustine of Hippo. Discuss the development of liturgy in the Church.

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS

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MODULE 2

THE IMPERIAL CHURCH – 313 – 476 A.D

Unit 1 Reconciliatory Councils and Creedal Development

Unit 2 Rise of Monasticism and their developments

Unit 3 The Growth of Power in the Roman Church

Unit 4 The End of Western Roman Empire

Unit 5 Consolidation of Papal Power and the Rise of Islam

UNIT 1 RECONCILIATORY COUNCILS AND CREEDAL DEVELOPMENT

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
- 3.1 The Arian Controversy
- 3.2 The Nature of the Holy Spirit
- 3.3 The Apollinarian Controversy
- 3.4 The Pelagian Controversy
- 3.5 The Development of Creeds
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Readings

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The first unit of the second module of your course begins with the Imperial Church. The word imperial connotes some elements of royalty. It tells of a Church that was fully or partially controlled by Kings, Queens or Emperors. The period you are now studying was the period, soon after the cessation of the severe persecution of the Church, that is, shortly after Emperor Constantine embraced Christianity as his own religion. Therefore, in this unit, you will study the three prolonged controversies that occurred between 325 and 451 AD., which were fundamental to the very existence of the Church. The result of those disputes led to the numerous Councils of Bishops that were held to find solutions to the doctrinal issues that shook the Church to its foundation. Therefore, the following objectives present a clear picture of topics you are to study.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

It is expected that by the time you finish studying this unit, you should be able to:

- define the Arian controversy that arose over the doctrine of the Trinity
- define the Apollinarian controversy over the nature of Christ
- define the Pelagian controversy over questions relating to sin and salvation
- identify the role of the Church Councils in the resolution of these controversies
- state the resolutions of those Councils and their pronouncements
- identify those who participated in the Councils
- describe the development of Creeds in the Church.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 The Arian Controversy

The problem of the Trinity was one of the bitterest pills ever tasted by the Church. The problem bothered on the relationships between God the Father and Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. There were speculative thinking as to the equality in status and powers of the Godhead. Therefore the nature and functions of the Trinity led to the dispute.

Earle Cairns shed light on the controversy in the following paragraphs. According to him, Alexander, the bishop of Alexandria, preached to his presbyters on The Great Mystery of the Trinity in Unity about 318 or 319 A.D. One of the presbyters, Arius, an ascetic scholar and popular preacher, attacked the sermon because he believed that it failed to

uphold a distinction among the persons in the Godhead. In his desire to avoid a polytheistic conception of God, Arius took a position that did injustice to the true deity of Christ.

Cairns said that the issue was soteriological in nature. Therefore the following questions are to be addressed; Could Christ save man if He were a demigod, less than true God, and of a similar or different essence from the Father as Eusebius and Arius respectively asserted? Just what was His relationship to the Father? Without mincing words, the controversy became so bitter that Alexander had Arius condemned by a synod. Arius then fled to the friendly palace of Eusebius, the bishop of Nicomedia, who had been his schoolmate. Since the dispute centered in Asia Minor, it threatened the unity of the empire as well as that of the church. Cairns said that Emperor Constantine made a concerted effort to settle the dispute by letters to the bishop of Alexandria and Arius, but the dispute had gone beyond the power even of a letter from the emperor. Constantine then called a council of the bishops of the church to work out a solution to the dispute. This council met at Nicaea in the early summer of 325 AD. Between two and three hundred bishops of the church whom were from the Western section of the empire attended the Council. The emperor presided over the first session and paid all costs. For the first time the church found itself dominated by the political leadership of the head of the state. The perennial problem of the relationship between church and state emerged clearly here, but the bishops were too busy dealing with theological heresy to think of that particular problem.

Three views were put forth at the council. Arius, who was backed by Eusebius of Nicomedia (to be distinguished from Eusebius of Caesarea and a minority of those present insisted that Christ had not existed from all eternity but had a beginning by the creative act of God. Arius believed that Christ was of a *different (heteros)* essence or substance from the Father. Because of the virtue of His life and His obedience to God's will, Christ was to be considered divine. But Arius believed that Christ was a being created out of nothing, subordinate to the Father, and of a different essence from the Father. He was not coequal, coeternal, or consubstantial with the Father. To Arius He was divine but not Deity (E. Cairns: 134).

It was said that Athanasius (ca. 295-373) became the chief exponent of what became the orthodox view. His wealthy parents had provided for his theological education in the famous catechetical school of Alexandria. At the council, Athanasius insisted that Christ had existed from all eternity with the Father and was of the same essence (*homousios*) as the Father, although He was a distinct personality. He insisted on these things because he believed that if Christ were less than he had stated Him to be, He could not be the Saviour of men. The question of man's eternal salvation was involved in the relationship of the Father and the Son according to Athanasius. He held that Christ was coequal, coeternal, and consubstantial with the Father; and for these views he suffered exile five times.

Cairns explain further that the largest party was led by the gentle scholar and church historian Eusebius of Caesarea, whose dislike of controversy led him to propose a view that he hoped would be an acceptable compromise. He proposed a moderate view that would combine the best ideas of Arius and Athanasius. Over two hundred of those present followed his views at first. He taught that Christ was not created out of nothing as Arius had insisted but that he was begotten of the Father before time in eternity. Christ was of a like (*homoi*) or similar essence to the Father. His creed became the basis of the creed that was finally drawn at Nicaea, but that one differed

from his in its insistence on the unity of essence of substance of the Father and the Son

Thus Athanasius was made to convince majority of the Council to condemn the teaching of Arius, in the Nicene Creed of 325 AD. Athanasius spent his last seven years at Alexandria where he died in 373 AD. His view finally became supreme throughout the Church both East and West long after his death.

3.2 The Nature of the Holy Spirit

The next controversy was on the relationships of the Holy Spirit to the Father. The nature of the Holy Spirit came to the focus. How did he come into an existence? Where is the place of his abode? What are his responsibilities and how is it functioning? According to Earle Cairns, Macedonius, bishop of Constantinople between 341 and 360, most likely taught that the Holy Spirit was "a minister and a servant" on a level with the angels and that the Holy Spirit was a creature subordinate to the Father and Son. This was a denial of the true deity of the Holy Spirit and would be as harmful to the conception of the Holy Spirit as the views of Arius were to the conception of Christ. The Ecumenical Council of Constantinople condemned these views in 381. Cairns added that when the creed of Constantinople, our Nicene Creed, was recited at the third Council of Toledo in 589, the words "and the Son" (*filioque*) were added to the statement "that proceedeth from the Father," which is concerned with the relationship between the Holy Spirit and the Father and the Son. Accordingly, the Western churches since then have insisted on the true deity and the personality of the Holy Spirit as coequal, coeternal and consubstantial with the Father and the Son (Earle Cairns: 135).

3.3 The Apollinarian Controversy

The next controversy was on Christology which is the relationship between the natures of Christ. The dispute centered on whether Jesus Christ was fully man or fully God. According to Jesse L. Hurlbut, Apollinaris was the Bishop of Laodicea about 360 A. D. He asserted that the divine nature of Christ on earth was not of men, but God alone in human form. His view was sharply in contrast to the accepted doctrine of the Church, that the personality of Jesus Christ was a union of God and man, deity and humanity in one nature. Although Apollinaris stressed the deity of Christ, he minimized His true manhood. Therefore his view was considered heretic and condemned by the council of Constantinople, 381 A.D. (Jesse L. Hurlbut, p. 68).

3.4 The Pelagian Controversy: Anthropology – The Manner of Man’s Salvation

The heresies and controversy you have studied so far in this unit existed mainly in the Eastern part of Christendom where speculative metaphysical theology was more or less a preoccupation of the rationalistic Greek thinkers. But this controversy that we are now examining arose from the Western part of the Christendom and was over questions relating to sin and salvation. For example, Augustine and Pelagius were concerned with the problem of the nature of how man is saved. Was man to be saved by divine power only, or was there a place in the process of salvation for the human will?

Pelagius (ca. 360-ca. 420), was a British monk and theologian. Jerome described him as "weighed down with the porridge of the Scots. He came to Rome about 400 AD where, with the help of Celestius, he formulated his idea of how man is saved. Accordingly, he soon found that Augustine would have no part of his ideas. Therefore, he left Rome in 409 A. D. Pelagius was described as a cool, calm individual, who had known nothing of the struggle of soul through which Augustine had gone before he was saved. Hence, Pelagius was more willing to give the human will a place in the process of salvation. But Augustine had found his world helpless to extricate him from the morals of sin in which he found himself because of his sinful nature.

Contrary to the view of Augustine, Pelagius believed that each man is created free as Adam was and that each man has the power to choose good or evil. Each soul is a separate creation of God and, therefore, uncontaminated by the sin of Adam. He contended further that the universality of sin in the world is explained by the weakness of human flesh rather than by the corruption of human will by original sin. Therefore, according too him, Man does not inherit original sin from his first ancestor, although the sins of individuals of the past generation do weaken the flesh of the present generation so that sins are committed unless the individual wills to cooperate with God in the process of salvation. Pelagius stressed further that the human will is free to cooperate with God in the attainment of holiness and can make use of such aids to grace as the Bible, reason, and the example of Christ. Because there is no original sin, infant baptism is not an essential element in salvation (Earle Cairns, p. 137).

The above view was greatly opposed and rejected by Augustine, the great bishop of Hippo, who believed in the denial of the grace of God by insisting that regeneration is exclusively the work of the Holy Spirit. According to Augustine, Man was originally made in the image of God and free to choose between good and evil, but Adam’s sin bound all men

because Adam was the head of the race. Man's will is entirely corrupted by the fall so that he must be considered totally depraved and unable to exercise his will in regard to the matter of salvation. Augustine believed that all inherit sin through Adam and that no one, therefore, can escape original sin. Man's will is so bound that he can do nothing to bring about his salvation. Salvation can come only to the elect through the grace of God in Christ. God must energize the human will to accept His proffered grace, which is only for those whom He has elected to salvation (Cairns, p. 138).

Pelagius's views were condemned at the Council of Ephesus in 431, but neither the Eastern nor the Western church ever fully accepted Augustine's views. However, Hurlbut stated that the Council of Carthage of 418 A. D. condemned the Pelagian view, and the theology of Augustine became the standard of orthodoxy in the Church (Hurlbut, p. 68).

3.5 Development of Creeds

Perhaps, the development of Creeds started as reactions against the heresies that were creeping into the Church. For instance, after the Council of Nicaea condemned the erroneous teachings of Arius, the Church in Council immediately produced its own creed so as to exclude Arian error. Although, orthodoxy gained a temporary victory at Nicaea by the assertion of the eternity of Christ and the identity of His substance with that of the Father, the creed formulated here must not be confused with the Nicene Creed used by the Church today, although that creed is similar to the one formulated at Nicaea. The creed of 325 A. D. stops with the phrase "and in the Holy Spirit" and is followed by a section condemning Arius views (E. Cairns, p. 134).

Tim Dowley has presented the following as the Nicene Creed:

'We believe in one God, the Father, Almighty, maker of all things visible and invisible; And in one Lord, Jesus Christ the Son of God, begotten of the Father, only-begotten, that is, from the substance (*ousia*) of the Father; God from God, Light from Light, Very God from Very God, begotten not made, of one substance (*homoousios*, consubstantial) with the Father through whom all things were made; both in heaven and on earth; who for us men and for our salvation came down and was incarnate, was made man, suffered, and rose again on the third day, ascended into heaven, and is coming to judge the living and the dead; 'And in the Holy Spirit.

And those who say: "There was a time when he was not", and: "Before he was begotten he was not", or those who pretend that the Son of God is "of another substance (*hypotaxis*) or essence (*ousia*)" (than the Father) or "created" or "alterable" or "mutable", the catholic and apostolic church places under a curse.'

In addition to the Council of Nicaea of 325 A. D. there were other Councils that were held where doctrinal issues were treated. For instance, Tim Dowley said that Emperor

Theodosius, in 381 A. D., summoned the Council of Constantinople to reaffirm the faith of Nicaea. No doctrinal statement put out by the Council has survived, but at the council of Chalcedon in 451 the Nicene creed regarded as the creed of Nicaea was appropriately modified.

The Council of Constantinople, republishing the teaching of Nicaea rather than repeating his wordings, probably independently produced the Nicene Creed. The following is the Nicene Creed:

‘We believe in one God, the Father, the almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is seen and unseen. We believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father God from God, Light from the true God, begotten, not made of one being with the Father. Through him, all things were made. For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven; by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and was made man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father, He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end. We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified. He has spoken through the Prophets.

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen. (Tim Dowley, 177).

4.0 CONCLUSION

Throughout this unit you have noticed that the Christian Church went through stormy voyages, as it were. However, in spite of the controversies the Church of God landed safely. It should be stated, that at the dawn of the Reformation some of these doctrines were attacked and questioned by the Reformers. Christianity got fragmented doctrinal wise and the resultant effects were untold hardship, suffering, persecution and gruesome death. In the course of your further studies you will know more about the episodes.

5.0 SUMMARY

It is expected that from the study of this unit, you have learnt the following points:

1. Several reconciliatory councils met on doctrinal issues such as the Trinity, championed by Arius and Athanasius.
2. The Nature of the Son was also contested by Apollinaria
3. The Nature of the Holy Spirit was also discussed.
4. The questions relating to sin and salvation were bitterly debated. Pelagiasius was one of the leaders of the debate.
5. The role played by the participants in the controversies, particularly the Bishops was highlighted.
6. The unique role of the Emperor Constantine as the head of the Imperial Church was discussed.
7. The outcome of those Councils resulted into the formulation of Creeds that became one of the Christian rules of faith for many centuries.
8. The resultant effects of the creeds united the Christian Church throughout the Dark Ages.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. What will you consider as the reason for the controversies on the Trinity?
2. Discuss the role of the ‘creed’ in the Christian Church.

3. Discuss the role of Emperor Constantine at the Council of Nicaea of 325 A. D.

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS

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UNIT 2 THE RISE OF MONASTICISM AND THEIR DEVELOPMENTS

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 Monasticism Defined
 - 3.2 Asceticism and the Bible
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Monasticism began as a reaction to the worldliness that crept into the church shortly after the cessation of imperial persecution. You will recall that Emperor Constantine became the first Christian Emperor who gave recognition to Christianity. His acceptance of the Christian faith also encouraged most of his subjects to embrace Christianity. Most of them joined the church not because they were converted, rather, to give moral support to the Emperor.

In addition, the Roman society became prosperous as a result of the conquests of other nations, particularly, Carthage. There were many slaves in Rome that were purchased and made domestic servants. The influx of many people from other nations to Rome also added to the affluent society. The pleasures and comforts were visible to an extent of lowering the moral standards of the Roman society. With an abundance of wealth and comfort, there developed a serious laxity regarding the orderliness and security of the Empire. The Church of God lost her spirituality and almost became a social gathering. That unfortunate development in the church became very appalling and was abhorred by few Christians who longed for thorough spirituality. They therefore, decided to live a life of more rigorous practice of the faith than normal for the average Christian. They thereby withdrew from society and sought solitude. They tried to achieve a pure Christianity and a deep communion with God, which they considered unattainable in the existing churches. Perhaps, this brief introduction to this interesting subject will spur you into an action to study more details about monasticism as expressed in the following objectives.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

By the end of the study of this unit, you should be able to:

- trace the origin of Monasteries
- narrate the story of the founders of monasteries
- identify what the Bible says about asceticism
- describe Christian ascetics and monks
- identify the first monks
- define the monastic order
- enumerate the benefits of monasticism
- describe the negative effects of monasteries.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Monasticism Defined

S.M. Houghton defines Monasticism as a life apart from the world, a life almost exclusively devoted to meditation and prayer in accordance with certain rules and regulations prescribed by the founders of the various 'Orders' of monks. According to Houghton, Monasticism in its origin, however, can be traced to the hermit's life, a hermit being a person who desires to lead a solitary life in some secluded place, without any contact with other human beings.

3.2 Asceticism in the Bible

Perhaps, it is appropriate to find out what the Scriptures have to say about the topic in question. Tim Dowley said that parts of the New Testament have been held to encourage asceticism; but there it is advocated for practical reasons, with no suggestion that it is especially praise worthy. Jesus said that 'there are some who are eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of God', but this was specifically 'for those who can receive it'. Similarly, Paul's preference for the single life was based on his feeling that Christ's return might come very soon and that marriage ties might impede evangelism.

Tim Dowley states that, on the other hand, the New Testament strongly condemns some types of asceticism. Jesus rejected the Pharisees' scruples over clean and unclean food, and Paul attacked the teaching that it was wrong to marry or to eat certain foods.

Dowley agrees that, the Jews had traditions of asceticism, both individual and communal, reaching back into the Old Testament. The Nazarite vow involved temporary abstinence from wine and other restrictions. Later in Israelite history, prophets gathered into special groups for teaching and prayer, under the leadership of notable holy men such as Elisha.

Regular puritanical groups, such as the Rechabites, came into being later; they kept apart from normal Israelite life and aimed at a purer and more faithful devotion to God.

Accordingly, Dowley explains further that in New Testament times there were both individual and communal ascetics in Palestine. Josephus, the Jewish historian, mentions that he received some of his teaching from a hermit called Banus. John the Baptist, living a solitary ascetic life in the Judean desert, also represents this tradition. On the communal side, the best known are the Essenes, of whom the group at Qumran who produced the Dead Sea Scrolls was the most prominent. But some Essenes lived ascetic lives in the community, as did some of the Pharisees.

He asserted that, none of the earliest Christians appear to have lived as hermits or in an ascetic community. Individuals, however, were noted for their rigour of life and devotion to God. Many non-Christian Jews for his constant fasting and prayer, for example, admired James the Lord's brother. Also, in the early period, any consistent Christian life was likely to be viewed as extremely ascetic by a morally lax society. Some noble Roman ladies, who may have been Christian, are reported by pagan sources to have lived in mourning and seclusion presumably because they had no time for the pagan social life surrounding them.

The earnestness of these people may have been genuine, and their intentions sincere, but the whole practice of monasticism is contrary to the words of Jesus, for he said to his disciples: 'Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven' (Matt.5:16). Scripture certainly tells Christians that they are not 'of the world' (John 17:14), and are to keep themselves from worldliness (2 Corth.6:17), but to do this by means of a physical separation from unbelievers is not possible.

3.3 Factors that led to the Establishment of Monasteries

May be from the onset, you should acquaint yourself with some of the factors that led to the establishment of monasteries. Earl Cairns lists some as follows:

- (a) The dualistic view of flesh and spirit, with its tendency to consider flesh evil and spirit good – so characteristic of the Orient – influenced Christianity through the Gnostic and Neo-platonic movements. Retirement from the world would, it was thought, help the individual to crucify the flesh and to develop the spiritual life by meditation and ascetic acts.
- (b) One should also remember that some Scriptures seem to support the idea of separation from the world. Paul's apparent advocacy of the celibate life in 1 Corinthians 7 is a case in point. The Early Church Fathers such as Origen, Cyprian, Tertullian, and Jerome urged celibacy as the correct interpretation of such Scriptures.
- (c) Certain psychological tendencies strengthened the desire for a monastic life. In periods of crisis there is always a tendency to retreat from the harsh realities about one. The late second and third centuries saw the beginning of civil disorder that was to become so prevalent in the later history of the empire. Many left society for the monastery as a means of escape from harsh reality and the moral contamination of the times.
- (d) With the union of Church and State the possibility of martyrdom as a pledge of their faith could find a psychological substitute in the ascetic practices of monasticism. Monasticism also offered a more individualistic approach to God and salvation than the formal corporate worship of the times.
- (e) History also played a part in the decision of many to accept the life of the cloister. The increasing number of barbarians crowding into the church brought many semi-pagan practices into the church, and puritanical souls revolted against them. The increasing moral deterioration, especially of the upper classes in Roman society, caused many to despair of social reform. Monasticism became a haven for those in revolt against the growing decadence of the times. It was a living criticism of the society of the day.
- (f) Geography merits some consideration as a factor responsible for the rise of monasticism. It would have been much more difficult to carry on the monastic life in areas where the climate was more severe than in Egypt, where the monastic life has its beginnings. The warm, dry climate and the multitude of caves in the hills along the banks of the Nile were conducive to separation of the individual from society. Small gardens, along with the resources of food provided by the nearby Nile, made securing of food by the individual fairly easy. Nearness to such a place where there was virtually nothing that linked to civilization was an impetus for personal reflection, meditation, sobriety and piety.

3.4 The Origin of Monasticism

In the previous unit, you studied about doctrinal controversies in the church that shook the church to its foundation and how the church finally came up with a set of creeds. Interestingly, while these fiery great controversies were ranging, another movement began, which in the Middle Ages grew to immense proportions. This was the rise of the monastic spirit. Hurlbut said that in the early church there were neither monks nor nuns. He contends further that the Christians lived in families, and though keeping

apart from idolatrous associations, were still members of society in general. But in the period now under consideration we note the beginnings and early progress of a movement toward the monastic life.

During the days of persecution many Christians tried to find safety in seclusion, and to grow in holiness and godliness by living a life of consecration and self-denial. Later, during the reign of Constantine the Great, when the days of persecution had passed, and the Church and the world drew together, many more Christians thought they could please God by separating themselves as far as possible from the world and living in seclusion; not as hermits, however, for the most part, but in small companies. As stated earlier, after Christianity became dominant in the empire, worldliness crept into the church and became prevalent. Many who sought a higher life were dissatisfied with their surroundings, and retired from the world. Either alone or in groups they dwelt in seclusion, seeking to cultivate the spiritual life by meditation, prayer, and ascetic habits. This monastic spirit began in Egypt, where it was fostered by the warm climate and the few necessities for living.

3.5 The Founders of Monasteries

As stated above, Egypt was the birthplace of Monasticism, for it was there, in the middle of the third century, that a certain Antonius secluded himself from the world for religious purposes. Houghton said that while Antonius was a young man he was so deeply impressed by the story of the rich young ruler (Mark 10:17-27) that he decided to apply the words

of Jesus to himself – ‘If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come, take up the cross, and follow me’. Houghton further explains that Antonius sold all his valuable property and distributed the money among the poor. He then said farewell to the world, to relations and friends, and lived alone – first near his home, then in a tomb, later in a disused fort, and finally on a mountain. S. M. Houghton added that, twice a year his friends brought him food, which he ate with a little salt. He drank nothing but water. He decided not to comb or cut his hair, except once a year, at Easter. He never took a bath. Men of his type are often called anchorites (those who ‘take to the bush’). They believe that thereby they are able to reach to higher degrees of holiness than others. Antonius, we are told, lived until he was 106 years of age.

One peculiar form of asceticism was adopted by the pillar-saints, of whom the first was a Syrian monk, Simeon, called Stylites, "of the pillar". ‘Stylos’ is the Greek word for a pillar. Simeon imagined that by living on the top of a pillar, his soul would benefit. Therefore, he left the monastery in 423 A.D and built in succession several pillars, each higher than its predecessor, the last one sixty feet high and four feet broad. On these pillars in turn he lived for thirty-seven years. Thousands emulated his life, and Syria held many pillar-saints between the fifth and twelfth centuries. But this form of life never obtained followers in Europe.

The monastic movement in Europe spread more slowly than in Asia and Africa. The individual, solitary life of the ascetic soon gave place in Europe to the establishment of monasteries, where work was united with prayer. Benedict’s Rule, by which the Western monasteries were generally organized and directed, was promulgated in 529 A.D. The monastic spirit grew through the Middle Ages (Hurlbut p.69).

Also, Houghton submits that in the West of Europe, monasticism originated in the work of a monk named Benedict who, having lived for a time in a cave as a hermit, established a monastery near Naples in the year 529. Its members were called Benedictines. He further stressed that

the three essential requirements or vows for these monks, as prescribed by Abbot Benedict, were poverty, chastity, and obedience. By obedience was meant strict adherence to the laws of the Church and the rules of the monastic Order. Houghton explains further that the Benedictine Order became immensely popular and widespread. To it belonged a monk named Augustine who brought forty monks to Canterbury in Angle-land (England) in the year 597. Of course, this Augustine and the Augustine previously mentioned as Bishop of Hippo Regis in North Africa, were totally different persons, living in different period, but sometimes they are confused. The Augustine who came to Canterbury established a Benedictine monastery there.

In the British Isles, one of the earliest and best-known of monks was The Venerable Bede who lived at Jarrow-on-Tyne, and is known as 'the father of English history'. So far as is known he never traveled outside the Kingdom of Northumbria. He lived from about the year 673 to the year 735, and was probably the most learned man of his age in England. He knew Latin, Greek and Hebrew, and was familiar with the classical literature of ancient Greece and Rome, and also with the writings of Ambrose, Augustine and Jerome. He himself wrote *The Ecclesiastical History of the English Nation* which tells us most of the things we know about the church in England from Roman days until Bede's death.

3.6 Life in Monasteries

We have already noted the origin of the monastic life in the caves of Upper Egypt, during the fourth century. In Europe the movement was at first of slow growth, but the Middle Ages showed a great development of the monastic spirit, both among men and women. The number of monks and nuns increased enormously, with results both good and evil.

In the East the early ascetics lived apart, each in his own cave or hut, or upon his pillar, but in Western Europe they formed communities, dwelling together. As these settlements grew in size and in number, some form of organization and government became necessary, and in process of time four great orders arose.

The Rule of Benedict is based on two activities, prayer and work. The individual monk, had to show high moral character, and Benedict insisted that a monk should remain in the same monastery where he had taken his vows. The abbot was the spiritual head of the monastery and exercised all the normal discipline.

In every aspect all shall follow the Rule as their guide; and let no one depart from it without good reason. Let him not lean on his own inclinations, or brazenly argue with his abbot... The abbot, for his part, should do everything in the fear of the Lord and in obedience to the Rule, knowing that he will have to account to God for all his decisions.

If a brother is insubordinate or disobedient, proud or a grumbler, or in any way acting contrary to the holy Rule and despising the orders of his seniors, let him, according to the Lord's commandment, be privately warned twice by his seniors. If he does not improve, let him be publicly rebuked before them all. But if even then he does not correct himself, he should be excommunicated, if he understands how severe this penalty is. If however, he is beyond conviction, he should be physically punished

The brothers shall take turns to wait on each other so that no one is excused from kitchen work, unless prevented by sickness or taken up with some vital business... An hour before each meal the week's servers are to receive a cup of drink and a piece of bread over and above their ration, so that they can wait on their brothers without grumbling or under fatigue.

At the brother's meal times there should always be a reading... There shall be complete silence at table and no whispering or any voice except

the reader's should be heard. The brethren should pass to each other in turn whatever food is needed so that no one needs to ask for anything. If anything should be wanted, ask for it by sign language rather than speech.

Above all, care must be taken of the sick... Baths should be available to the sick as often as necessary: to the healthy, and especially the young, less often. The eating of meat shall also be allowed to the sick and the delicate to aid recovery. But when they have got better, they shall all abstain from flesh, as normal.

In winter that is from 1 November until Easter as far as possible they must get up at the eighth hour of the night, so that they rest for a little over half the night and rise when they have had a good sleep. But the time that remains after 'vigils' shall be spent in study...

As the prophet says, 'seven times in the day do I praise thee.' We will complete this sacred number seven if, at lauds, at the first, third, sixth, ninth hours, at vesper time and at compline we carry out duties of our service.

Idleness is the enemy of the soul. Therefore, at fixed times, brothers should be in holy reading. We believe these ought to be arranged in this way: from Easter until 1 October, on coming out of Prime they shall do the work needing attention until the fourth hour. From the fourth hour until about sixth hour, they should concentrate on reading. After the meal on the sixth hour, they shall rest on their beds in complete silence; anyone who wishes may read to himself as long as he does not disturb anyone else. None shall be said a little early, about the middle of the eight-hour; after that they shall work at their tasks until evening.

3.7 Benefits of Monasticism

Without gainsay, monasticism offered a lot of comfort and solace to the society they lived. The following could be considered as some of the good results of monasticism:

- i. Through ages of war, almost of anarchy, there were centers of peace and quiet in the monasteries, where many in trouble found refuge.
- ii. The monasteries gave hospitality to travelers, the sick, and the poor. Both the hotel and the modern hospital grew out of the hospice or monastery.
- iii. Often the monastery or the convent was a refuge and protection to the helpless, especially to women and children.
- iv. The early monasteries both in Great Britain and on the Continent promoted agriculture by the example of the monks in the drainage, control of watercourses, the building of roads, and instruction in cultivating the soil.
- v. In the libraries of the monasteries were preserved many of the ancient works in literature, both classical and Christian.
- vi. The monks copied books, wrote lives of distinguished men, chronicles of their own time, and histories of the past. Many of the most precious religious works, such as the songs of St Bernard and *The Imitation of Christ* by Thomas A. Kempis, have been given to the world by the monasteries. Without their historical writings, the Middle Ages would be a blank indeed.
- vii. In the education of youth, the monks were the principal teachers, almost the only teachers; nearly all the universities and schools of the Middle Ages arose in the abbeys and monasteries.

- viii. In the diffusion of the gospel the monks were the early missionaries. They met the incoming barbarians and converted them to Christianity. Of these St. Augustine (not the great theologian) who came from Rome to England (597 A.D.) and St. Patrick, who began the evangelization of Ireland about 431 A.D. were examples among many monastic missionaries.

3.8 Negative Effects of Monasticism

It was also observed that there were evil results in the monastic system. According to Hurlbut, some of these evils were apparent even when the institution was at its best, but they grew more manifest in the later periods, when monasticism degenerated, lost its early fervor, its lofty aims, and its strict discipline. Among these evils were the following:

- i. Monasticism set forth the celibate life as the higher life, which is unnatural and almost virtually unscriptural or scripturally debatable.
- ii. It enforced the monastic life upon untold thousands of the noblest men and women of their age. Homes were established and families reared, not by the best men and women, but by those of lower ideals.
- iii. It secluded multitudes not only from family life, but also from social, civic, and national life. Alike in peace and in war, good men who were needed in the state, were idle in the monasteries.
- iv. The growing wealth of the monasteries led to lax discipline, to luxury, to idleness, to open immorality. Many of the converts became sunken in iniquity.
- v. Originally the monasteries were supported by the labor of their occupants; but in the later ages their work almost entirely ceased, and the monks and nuns were maintained by the revenues of their constantly increasing property, and by contributions extorted from the families of the rich and poor.
- vi. All real estate owned by the monastic houses was exempt from taxation. Thus an increasing and finally insupportable burden was laid upon society outside the converts. Their rapacity led to their extinction.

4.0 CONCLUSION

Monasticism developed as the Christian Church grew cold on the spiritual realm. Christians who wanted to worship God in Spirit and in Truth did not enjoy their fellowship with the influx of the recent converts whom they described as 'babies in faith'. They left their immediate community and hid themselves in caves in wilderness. They were able to meditate and gave their lives to God. The abuses that eventually developed in the monasteries became strong warnings to heaven bound Christians that the only safe ground for any Christian to dwell is in the presence of the Almighty Father. As one of the gospel writers says, "All other ground is sinking sand"

5.0 SUMMARY

Perhaps, you have noted during the course of your studies the following points as major parts of monasticism. These are;

The origin and founders of monasteries.

Factors that influenced their establishments

The Benedictines founded by St. Benedict in 529 A.D.

The benefits of monasticism includes the following:

- a. The monasteries gave hospitality to travelers, the sick and the poor.

- b. Monks promoted agriculture and gave instruction in cultivating the soil.
 - c. The monks helped in construction of roads and bridges.
 - d. Monks became copyists before the invention of the Printing Press.
 - e. The monks were principal teachers in the education of the youth.
 - f. The beginning of nearly all the Universities and Schools in the Middle Ages could be traced to the abbeys and monasteries.
 - g. The monks were the early missionaries.
- Some of the evil effects of monasticism were considered:
- a. It enforced the monastic life upon many people.
 - b. It secluded thousands from civic, national and social life, because some of them were idle in the monasteries.
 - c. The growing wealth of the monasteries led to lax discipline and to open immorality.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Discuss the factors that influenced the establishment of monasteries.
2. Discuss the failures and successes of Monasticism.
3. Discuss the life in Monasteries.

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UNIT 3 THE GROWTH OF POWER IN THE ROMAN CHURCH

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- 7.0 References/Further Readings

1.0 INTRODUCTION

You are now studying the third unit of the second module of your course. This unit will address how the Roman Church came to the prominent position amongst its equals. It will interest you to note that there were about six major cities where Christianity had had major impacts on the lives of their citizens. Some of these were Jerusalem, Antioch, Alexandria Constantinople and Rome. Most of these Churches except Rome were situated in the Eastern part of the Roman Empire with their Patriarchs in charge. Therefore, we shall study in this unit how the Church in Rome took the prominent place among its equals. The following objectives will also help you to understand the dynamics in the growth of the Roman Church.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit you should be able to:

- list the reasons why Emperor Constantine relocated his headquarters from Rome to Constantinople
- describe how the vacuum of imperial authority at Rome was filled by Church power
- describe how Rome asserted apostolic authority for its claim
- describe the effect of social ministry in the growth of the Roman Church.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 The Founding of Constantinople

As you studied earlier in the previous units, Christianity became the religion of the Emperor and the Church came directly under the control of Emperor Constantine. He was the one who chaired the Council of Nicaea in 325 A. D. where issues on Christian doctrines were resolved. And as long as Emperors made Rome the seat of their Empire, the Roman Church was under imperial control. At that time in history, Patriarchs in other major cities were not under the control of the Bishop of Rome.

However, Constantine decided to look for a new capital, a better city where the Roman Empire will be well coordinated. He succeeded in locating one. He selected the Greek city of Byzantium, situated at the meeting of the two continents, Europe and Asia. We were told that the site of the city is so fortified by nature, that in all its history of more than twenty five centuries it has rarely been taken by enemies while

its rival Rome has been overcome and ravaged many times. The Emperor moved his capital to the Eastern part of the Roman Empire in 330 A. D. and named his new capital after himself Constantinople "the city of Constantine". Interestingly, soon after the Emperor vacated Rome, the Bishop of Rome made Rome the head of Christendom, although, it was a gradual process.

Hurlbut said that Rome asserted its right to be the capital. The Roman Church was therefore gaining power and prestige, and the Bishop of Rome, now entitled "Papa, father" later modified into Pope, was claiming the throne of authority over the entire Christian world and recognized as the head of the Europe west of the Adriatic Sea.

There are four major factors that brought the Church at Rome to the position of leadership. They are: the organizational structures of the Roman church fashioned after imperial rule, the assertion of apostolic sanction, character of Roman church and bishop and the orthodoxy of the Roman church. We shall consider them subsequently.

3.2 The Organizational Structures of the Roman Church Fashioned after Imperial Rule

You will recall that the Roman Empire as an extended empire includes the Northern part of Africa, Palestine, Jewish nation, some parts of Middle East and nearly all the nations in the modern day Europe. Mostly, an Emperor who sometimes ruled arbitrarily governed that vast Empire. By lifestyle, Emperors were autocratic and absolutely controlled the affairs of their Empire since there was only one head in charge of the Roman Empire; the Roman Church also decided to make the Bishop of Rome the head of the Christian Church. You will remember that there were other cities that longed to have the spiritual head resided in their domains, as well. These cities include Jerusalem, Antioch in Syria, Alexandria, in Egypt and Constantinople. There were frequent contests for precedence and supremacy. Hurlbut added that the struggle was eventually narrowed down to two, before long. The choice was to be made between the Patriarchs of Constantinople and the Pope of Rome. Already, the Pope had followed organizational structures of the Imperial Rome. Since Rome was the seat of the Imperial authority similarly without any question, the Bishop of Rome must be the head of Christian Dom. In addition to that assertion, the Bishop of Rome made use of the scriptures to lay claim on the Superiority of Rome above other centers. You will learn this in the next section, which is known as the Apostolic Succession (Hurlbut P. 71).

3.3 The Assertion of Apostolic Sanction

Perhaps, one is safe to state that not all the History of the Christian Church is fully made known to us. Some records are authentic to an extent while some are pseudo in nature. There are many claims although carefully documented and preserved but lack merits since you and I were not around at that time in history. Those claims and writings are subjects of verification or at worse we take them by faith. One of these claims was the assertion of the Apostolic Sanction.

Hurlbut said that Rome asserted apostolic authority for its claims. He adds that Rome was the only Church, which could name as its founder two Apostles, St. Peter and St. Paul. According to Hurlbut, Rome claimed that Peter was the first bishop of Rome, which is now part of the tradition. If, accordingly, St. Peter was the first bishop of Rome, and the meaning of the Greek word bishop means a ruler, then St. Peter might have ruled with authority over clergyman and the Church, in general.

The bishop of Rome made use of the following two scriptural passages: Mathew 16:18 and John 21:16&17 "And I tell you, you are Peter, on this rock I will build my Church" The Bishop of Rome held on to this quotation to prove that the great Apostle was in the business before other centers. Additional text is that of John 21:15&17 where Jesus Christ

appeared to his disciples the third time, after resurrection. "Simon Peter, Simon son of John, do you love me more than these? He said to him, yes Lord; you know that I love you. Jesus said to him, "feed my lambs".... "Tend my Sheep".... "Feed my Sheep". It was then argued that if Peter was the first head of the Church, then his successor, the Pope of Rome must continue his authority (Hurlbut, 71).

Concerning the Petrine theory, Cairns said that by 590 A. D. the teaching was generally accepted. Peter had been given "ecclesiastical primogeniture" over his fellow apostles, and the Apostolic Succession had passed on his superior position from him to the bishops of Rome (Cairns, 157).

3.4 Character of Roman Church and Bishop

Another major contributing factor, you should note, about the consolidation of the Roman Church was the qualities of the Bishops. As it were, the bishops were square pegs in square holes. The Bishop of Rome was well disciplined and talented. They were equal to the task ahead of them. They were determined to succeed and thereby surmounted all odds militating against their consolidation. Some of these bishops were Damascus I (366-384), Leo (440-461), Gregory and others. Hurlbut support the above views in the following paragraph.

The character of the Roman Church and its early heads strongly supported these claims. The bishops at Rome were in the main, and in far greater measure than those in Constantinople, strong and wise forceful men, who made their presence felt throughout the Church. Much of the old imperial quality, which had made Rome the mistress of the world, still dwelt in the Roman nature (Hurlbut, 71).

3.5 Orthodoxy of the Roman Church

Another point that made the Church of Rome ahead of others, particularly, that of Constantinople was that of its orthodoxy. Perhaps, you need to be reminded of one of the traits of character of Rome is conservatism. Rome resisted all sects, unlike Constantinople, Syria and Greece where speculative thinking were permitted in matter of doctrines, thus, made way for inroad of heresies in the Church.

3.6 Practical Christianity of Roman Church

You have studied about four major factors that brought the Church at Rome to the position of leadership. Now you are going to study the greatest factor that aided the Church of Rome to the state of prominence. The Roman Church demonstrated beyond reasonable doubt the caring and concerned spirit for the: less privileged, downtrodden, poor, afflicted, orphans and homeless. Mathew 25 was considered and put into use, on daily basis, in the Church of Rome. Jesus Christ gave the following words of commendation, to a caring Church; "I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me water to drink. I was a stranger and you welcomed me. I was naked and you clothed me. I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me" (Matt. 25:35-36).

The Church in Rome lived what they professed. The Church was, indeed, a sermon of its own without public crusades and the influx into the Church became great. The new converts met nearly all their needs and they sang the song of the praises of the Roman Church wherever they went.

3.7 The Relocation of the Capital

Maybe at this juncture, you need to refresh your memory of the previous sections in this unit, particularly section 3.1 where you learnt about the removal of the Roman Empire capital from Rome to Constantinople. The Emperor was directly the over-lord of the Church in the new capital. But at Rome, the situation changed. The Bishop of Rome was absolutely in control of the Church. He was accorded due respect and honour. He became the first citizen and enjoyed full support from Christian bodies.

And because the capital was moved far away to Constantinople, Europe then looked to Rome with reverence and a feeling of loyalty toward the Roman Pontiff replaced that of the Roman Emperor.

Hurlbut said that it was not long when nations of Western Europe gave recognition to the Roman bishop or Pope as the leading authority in the general Church. Thus, at the Council of Constantinople of 381 A. D. under the auspices of the Emperor Theodosius, Rome was placed first in recognition and Constantinople took the second position.

About the primacy of the bishop of Rome, Cairns gave the following insight into the topic. He said that of the five great Patriarchs of the Church in Jerusalem, Antioch, Alexandria, Constantinople, and Rome – only the Patriarch of Constantinople and the bishop of Rome lived in cities of world consequence by 590 AD. According to Cairns, the bishop of Jerusalem lost prestige after the Jewish rebellion against Rome during the second century. He submitted that Alexandria and Antioch rapidly declined in importance when the Muslim hordes overran them in the seventh century. Therefore the bishops of Rome and of Constantinople were left as the two most prominent clerical leaders by 590 AD. Cairns also noted that Emperor Valentinian II, in an edict in 445 AD., recognized the supremacy of the bishop of Rome in spiritual matters. Thus both State and ecclesiastical authorities recognized the claims of the bishops of Rome to primacy in the Church (Cairns, 158).

3.8 The Missionary Efforts

One of the effective weapons used by bishop of Rome to propagate and prove his primacy was the ministry of monks. Missionary monks were commissioned to proclaim the gospel throughout most of all the countries in Europe. According to Cairns, the monks were loyal to the bishop of Rome, as they carried out assignments given to them with every seriousness and in complete obedience. He said that, even Clovis, the leaders of the Franks, was loyal supporters of the authority of the bishop of Rome. Clovis I was king of the Franks and ruler of the larger part of Gaul from 481 to 511. This period was important especially when the Roman Empire was gradually changing to Europe. His dynasty, the Merovingians, lasted for over 200 years. This king was important in relation to establishment of his kingdom's religious and political ideologies (Encyclopaedia Britannica). For instance, Gregory I sent Augustine one of the monks, to England, and that monk and his successors were able to bring

Britain under the sway of Rome. Interestingly, wherever, the missionary monks went, they insisted that their converts yield allegiance to the bishop of Rome. May be one can conclude that the influence of the Roman Catholic Church that is presently much felt around the globe, could be traced to the conscious efforts of monks missionary of the early time.

Without mincing words, you now understand those factors that made the bishop of Rome the head among his equals. In the subsequent units, you will study more in detail about the power of the Roman Catholic Church.

4.0 CONCLUSION

Without any controversy, you have discovered for yourself, how the Roman Church came to limelight through hard work and act of charity. The leaders were men of great intellect who knew what to do and they performed. Perhaps you will agree with this popular saying, there is no royal road to success in life and that there are no substitutes to hard work, diligence and commitment. Even, as of today, the Roman Church has one of the best systems of operations.

5.0 SUMMARY

If you have gone through this unit conscientiously, you should be aware of the following points:

1. The transfer of the Roman capital to Constantinople
2. The Church at Rome had free hand to operate while that of Constantinople was under the surveillance of the Emperor.
3. The Church in Rome patterned its system of government after the imperial rule, that is, only one head at a time.
4. The Apostolic Succession was also used to stabilize the Roman Church.
5. The character of Roman Church and of its bishops played a prominent role in her growth.
6. The Church of Rome remained conservative and all attempts of sects to have inroad to the doctrines of the Church were quashed.
7. The Roman Church showed practical Christianity.
8. The absence of the Emperor and his authority paved way to the popularity of the Roman Church and became the leading authority in the Western Roman Empire.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Comment on the “Apostolic Succession” theory.
2. Discuss the factors that led to the supremacy of the Roman Church.

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS

- Cairns, Earle. E. (1981). *Christianity through the Century: A History of the Christian Church*. (Rev. & Enlarged Ed.) Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, pp. 157-161.
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UNIT 4 THE END OF THE WESTERN ROMAN EMPIRE

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
- 3.1 Causes of Downfall: Relocation of the Capital City from Rome to Constantinople
- 3.2 Roman Riches Coveted
- 3.3 Civil Wars Weakened the Empire
- 3.4 Economic Decay
- 3.5 Inability of Romans to Fight in Wars
- 3.6 The Coming of the Invaders
- 3.7 The Invading Tribes: The Visigoths
- 3.8 The Vandal under Genseric
- 3.9 The Burgundians, 414 A.D.
- 3.10 The Franks 420 A.D
- 3.11 Saxons and Angles, 440 A.D

	3.12	The Huns under Attila, 450 A.D
T	3.14	The Fall of Rome in 476 A.D
4.0		Conclusion
5.0		Summary
6.0		Tutor-Marked Assignment
7.0		References/Further Readings

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

one of the most important units you will study to gain insight into the development and fall of many nations. May be, you need to remind yourself of the popular saying, that, absolute power corrupts absolutely. This unit enumerates reasons for the fall of great empires, such as the Roman Empire that survived for more than a thousand years.

The Roman Empire, which was iron-like in nature and character that existed more than a thousand years fell flat before his attackers. If nations will learn good lessons from the past they will not be at each other's throats. Perhaps, pleasures and easy life are tools in the hands of the enemies to prey on one's life. Therefore you need to know that the difficult thing in life is how to manage prosperity. The history of the fall of nations, not only of the Roman Empire tends to lead towards indiscipline and reckless spending and unnecessary rancor.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

By the time you finish studying this unit, you should be able to:

- narrate how the Roman frontiers were left without much protection
- identify the effects of pleasure and luxury among the upper class Romans
- identify the effects of violence and wanton destruction in the Empire
- identify the effects of civil wars on the Empire
- identify the effects of the rapidity of the invading tribes.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Relocation of the Capital City from Rome

One of the reasons, firstly, for you to consider has to do with the relocation of the seat of the Empire to Constantinople. Constantine was not arbitrary in the choice of his new capital city. Hurlbut said that the city of Rome was not fortified with natural barriers as that of the Greek city of Byzantium. According to Hurlbut, Constantine felt insecure by staying in Rome to administer his great empire. Instances were given that in the earlier times of the Republic, the city of Rome had been more than once besieged by foreign foes. Also, in its later history, armies from the provinces had many times enthroned and dethroned emperors. Thus, there is the need for a more secured place.

The division of the empire soon followed the building of the new capital. The boundaries were so wide and the danger of invasion from barbarians around was so imminent, that one emperor could no longer protect his vast dominions. Diocletian had begun the division of authority in 305 A.D. Theodosius completed the separation. Therefore, from the time of Theodosius the Roman world was divided into Eastern and Western, separated by the Adriatic Sea. The Eastern Empire was known as Greek, the Western as Latin, from the prevailing language in

each section. Humanly speaking, Constantine sought for security and continuity of the Roman Empire (Hurlbut p.72).

Unfortunately, that division of the empire and the relocation of its capital to Constantinople did not help the matter. Rather, lives of millions of the Romans in the West were exposed to danger. The barbarians saw the events as an inducement for their races to perfect their acts of destruction and vandalism. Please, note that the word barbarians is not used as a derogatory term, rather, the Roman used the word to describe other races and tribes except themselves, the Jewish and the Greeks. It was not long after the relocation of the capital city that the moral and political decay continued unabated. Hurlbut says that within twenty five years after Constantine's death in 337 A.D., the barriers on the border of the Western empire were broken down and hordes of barbarians were every where pouring in upon the helpless provinces seizing territory and establishing independent kingdoms. Therefore, lack of strong fortification, and adequate protection, was one of the reasons for the fall of the Western Roman Empire (Hurlbut, p.72).

3.2 Romans Riches Coveted

Another point for your consideration is the Roman's affluent society. The empire had many rich cities with abundance that led to the downfall of the Western Roman Empire. They had large fields, full of harvest and possessed almost all the necessity of life. Contrary to the above scenario were the poor, warlike uncivilized and wandering tribes surrounding them who were in dire need of those possessions. When however, the opportunity came the barbarians had inroads and invaded the Western part of the Empire that was unprotected and occupied those territories.

3.3 Civil Wars also weakened the Empire

May be you should note also that not many nations can survive many civil wars. The damages are not usually repairable. The loss of lives and many other valuable thing, usually impedes rapid recovery and restoration. And that was the case of the Western Roman Empire. It was said that civil wars were carried out through generations by claimants to the imperial throne. Accordingly, the emperors were no longer chosen by the senate, but when one was slain each army in a different province set up its own candidate and the decision was not by votes but by arms. It was later reported that in ninety years, eighty leaders were hailed as emperor and claiming the throne. There was no definite line of succession and that resulted into chaos. Cities were plundered, armies were extravagantly paid and the whole empire was impoverished by the ambition of men for power. The end result of those unpleasant memories was that garrisons were called away from the borders, and there was no one to protect. The land was left open and helpless against the barbarians (Hurlbut p.74).

3.4 Economic Decay

You may recollect that, for a while, the economy of the Roman Empire was based on slaves. Meaningful living in Rome was based on Agriculture and its produce. Sadly, slaves were used to manually cultivate and till the land. As long as there were conquests to make, Romans felt happy and secured. They were so rich in slaves that they engaged slave in other domestic works. Even, during the breakthrough of the Industrial, Agricultural and technological revolution, average Roman farmers felt unconcerned. If you could recall Romans were known for conservatism and reference. The Romans did not change with time, and their farmers were left behind. Since there was no more influx of slaves, agricultural activities became dwindling, thus famine took its toll. In addition to the reduction of slaves, the plagues of the second and third centuries in Europe sharply reduced the populations. Those

unfortunate incidents will lead you to the next point of your study (Edward Burns, 263).

3.5 Inability of Romans to Fight in Wars

We have previously addressed the wealth of the Empire in this unit. The Romans hired men for labour and depended mostly on them for defense and gainful employment. Since they had more money, they could not fight personally by themselves any more in war fronts. In those days, armies fought face to face in physical combats. The barbarians had upper hands in war arenas, because they had trained themselves in the acts of warfare.

Also, to compound the issues, we were told that, the Romans had hired many of the barbarians to man the legions, who for a time often fought in defense of Rome against their own people. Most of the later armies, their generals, and even many Emperors themselves came from the barbarian races. In such arrangement, there could not be total commitment to the Roman Empire (Hurlbut, 73).

3.6 The Coming of the Invaders

Perhaps, there are forces beyond human beings that always lead to their displacement from their original habitations. Some of these forces could be wars, natural disasters, famine, draught, epidemics, tsunami, earthquake, flood and other calamities. The above catastrophes sometimes are beyond the control of ordinary persons. However, in our age, when a nation is threatened with disasters, neighbouring countries come to their rescue and set her back on her feet. The role of the Red Cross and other Voluntary agencies could not be forgotten in such cases when the unexpected happens. We were told that the movement of the Asiatic tribes into Europe was caused by one of the evils mentioned above.

As a student of Church history, you will recall that the Lord made man and placed him in his original habitation and as men began to multiply, they spread all over the globe. Some left their places of birth in search of better lands and severally changed their locations. Perhaps, that was the case of a tribe in Central Asia, the Huns, under their king Attila. Probably, they were afflicted with draught and needed a more habitable place for their race. Although, we may not know the whole truth about their movement, one thing is certain, at least, they were not satisfied with their condition on ground in the land of their nativity. They left their home and turned to the West, towards Europe. Perhaps, the Huns were notable warriors and thereby very ruthless and destructive. Therefore, as they moved towards Western Europe, they came in contact with other races, which were less sophisticated both in warfare and cultural wise. Therefore, the Huns under Attila their king did not find much resistance from the original settlers. In order for them to save their lives, they gave way to the Huns and migrated into the Western part. You will study these tribes in the next section.

3.7 The Invading Tribes: The Visigoths

Now, let us study these tribes or races as they invaded Western Europe in search of greener pastures. As stated earlier, they were chased away from their original place of settlement. And in order for them to survive they migrated into a new land. They met people who were already cultured who have settled in their lands for centuries. Some of the tribes or races that came to Europe for protection and in search of better lands were the Visigoths under the leadership of Alaric. You will recall that at that point in time, the frontiers of the Western Roman Empire were porous. There were no strong fortifications to protect the territories from assaults of the foes. The Visigoths capitalized upon the weakness of the Western Roman Empire, swept over Greece and

Italy, captured and spoiled Rome in 410 AD and set up a kingdom in Southern France (Hurlbut p.74).

3.8 The Vandals under Gaiseric

The next set of tribes or races that moved to Europe were the Vandals under their leader, Genseric, in 406. The groups marched across France to Spain and then into Northern Africa, conquering these countries. The Vandals actually vandalized all they saw and met. They could be called destroyers of anything good and progressive.

3.9 The Burgundians, 414 A. D

The third race that invaded the Western Roman Empire was the Burgundians, in 414. They quickly crossed the Rhine and established a kingdom having Strasburg as its centre. They were not violent; rather, they adjusted quickly to their new acquired fortunes.

3.10 The Franks 420 A. D

The next tribe to attack the Western Roman Empire was from Germany, in 420 A.D. The Franks seized all Northern Gaul, which they named Francia. The tribe settled well and mixed with the settlers on ground. They set up their kingdom and had many able leaders. One of their kings was Clovis who became a Christian and many of his people accepted Christianity. The Franks had the desire that all should embrace Christianity. Therefore, throughout the Northern Europe, they made Christianity compulsory for everybody and those who were not enthusiastic about the Christian faith were forced. Thus, the gospel was made known to many nations in the Northern part of Europe.

3.11 Saxons and Angles, 440 A. D

The next tribes were the Saxons and Angles from Denmark and other parts in the North in 440 AD. As you are aware from this unit, the weakness of the Western Roman Empire made the Roman legions to desert Britain. There were neither funds to maintain the hired armies, nor were the Roman willing to fight to defend their frontier. Therefore, when the invaders came, it was easy to make in roads, generation after generation.

3.12 The Huns under Attila, 450 A. D

The last tribes you will study among the invaders were the Huns, under their merciless King, Attila. Previously, you have noted how that tribe displaced and subjugated other tribes they met on their way from Asia. After the Huns destroyed their new acquired settlements, they set out again for new fields. At that time, they came close to the frontiers of the Western Roman Empire. There they saw the prosperous lands before them and coveted them. Therefore, about 450 AD., the Huns invaded Italy and threatened to destroy, along with the Roman Empire, the new established small Kingdoms of the Goths, Vandals and Franks. Since Attila could not be persuaded to settle the matter amicably, it resulted to a bloody conflict in 451 A. D., at the battle of Chalons. Under the leadership of Rome, the battle was against the Huns, as they suffered a lot of casualties. Perhaps, one can state that, the battle of Chalons settled matters of invasions from Asia, at least, for the next 20 years. The settlers, who had just formed new small kingdom, developed their own civilizations and ran their own affairs by themselves (Hurlbut, 75).

3.13 The Fall of Rome in 476 A. D

You have followed the trends of events as they unfolded in the Western Roman Empire. At least, from your studies of this Unit, you have noted that the Western Roman Empire had suffered series of attacks from the invaders. They had apportioned the large territory among themselves,

and thereby reduced the one time Great Empire to a small territory. Even, at that point in time the Emperors who were in the East, made no provision for adequate security to protect their frontiers. It was not difficult for any experienced general to exploit the situation. Therefore, in 476, the Heruli, one of the small German tribes under their king Odoacer came to Rome, took possession of it and dethroned Augustulus, the boy emperor. King Odoacer, thereafter, took the title "King of Italy". From that year, 476, the Western Roman Empire came to an end. It will interest you to note that from the time when the foundation of Rome was laid and when it turned to state and finally to an empire was fifteen hundred years (1500years) for everything that has a beginning will surely have an end. The ancient empires have come and gone, but left lessons behind for younger generations to learn. Perhaps, you should learn lessons from history so that you may avoid all possible fall. (Hurlbut, 75).

4.0 CONCLUSION

From the beginning of this unit, you have noticed how the mighty kingdom had fallen. It was a gradual decay caused by a gross of indiscipline. When a nation does not follow the path of justice and fairness, it will soon fall flat as ancient kingdoms did. There is nothing morally wrong for an individual or a nation to be blessed with wealth. The only question one should strive to answer is how the wealth is distributed or used for the benefit of masses. The Romans felt self-sufficient until the tide changed for the worse and the Western part of the empire was swept away in 476 A.D., although, the Eastern empire, endured until 1453 A. D.

5.0 SUMMARY

Throughout this unit, you have learnt the following point about how:

- i. the transfer of the seat of the Empire to Constantinople from Rome, in 330 A.D. became an inducement to the foes for early invasions of the Western Roman Empire.
- ii. the downfall of the Western Roman Empire was caused by many factors and one of them was lack of patriotic spirit.
- iii. how luxury and wealth spoilt the Romans into an extent that they were not willing to work with their own hands, rather, they hired labour to do most of their national and domestic assignments.
- iv. the Civil Wars caused by successions to the imperial throne, also, wrecked the Roman Empire.
- v. the coming of the barbarians from the interior of Asia in search of better land and fortune.
- vi. the six major tribes that invaded Roman Empire were the Huns under their King Attila the Visigoths under the leadership of Alaric, and the Vandals under Geneseric. Others were the Burgundians, the Franks and the Saxons and Angles.
- vii. the Battle of Chalons, 451 A.D. which was a decisive one in favour of the Europeans
- viii. the Heruli, a small German tribe, under their king, Odoacer conquered the city of Rome in 476 and took the title of "King of Italy". Thus ended the western part of the Roman Empire.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Discuss the invasions of the barbarians.
2. Comment fully on factors that led to the downfall of the Western Roman Empire.

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- Cairns, Earle. E. (1981). *Christianity Through the Century: A History of the Christian Church*. (Rev. & Enlarged Ed.) Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House.
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UNIT 5 **CONSOLIDATION OF PAPAL POWERS AND THE RISE OF ISLAM**

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
- 3.1 The Progress of the Papal Power: Righteous Living of Bishops of Rome
- 3.2 The Historical Background of Gregory I
- 3.3 The Claims of Gregory I
- 3.4 The Zenith of Papal Power
- 3.5 Papal Supremacy under Innocent III
- 3.6 The Decline in Papal Power
- 3.7 The Rise of Islam
- 3.8 The Progress of Islam
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Readings

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In this unit, you will study two important topics, though, not closely related. These are the Consolidation of Papal Powers and the rise of Islam. In the Module 2, Unit 3 of your study, you studied how Bishop of Rome came into prominent position among his equals. You also learnt that the Roman Church cared for the poor, the needy and the less privileged. In addition, she had capable leaders who stood for orthodoxy. The Roman Bishop was a tower of strength during the sacking of Rome in 410 A.D by Alaric and his Visigothic followers. You will also recall that the Emperor was far away in his capital, Constantinople when the imperial throne in the West fell into the hands of King Odacer, the Heruli and his people, in 476 A.D. The Bishop of Rome stood firm in the time of that crisis to save the Romans from the hands of their foes. Therefore, the people of Italy came to look to the Roman bishop for political as well as spiritual leadership. Leo 1, who occupied the Episcopal throne in Rome between 440 and 461, was the ablest occupant of that chair unit Gregory I took that position in 590 A.D. Therefore, in this unit, you will study the factors that led to the Consolidation of Papal powers as presented in the following objectives.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

By the time you finish studying this unit, you should be able to:

- identify the factors that strengthened Papal Powers
- describe the commencement of the declining stage in the power of the papacy
- describe the life of Prophet Muhammad and the beginning of Islam.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 The Progress of the Papal Power: Righteous Living of the Earlier Bishops of Rome

Perhaps, one of the major causes of the development of papal powers was rooted in transparency, honesty, ability and dynamism of the bishops of Rome. Most of the early bishops were pure, righteous, pious and dedicated.

Perhaps, one is safe to state that the stage of growth in the papal power began with the pontificate of Gregory I, who was considered to be the first medieval pope, and came to its height under Gregory VII, known as Hildebrand.

3.2 Historical Background of Gregory I

The following is brief background of Gregory I before cataloging his achievements toward the Consolidation of Papal power. Gregory was born in 540 A.D, into one of the old, noble, and wealthy families of Rome, and was given legal education. He also studied Latin and literature extensively. About 570 A.D, he was made Prefect of Rome, a position of importance and honour. Shortly after that, he gave up the fortune that he had inherited from his father, and the proceeds of it were used to build seven monasteries in Italy. Cairns explained further that he was made an ambassador as he represented the Roman bishop at Constantinople. When, however, Pope Pelagius died of the Justinian plague in 590, Gregory was chosen to replace him. Cairns added that, Gregory I was one of the noblest of the leaders of the Roman Church. He was a man of humility who thought of himself as "the servant of the servants of God". He was a zealous missionary and was instrumental in winning the English to Christianity. In addition, he was a good preacher, with a real message for the time of crisis in which he lived. It was said that his sermons were practical and stressed humility and piety.

3.3 The Claims of Gregory I

Perhaps, the above historical background of Gregory will motivate you to study his contributions to the Church as follow:-

- a) He asserted the spiritual supremacy of the bishop of Rome.
- b) He exercised Episcopal care over the churches of Gaul, Spain, Britain, Africa and Italy.
- c) He appointed bishops and sent the pallium, the staff of office, to those whose appointment he had made or ratified.
- d) Though, he preferred to be called the servant of God, he will not allow anyone else to claim the title "Supreme head of the Church". The title was reserved for the bishop of Rome, now Pope.
- e) Gregory made the bishopric of Rome one of the wealthiest in the Church of his day – by excellent work as an administrator.
- f) Gregory raised troop to protect Rome and forced the Arian Lombard king to make peace to win them from Arianism.
- g) He also organized the Gregorian chant, which came to have a more important place in the Roman Catholic Church.
- h) He emphasized the prerequisites for the bishopric, the virtues a bishop needs for introspection.
- i) Gregory laid the ground work of the theology that was held by the Roman church throughout the Middle Ages until Thomas Aquinas formulated his summa.
- j) He widely made use of the Canon of the Mass that considers the Communion as a sacrifice of Christ's body and blood each time it is performed.
- k) He emphasized good works and the invocation of the Saints in order to get their aid.
- l) The Medieval theology bore the Stamp of Gregory's thought.
- m) He systematized doctrine and made the Church a power in politics.

Perhaps, one should agree with Cairns, that, the pontificate of Gregory is indeed a landmark in the transition from ancient to medieval church history. The next section you will study in this unit will be the rise of Islam. This section is very important at this time of the very onset of the

medieval period of the history of the church. So, at the time when the Church was beginning to contend with the varied ideologies of the medieval period, Islam's originator and primary propagator, Prophet Muhammad was born.

3.4 The Rise of Islam

The rise of Islam could be traced to Mohammed who was born in 570 A.D. at Mecca in Arabia. He lost his parents early in life, and was under the care of his relations. Being an honest man, and a hardworking young man, he obtained the favour of a widow whom he served, and eventually married.

It was about 610 A.D. when Muhammad felt that he was called by Allah to be his messenger. He began with reforms in the midst of people who loved idol worship. It was also said that the people of Mecca had an idol per day for worship throughout a whole year, except one day that was free. With that background, the assignment of Mohammed was an upstream task.

In 622 A. D. the inhabitants of Mecca rose against Muhammad and his few converts. He fled to Medina (the flight is known as Hegira) where he made more converts. In 630 A. D. Mohammad made his homeward journey, and at that time, the people of Mecca accepted him and the message. Just two years after that, he died in 632 AD.

According to Earle Cairns, the following are the major beliefs of Muslims:

Belief in one God known was the central theme of Islam. Allah made his will known through twenty-five prophets, including biblical characters such as Abraham, Moses, and Christ, but Mohammed was the latest and greatest of these prophets.

Islam is fatalistic with its idea of passive submission to the will of Allah. The good Muslim prays five times daily, facing Mecca. He also recites his creed daily.

Fasting for thirty days (one lunar month) is also expected of Muslims.

Almsgiving is important as the faithful is expected to give out at least 1/40 of his income.

The holiest Muslims are those who, at least once during their lifetime make a pilgrimage to Mecca. (Cairns p. 175)

3.5 Progress of Islam

Perhaps one can state that at the initial stage of Islam, the progress made was not through violence. Muhammad relied on moral influences in preaching his gospel. However, the method changed shortly after a peaceful take off to that of force. His converts became warriors and forced people to accept Islam. Hurlbut said that, the Arab warriors gave two alternatives of Islam, tribute or death to every nation or tribe who resisted their arms. Accordingly, Muhammad was succeeded by a series of Caliphs who built up a vast Empire by the sword. Palestine and Syria were conquered and the holy places of Christianity fell under the power of Islam. Their conquest included Egypt, all Northern Africa and the greater part of Spain. The religion tore away province after province from Greek Emperors of Constantinople unto its final extinction. Eastward, the Empire of the Caliphs extended beyond Persia into India. Their capital was at the Bagdad on the Tigris (Hurlbut, 90).

Today, there are over a billion muslims around the globe. The following are facts about Islam:-

- 1) Islam is very simple to understand and far too superior to paganism

- Islam opposes image worship
- 2) It rejects saintly meditation and cult of the saints
 - 3) Throughout the Muslim world abstinence from strong drink is desired.
 - 4) Literature and science were promoted under the Caliphs. Interestingly, the Arabians gave the world the numerals 1, 2, 3, etc.

Without much questions, Islam has contributed immensely to the modern day society.

3.6 The Zenith of Papal Power: The Pontificates of Gregory VII and Innocent III

The word Zenith indicates topmost, a peak, upper level, the highest point or directly above others. In term of the Papacy, it represents the period when the papal power was at its best and highest. It could be considered as between 1054 and 1305.

Perhaps, Hildebrand's career readily divides itself into two periods. He was the power behind the papal throne for over twenty years before he became pope in 1073, and from 1073 until his death in 1085 he exercised the powers that he had obtained for the popes while he was a humble supporter of the papacy. He was able to influence the formulation of papal policy under five popes before he finally became pope. It will interest you to note the following claims of Gregory VII.

1. He put into practice his ideal of a theocracy in which temporal as well as spiritual power would be exercised by the pope as the vice-regent of God.
2. He insisted on the abolition of simony and the enforcement of clerical celibacy as the best way to reform the Roman church.
3. He claimed that Roman church owed its foundation to "God alone", that its pontiff was "alone to be called universal"; and that he had power over all bishops. The assertion is in the "Dictatus Papae"
4. He claimed that there had never been error in the Bible, there would never be error in the Roman church and that according to the Bible, it would never err.
5. He asserted that countries such as England, Hungary, Russia and Spain had been put under the control of Peter and his successors.
6. In 1075, a Roman synod, under Gregory VII forbade any high clergyman to receive investiture to a church office from a layman.
7. He excommunicated Henry IV, the Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, that was a bold step as any pope had ever taken.

Accordingly, due to seemly civil unrest in his domain Henry came for a release from the Pope at Canossa in 1077. It was said that Gregory did not attend to Henry until he stood barefooted in the snow outside the gates of the palace on three successive days before he would admit him to his presence. After genuine repentance, Gregory VII then release King Henry IV from his sentence of excommunication. Thus, Gregory VII humiliated the greatest ruler in Christendom.

3.5 Papal Supremacy under Innocent III

Innocent III was elected Pope in 1198. He brought the medieval papacy to the zenith of its power by the following claims, and activities.

Innocent believed that he was the "vicar of Christ" with supreme authority on earth.

He believed that kings and princes derived their authority from Pope and that he could therefore excommunicate, depose them or lay an interdict, which forbade the clergy to

perform any service in the church, but the most essential services of the church, upon the state.

He believed that God had given the successor of Peter the task of ruling the whole world, the church as well as the State. The pope stood above man and below God.

It was also said that Innocent III asserted that the State should be related to the Church as the moon is to the sun, and that as the moon shines by the reflected light of the sun; the State was to bask in the glory of the papacy and derive its power from the Pope (Cairns, p. 214).

Innocent III placed France under an interdict that affected everyone in the nation, closed all churches until Philip submitted to the will of the Pope. Also, between 1205 and 1213, Innocent was able to defeat John of England in a contest over the election of an Archbishop of the vacant archbishopric of Canterbury.

3.6 The Decline in Papal Power

As stated earlier, the pontificate of Innocent III marked the peak of Papal Power in Europe. However, after his death, there were other popes after him who could not maintain the legacies. The pontificate of Boniface suffers humiliation from the temporal power. Clement V became Pope after the death of Boniface, and it was during his pontificate that the papal court was transferred to Avignon in 1309. Therefore, the removal of the papal seat from Rome in 1309 was the beginning of the era known as the Babylonian captivity of the papacy. Until 1377 the papacy was under the influence of the French monarches and lost the powers she had in Europe. Cairns stated that, in 1377, the reigning Pope, Gregory XI, returned to Rome.

Therefore, from 1378 the Popes have continued dwelling at Rome, making claims as high as ever but unable to enforce them (Hurlbut, 88; Cairns, 217). From the scene before you, there are reasons for you to accept the popular axiom that everything that goes up, must come down. The only kingdom that will last forever is that of Jesus Christ.

4.0 CONCLUSION

So far, you have also studied the rise and development of Islam. Tim Dowley said that at the very time when Gregory the Great was turning away from the Eastern Mediterranean and seeking to extend papal influence throughout the West, there began in Arabia the career of a remarkable religious leader, Muhammad of Mecca. His teachings had an almost immediate impact. The movement of Islam was born, and spread with dramatic speed outside Arabia after the prophet's death under the caliphs, literally 'successors'.

Tim Dowley added that, the major factor that led to the rapid growth was the extraordinary religious enthusiasm generated by Muhammad and his immediate converts, the 'Companions'. Within a century of the prophet's death, Islam had reached the Atlantic (Morocco) and the River Indus (Pakistan).

Without mincing words, the rise of Islam directly influenced the political and economic development of the two halves of Christendom. Therefore, Islam became medieval Christianity's greatest opponent (Tim Dowley, 234). You have also studied about the contributions of the Arabs to the world of Science and literature. Consequently, Islam impacted the development of the modern society.

You have also learnt about the zenith of Papal power. The papacy exercised great temporal power between 1054 and 1305. Hildebrand was able to humble the Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire. Also, Innocent III was powerful enough to force rulers of rising nation states to do his will. However, the power of papacy got abated as from the time of Pope Boniface till the time of the Babylonian Captivity in 1309. The papacy was under the influence of the French monarchies until 1377 when the seat of Pope was brought back to Rome (Cairns p.209).

5.0 SUMMARY

Throughout the pages of this unit, you have studied the various ways and also a stage of the consolidations of Papal powers. Some of the following points are considered as part of the contributing factors:

1. The ability, dynamism and capability of bishops of Rome.
2. The Church was highly orthodox. The Church of Rome was very conservative in nature.
3. The Church had respect for oral traditions of the Church Fathers.
4. The bishops of Rome were greatly involved in charity works.
5. The bishops of Rome devoted their time to political affairs when the seat of the Empire was removed from Rome.
6. The bishop of Rome, severally, through diplomacy rescued Rome from ruin, and the attacks of the enemies.
7. During the Pontificate of Gregory VII the following achievements were made
 - (a) The Clergy Reform was instituted
 - (b) The church was set free from the control of the State
 - (c) The Church was made supreme above the State
8. During the Pontificates of Gregory VII and Innocent III the following documents were used extensively for the consolidation of Papal authority.
9. Forged donation of Constantine. That was the claim of the bishop of Rome, that the first Christian Emperor Constantine had given to bishop of Rome, Sylvester I (314-335 A.D) Supreme authority over all European provinces of the Empire and proclaimed the bishop of Rome as ruler even above the emperors.
10. The rise and spread of Islam, with Muhammad as the Prophet whom Allah used to propagate the religion.
11. Islam has simple beliefs with only five major pillars of the faith.
12. Islamic religion began its propagation through persuasion and was supported with free will donations. Later, the mode of conversion changed to force and violence.
13. Islam has dominated many countries of the world today.
14. The contributions of the Arabs to the advancement of science and literature could not be over emphasized.
15. The second document was False Decretals of Isidore published in 850A.D. said that the document professed to be decisions given out by early bishops of Rome, from the apostles downward, setting forth the highest claims, such as the absolute supremacy of the Pope of Rome over the universal church; the inviolability of the clergy of every rank from any accountability to the State; to the extent that no secular court could judge in matters pertaining to the church.
16. Innocent III successfully humiliated king John of England by excommunicating him in 1208. He also compelled the licentious Philip Augustus, King of France to receive back his wife, whom he had divorced.
17. Probably, the decline in Papal Power started with the Pontificate of Boniface VIII who was humbled by Edward I of England.
18. The period from 1305 to 1377 is known as the Babylonish Captivity, when the French King compelled the Papal seat to be transferred from Rome to Avignon in France

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Discuss the Pontificates of Gregory I and Innocent III.

2. Discuss the rise and spread of Islam.

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS

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MODULE 3 THE MEDIEVAL CHURCH – 476 – 1453 A.D

Unit 1 The Holy Roman Empire

Unit 2 The Crusades

Unit 3 Invention of Printing Press and the Forerunners of the Reformation

Unit 4 Renaissance Period to the Dawn of Reformation

UNIT 1 THE HOLY ROMAN EMPIRE

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
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 - 3.4 The Efficient Emperors
 - 3.5 The Emperors and the Popes
 - 3.6 The Decline and Fall of the Holy Roman Empire
 - 3.7 Fall of Constantinople in 1453
 - 3.8 Causes of the Separation of Latin and Greek Churches
 - 3.9 Scholars and Leaders of the Medieval Church
- 4.0 Conclusion
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- 7.0 References/Further Readings

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Holy Empire

This is the first unit of module three of your study. So far, you have been able to trace the origin of the Church and the developments through the centuries. The claims of the bishops of Rome as the head of the Christian Church worldwide were also noted in the previous lesson. Earlier, it was also discussed that, the old Roman Imperial Empire succeeded by three heirs, these were: the Early Medieval Western World, with Rome as the seat of the government; the Byzantine Empire with Constantinople as the headquarters and Islamic world as third heir. You will recall that King Odoacer who took the title King of Italy sacked the Western Roman Empire in 476 A.D. Since that year, the territories in the Western Roman Empire had been directly under the supervision and protection of the Bishop of Rome as the head. However, those claims and assertions of papacy were severally challenged after 590 A.D.

For instance, the emperors in Constantinople, who believed that the Church should be subordinated to the ruler of the State, were steadily encroaching on what the bishop of Rome thought were his prerogatives and possessions.

In addition, the Lombards of Arian theology made attempts to invade Rome, and possess it. Cairns said that, these difficulties forced the Pope to look around for a powerful ally who would support his claims to spiritual power and to temporary possessions in Italy. The Frankish rulers seemed to be the most promising allies, and with them the Popes made an alliance that was to influence both ecclesiastical and political affairs during the Middle Ages. The new political empire in the West, to which the Pope gave his assent in 800, revived the imperial idea of the Roman Empire; but the rulers of this new empire were to be Teutons rather than Romans. Therefore, the glory of reviving the Roman Empire went to the Carolingian rulers. With this brief introduction, you should be in top gear by now, to study the following objectives in this Unit.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit you should be able to:

- identify the founders of the Carolingian Empire
- describe the background of Charlemagne
- enumerate the achievements of Charlemagne
- identify the Carolingian great leaders
- identify the Emperors and Popes of the Era
- discuss the decline and fall of the Holy Roman Empire
- list the reasons for the separation of Latin and Greek Churches in 1054 A.D
- discuss the decline and fall of the Eastern Roman Empire in 1453 A.D.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 The Founders of the Carolingian Empire

As stated earlier, the Holy Roman Empire was one of the three heirs of the Imperial Roman Empire, once headed by Constantine the Great. When Constantinople replaced Rome as the new Capital, the frontiers of the Roman Empire in the West became porous and that paved way for foes, which brought the Western Roman Empire to an end in 476A.D. After the fall, the bishops of Rome fairly managed the affairs of the realm till the 10th Century. However, Hurlbut said that from the tenth century until the nineteenth there existed in Europe a peculiar political organism, showing different phases during different generations, of which the official name was the Holy Roman Empire, commonly but inaccurately called the German Empire. He said that until the Holy Empire appeared, Europe west of the Adriatic Sea was in disorder, ruled by warring tribes rather than by states. He added that, through all the confusion, the old Roman conception of unity and order remained; an aspiration after one empire to take the place of that which, though fallen, was still held in traditional veneration (Hurlbut, 1981: 94).

Cairns said that the confusion referred to and its attendant difficulties forced the Pope to look around for a powerful ally who would support his claims to spiritual power and to temporal possessions in Italy. Accordingly, the Frankish rulers seemed to be the most promising allies, and the Pope made an alliance with them in 800A.D. Therefore, the glory of reviving the Roman Empire went to the Carolingian rulers. Clovis was the first leader.

According to Cairns, Clovis' sons did not have the ability of their father; and control of the affairs of state passed into the hands of an official, known as the mayor of the palace, who held the reins of government, while the weak successors of Clovis enjoyed life in the palace. These mayors of the palace made up what is known as the Carolingian dynasty, which was to reach the zenith of its power under Charlemagne.

- (1) Interestingly, Pepin of Heristal was the first of these mayors of the palace to unite the divided possessions of Clovis, and from 687 to 714 he controlled the Franks for the palace - a hereditary position to be filled by his descendants.
- (2) The next ruler was Charles Martel (689-741) who was also called the Hammerer. According to Cairns, Charles Martel was an illegitimate son of Pepin, who took over the duties of mayor of the palace after 714 A. D. His abilities as a warrior were indispensable, rather, badly needed because the Muslims, who had overrun Spain, were now threatening to take over all of Western Europe. Cairns said that Charles fought them and defeated them at the battle of Tours near Poitiers in 732 A. D. and obligated the Roman Church to him because he had apparently saved Western Europe for orthodox Christianity. It will interest you to note that Martel supported the work of Boniface in evangelizing the tribes beyond the Rhine, knowing that if they were won to Christianity, he would not have difficulty with them on the Western bank of the Rhine.
- (3) Cairns added that Charles' successors as mayor of the palace was his son Pepin (ca. 714-68) known as Pepin the Short or Pepin the Great, who ruled jointly with his brother from 741-747 A. D. when the brother withdrew to a monastery (Cairns, 1981, 183-184).
- (4) The next ruler over the Franks was Charlemagne, son of Pepin the Short.

3.2 Biographical Sketch of Charlemagne

Much information about Charlemagne is derived from Einhard, sometimes incorrectly known as Eginhard, writer of the biographic sketch of Charlemagne. Charlemagne was about seven feet tall and had a proportionately large body. His bright face and long white hair, coupled with such height, gave him an air of dignity. He delighted in hunting, riding, and swimming but also had a real interest in culture; and this interest led him to combine the pleasure of the table with listening to music or having someone read to him. He was also devoted to religion. However, his religion did not carry over into his domestic life because he kept concubines as well as his legal spouse in his palace.

Charlemagne (742-814 A. D.) came to the throne in 768 A. D. and in 800 A. D. he became emperor in the West when the Pope crowned him *Imperator Romanorum* (Emperor of the Roman). His influence was felt in every area of human endeavor in Western Europe.

3.3 The Achievements of Charlemagne

Concerning his views of the achievements and greatness of Charlemagne, Edward Burns said that he ranks him as one of the most important rulers of the whole medieval period. According to Burns, most of his campaigns were very successful, thereby increasing the Frankish realm. Cairns also supported this view with the following evidences and proofs. He said that:

- 1) Charlemagne was also a man of war. He engaged in over fifty campaigns during the course of his reign in an attempt to end anarchy within his kingdom and to expand its borders into Italy, where he completed the defeat of the Lombards, and into Germany, where he conquered the Saxons.
 - 2) He spread Christianity among the Saxons by force of arms.
 - 3) He was able to double his father's possessions until he held all of Italy as far south as Rome, most of the area of modern Germany, and all of the area of modern France. So much land in Western Europe had not been under one jurisdiction since the time of the Empire.
 - 4) Charlemagne developed an able bureaucracy and a good system of imperial government to administer his large empire. The empire was divided into different areas, each of which comprised several countries, under a duke. The emperor sent men known as missidominici to the courts of these dukes at unexpected times to inspect their accounts, to announce new capitularies or laws, and to check on how well they were keeping order.
 - 5) He was also friendly to the Church. He thought that the Church might be compared to the soul and the State to the body of man. Church and State had their respective spheres of responsibility.
 - 6) While on a visit to Rome to finish the work of defeating the Lombards in 774 A. D., he reconfirmed the donation of lands that Pepin had made to the Pope in 756.
 - 7) He believed, however, that the ruler of the church should not dispute the decision of the ruler of the State and that bishops should also be subordinated to the head of the state.
 - 8) When Pope Leo III was set up by a faction in Rome and was nearly killed, he left Rome for the court of Charlemagne. Charlemagne went back to Rome with him, and at a Council the Pope was cleared of the charges against him. At a holy mass in the Cathedral on Christmas Day in 800 A. D., while Charlemagne knelt before the altar, the Pope put the crown on Charlemagne's head and declared that he was the emperor of the Romans. Thus was the Roman Empire revived in the West; and a new Rome, led by a Teuton, took the place of the old Roman Empire. A universal empire existed beside a universal church. The classical and Christian heritages were not linked in a Christian empire

3.4-The Efficient Emperors

Perhaps, it is a part of life, that whatever has a beginning will surely have an end. The good day of Charlemagne did not last long. Hurlbut said that after the degenerate descendants of Charlemagne lost the throne, it became elective, the emperor being chosen by seven princes; entitled electors. Among the fifty-four emperors, we can merely name a few of the greatest after the time of Charlemagne.

The first name was Henry I called the Fowler (919-936 A. D.), who began the restoration of the empire, which had fallen into decay. His son Otto I (the Great), though not crowned as emperor until 951 A. D., and who reigned until 973 A. D., is regarded as the real founder of the Holy Roman Empire as distinct from the Roman Empire.

According to Hurlbut, Frederick Barbarossa (Red Beard) was one of the most powerful in the line of emperors. Hurlbut said that, Barbarossa

went on the Third Crusade, but was drowned in Asia Minor, and his death led to the failure of the expedition.

Frederick II, grandson of Barbarossa, has been called the marvel and enigma of history, enlightened and progressive, the liberal man of his age, in his views of government and religion; was twice excommunicated by the Pope, but in the Fifth Crusade made himself king of Jerusalem.

Rudolph of Hapsburgh, founder of the house of Austria, received the imperial crown in 1273 A. D. when it brought not much more than an empty title; but he compelled princes and barons to submit to his authority. From his time Austria was the most powerful state in the German confederation, and nearly all the emperors were his descendants, the archdukes of that country.

Charles V, emperor at the opening of the Reformation (1519 1556 A. D.) was also hereditary ruler of Austria, Spain, and the Netherlands. He did his best, but unable to hold all the lands under him to the old religion. In 1556 A. D. he voluntarily abdicated, and spent the last two years of his life in retirement (Hurlbut, 1981, 95-96).

3.6 The Emperors and the Popes

Perhaps, you love to go on memory lanes concerning the powers, authority and influence of Popes in the Dark Ages. Many of them abused their powers, by excommunicating members, by physical torture and through inquisition. The Emperors on their own part insisted that they were above clergymen and women.

For many centuries during the earlier history of the empire, there was strong rivalry, and sometimes open war between the emperors and the popes; emperors striving to rule the empire. For instance, Pope Gregory VII (Hildebrand) for a time compelled the submission of an emperor, and Innocent III set up and put down emperors and kings. Happily, the strife grew less vigorous and ceased after the Reformation, when the boundary lines between the Church and the State had gradually become fixed (Hurlbut, 1981, 96).

3.7 The Decline and Fall of the Holy Roman Empire

Perhaps, historians are at the vantage position to know causes, factors or events that led to the downfall of many nations, kingdoms and Empires. For instance, the Ancient Egyptian Civilization came to a low ebb because of endless wars of succession; mismanagement of the resources, internal wrangling and external forces. Sadly, similar evils could be traced to the downfall of many nations; including the Holy Roman Empire.

Hurlbut said that, as the realm of Austria grew more important, the emperors were increasingly occupied in their hereditary dominions. The many states of the empire became practically independent, until the emperorship was little more than a meaningless honor. He added that, in the eighteenth century, the cynical Voltaire said, the Holy Roman empire was not holy, not Roman, and not an empire. The succession of emperors ended in 1806, when Napoleon was at the summit of his power. In that year, Francis II was compelled to renounce the title Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, and assumed that of Emperor of Austria (Hurlbut, 1981, 96).

3.8 Fall of Constantinople in 1453

The fall of Constantinople in 1453 A. D. did not come by surprise. Severally, the Islamic jihads were targeted against it. The wealth of the Empire was covered by foes around it. In addition, the religious speculations and controversies, probably, kept the inhabitants busy, and they were not thoroughly prepared for the final assault. In his own view, about the fall of Constantinople, Hurlbut said that, the Greek Empire never recovered from the conquest of Constantinople by the Crusaders in 1204, but the

strong defenses, natural and artificial, long protected the city against the Turks, who succeeded the Arabians as the leading Islamic power. Hurlbut explains further that, province after province of the great empire was shorn away, until only the city of Constantinople was left, and, in 1453, the Turks under Mohammed the Second, finally took it. He further expressed that, in one day the Church of St. Sophia was transformed into a mosque, and Constantinople became, as it remained until 1920, the city of the Sultans and the capital of the Turkish Empire. Angora (Ankara) became the Turkish capital after World War I. The Greek Church continues with its patriarch, shorn of all but ecclesiastical authority, residing in Constantinople (Istanbul). The fall of Constantinople in 1453 A. D. ends the period of the Medieval Church (Hurlbut, 1981, 112).

3.9 Causes of the Separation of the Latin and Greek Churches

Perhaps, you will be amazed to discover that Christian denominations are multiplying on daily basis. The parting lines are not always significant. Interestingly, they quote from the Bible to support their existence and teachings. As stated earlier, the growth is unabated. The separation of the Latin and Greek Churches was politically motivated. The craving for power, popularity and recognition has always the banes of any institution in our society. Hurlbut said that, although the separation of the Latin and Greek churches was formally made in the eleventh century, it was practically accomplished long before. He explains that between popes and patriarchs strife had been the normal relation for hundreds of years, until finally, in 1054 A.D., the Pope's messenger laid upon the altar of St. Sophia in Constantinople, the decree of excommunication; whereupon the patriarch in turn issued his decree excommunicating Rome and the churches submitting to the Pope. Since that time the Latin and Greek churches have stood apart, neither one recognizing the churchly existence of the other. Hurlbut further contends that, most of the questions at issue, forming causes leading to the separation, seem in our day almost trivial, yet for centuries these were subjects of violent controversy, and at times of bitter persecutions.

Hurlbut present the following as causes of the separation:

- a) Doctrinally, the principal difference lay in the doctrine known as the procession of the Holy Ghost. The Latin Church held that the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father *and the Son* in Latin *filioque*. The Greek Church said the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father leaving out the word *filioque*. Over that one word mighty debates were held, books in untold numbers were written, and even blood was shed in bitter strife.
- b) In the ceremonies of the church, different usages became the custom in the East and the West, and these customs were formulated into laws. The marriage of priests was forbidden in the Western Church, but sanctioned in the Eastern Church. Throughout the Greek Church at the present time, every village priest (who bears the title of pope, equivalent to father among the Roman Catholics) must be a married man.
 - c) In the Western Church the adoration of images has been practiced for a thousand years, while in the Greek Church one sees not statues but only pictures. Yet the pictures are in bold relief, as bas relief images, and they are held in the most profound reverence.

- d) In the service or the mass the Roman Churches used unleavened bread (the wafer) while common bread is distributed in the Greek communion.
- e) As a protest against observance of the seventh day, the practice of fasting on Saturday arose in the West but never in the East. Later, the Roman Catholic fast day was changed to Friday, the day of our Lord's crucifixion.
- f) But deeper than these differences of ceremony, in bringing about the separation of the Latin and Greek churches, was the political cause in the independence of Europe from the throne of Constantinople, in the establishment of the Roman Empire (800 A.D.). Even after the fall of the old Empire of Rome in 476 A.D. the imperial idea still held power; and the new barbarian kingdoms of the Goths, Franks and other races, in a loose way regarded themselves as theoretically under the emperor at Constantinople. But when Charlemagne established the Empire, it took the place of the ancient empire, separate from and independent of the emperors of Constantinople. An independent state necessitated an independent church.
- g) But the most powerful force leading to the separation was the persistent claim of Rome to be the ruling church and of its Pope to be the Universal Bishop. At Rome the church was gradually dominating the state; at Constantinople the church was obsequious to the state. Hence a schism between the two sections with such opposite conceptions was inevitable; and the final rending apart of the two great divisions of the church came, as we have seen, in 1054 A.D. (Hurlbut, 1981, 97).

4.0-CONCLUSION

Perhaps, the revival of the imperial power in the West was brought about as a result of the papacy searching for security and stability. The Bishop of Rome needed strong and formidable allies to ward off enemies that constantly threatened and intimidated the peace of his territories. Therefore, the Frankish rulers paved way for the desired Empire the papacy was searching for. The bishop of Rome intended to use the temporal authority as a tool in his hand to perpetuate his claims as the Vicar of God on Earth. You will recollect that sometimes the papacy achieved that lofty aims, as Emperors and Kings were humiliated and brought down on their knees, pleaded for mercy and forgiveness. This was also the period when the first great schism in the church occurred. The Western and Eastern sections of the church separated to go their respective ways as the Roman Catholic Church in the West, and the Greek Orthodox Church in the East. However, the gloom of the Dark Ages was being slowly dispelled by a revival of learning that began under Charlemagne.

5.0 SUMMARY

Throughout this unit, you have learnt the following points:

Frankish Emperors aided the papacy and supported her claims, whereas, the Germans and French Rulers fought.

The ideal of a revived Roman Empire was never given up after the fall of Charlemagne's empire.

The German emperors of the tenth century took over from the west Frankish state the tradition of empire, and the empire founded by Otto I was known as the Holy Roman Empire.

The Carolingian Empire also created the problem of whether the Church or the State was the representative of Deity on earth.

The issue of whether God had delegated sovereignty to the Pope or to the Emperor so that one derived his authority from the other was a heritage of Charlemagne's empire. This issue embittered relationships between the Church and the State for some centuries during the Middle Ages.

The beginning of the Pope's claim to be a temporal ruler dated from the grant of lands in Italy to the Pope by Pepin, the ancestor of Charlemagne, in 756 A. D.

The Pope as a temporal as well as a spiritual ruler made claims they would not admit were justified on national rulers during the Middle Ages.

The impetus given to culture by Charlemagne must be counted as one of the great marks of his empire.

His reign was a bright light illuminating by contrast the cultural darkness of the Dark Ages elsewhere in Western Europe.

The decline and fall of the Holy Roman Empire and that of Constantinople

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Discuss the rise and fall of the Holy Roman Empire.
2. Discuss the trends that led to the great Schism of 1054.

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS

- Cairns, Earle. E. *Christianity through the Century: A History of the Christian Church*. (Rev. & Enlarged Ed.) Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1981, pp. 191-197; 205-206.
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UNIT 2 THE CRUSADES**CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Another great movement in the Middle Ages, under the inspiration and at the command of the Church, was the crusades, beginning at the end of the eleventh century and continuing for nearly three hundred years. From the fourth century onward even unto the present time pilgrimages have been made by multitudes every year to the Holy Land. The number of pilgrims vastly increased about the year 1000 A.D. when the end of the world and the coming of Christ were almost universally expected; and even after those events failed to take place, the pilgrimages continued. At first, they were favored by the Muslim rulers of Palestine, but, later, the pilgrims suffered oppression, robbery, and sometimes death. At the same time the weakening eastern empire was menaced by the Muslims, and the Emperor Alexis besought Pope Urban II to bring the warriors of Europe to its relief. The spirit arose throughout Europe to free the Holy Land from Muslims control, and out of this impulse came the crusades.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit you should be able to:

- enumerate the factors that gave rise to crusades
- identify the sponsors of the crusades and their goals
- identify the stages of the crusades and their effects on Christendom
- describe the folly of bigotry and fanaticism as related to children's crusade
- list the benefits of crusades to the Europeans and the Arabs
- analyze the failures of the expeditions
- describe the effects of the crusades on Papal power
- identify the factors leading to Christian Reformation of the sixteenth century.

3.0-MAIN CONTENT**3.1-Origin of the Crusades**

Perhaps, it should not be far-fetched for one to understand and appreciate the importance and significance that most Christians attached to the holy land, in an age when Christians depended on the merits of the saints and the sales of indulgences rather than salvation by grace. Average Christians believed that by visiting the holy land (Palestine) where the Lord Jesus Christ lived, they would be closer to God, and God will grant any requests made in the holy land.

Interestingly, as early as the fourth century the mother of Constantine, the first Christian Emperor, made a trip to the holy land. Therefore, it became a general practice to atone for ones sins in the holy land. Also economically, in the early stage of pilgrimage to Palestine it was very lucrative in nature. The Arabs merchants were blessed with the proceeds from the pilgrimage. The tourists went with enough cash and as they returned to Europe they purchased many goods for their home ward journey. That situation did not last long, rather, there came a period of hostility intimidation and suspicion. The Arabs developed their empire and thereby made the Christian pilgrimage burdensome. They would not accept anybody to intrude on their privacy; therefore, they stopped Christians mainly from Europe to Palestine. Therefore, when Jerusalem was conquered, Christians from Europe felt compelled to regain the Holy City where prayers could be made and the presence of God could be felt.

Therefore, the birth, growth and conquest of Islam gave rise to Christian crusades from 1095-1291 A. D. Tim Dowley said that it was Pope Urban II who made passionate appeals at Clermont for aid to the Eastern Christians against the Turks. The call was a genuine one because Tim Dowley stated that the Turks had already captured Jerusalem and were making frantic efforts to invade Constantinople. Therefore, Pope Urban II's appeal was well received throughout Europe and the first crusade was out overland via Constantinople and regained Jerusalem in 1099 A. D.

3.2 The First Crusade

The principal crusades were seven in number, besides many other expeditions of lesser importance to which the name was given. Pope Urban II proclaimed the First Crusade in 1095 A. D., at the Council of Clermont, where a multitude of knights assumed the cross as a badge, and enlisted for the war against the Saracens. Hurlbut stated that before the regular expedition was fully organized, a monk called Peter the Hermit called together an undisciplined multitude, said to number 40,000, and led them toward the East, expecting miraculous aid. His unorganized, unprovoked mob went to failure, many of its members to slavery and death. But the first real crusade was undertaken by the best warriors from every land of Europe, led by Godfrey of Bouillon and other chiefs. After many reverses, chiefly from the lack of discipline and dissensions among the leaders, they finally succeeded in taking the city of Jerusalem and nearly all Palestine, in 1099. They established a kingdom on feudal principles, and as Godfrey refused the name of king, he was made Baron and Defender of the Holy Sepulchre.

After Godfrey's death, his brother Baldwin took the title of king. The kingdom of Jerusalem lasted until 1187, though constantly in a precarious condition, because it was surrounded by the Saracen Empire on all sides except the sea, and was far distant from its natural allies in Europe.

3.3 The Second Crusade

The Second Crusade was called forth by the news that the Saracens were conquering the out laying provinces of the kingdom of Jerusalem and menacing the city itself. Under the preaching of the saintly Bernard of Clairvaux, Louis VII of France and Conrad III of Germany led a great

army to succor the holy places. They met with many defeats, but finally reached the city. They could not regain the lost territory, but did postpone for a generation the final fall of the kingdom.

In 1187, Jerusalem was retaken by the Saracens under Saladin, and the kingdom of Jerusalem came to an end, although the empty title King of Jerusalem was continued long afterward.

3.4 The Third Crusade

The fall of the city aroused Europe to the Third Crusade (1188-1192 A. D.) which was led by three prominent sovereigns, Frederick Barbarossa of Germany, Philip Augustus of France, and Richard I the Lion hearted of England. But Frederick, the best general and statesman, was drowned, and the two remaining kings quarreled, Philip Augustus went home, and all the courage of Richard did not avail to bring his army to Jerusalem. But he obtained a treaty with Saladin, by which the Christian pilgrims gained the right to visit the Holy Sepulchre unmolested.

3.5 The Fourth Crusade

The Fourth Crusade (1201-1204 A. D.) was worse than a failure, for it wrought in the end great harm to the Christian Church. The Crusaders were turned aside from their aim of winning the Holy Land, made war on Constantinople, captured and plundered it, and set up their own rule over the Greek Empire, which lasted fifty years, and left that empire helpless as a bulwark against the growing power of the Seljuk Turks. They were a warlike, uncivilized race, who succeeded the Saracens as the dominant Mohammedan power soon after the close of the crusading period (Hurlbut, 1981, 101).

3.6 The Fifth Crusade

In the Fifth Crusade (1228 A. D.) the Emperor Frederick II, although excommunicated by the Pope, led an army to Palestine, and obtained a treaty whereby Jerusalem, Jaffa, Bethlehem and Nazareth were ceded to the Christians; and (as no Roman ecclesiastic would crown him, being under the Pope's ban), Frederick crowned himself King of Jerusalem. From that fact the title King of Jerusalem was held by all the German emperors of Austria until 1835 A. D. But through the quarrel between the pope and emperor the results of the crusade were lost; Jerusalem was retaken by the Mohammedans in 1244 A. D. and until 1817 A. D. remained under their control.

3.7 The Sixth Crusade

The Sixth Crusade (1248-1254 A. D.) was undertaken by Louis IX of France, known as St. Louis. He made his invasion by way of Egypt, and though at first successful, was defeated and taken prisoner by the Mohammedans. At an immense price he was ransomed, and went on to Palestine, remaining there until 1252 A. D. when the death of his mother, whom he had left as regent, compelled him to return to France.

3.8 The Seventh Crusade

The Seventh Crusade (1270 -1272 A. D.) was also under the leadership of St. Louis, jointly with Prince Edward Plantagenet of England, afterward King Edward I. The route chosen was again by way of Africa; but Louis died at Tunis, his son made peace, and Edward returned to England to become king. So this, generally regarded as the last of the crusades, came to naught.

3.9 Children's Crusade

Children's Crusade was a popular and emotional movement in 1212 A. D., growing out of crusading fervour, but not in any proper sense a crusade. It lacked any official sanction or approval; indeed, all responsible authorities, both clerical and lay, deplored it.

Though the movement began in June 1212, when a young shepherd named Stephen, from Cloyes, France, had a vision in which Jesus commanded him to raise an army to aid in the recapture of the Holy

Land (or Palestine) from the Muslim Saracens. Stephen recruited a band of followers that included about 50,000 children and poor adults. The group marched to Paris to persuade the French king, Philip II, to take up the Crusade. The king apparently convinced them to return to their homes.

However in the spring of 1212 A. D. a boy from Cologne named Nicholas raised a larger followership principally in the Rhineland and Lower Lorraine. He assured his recruits that God would help them take Jerusalem back from the Muslims. When they reached Mainz, some children in the group were persuaded to return home. The remainder marched through Marbach, near Colmar, and then across the Alps into Italy, where they separated into smaller groups. Some headed towards Venice, while the main group proceeded through Piacenza and arrived at Genoa on August 25. A few may actually have succeeded in finding passage on ships bound from Pisa to the Holy Land. A handful apparently reached Rome, and another small group turned up at Marseille, France. Some eventually returned to their homes, but the great majority simply disappeared without trace.

Although the expedition known as the Children's Crusade testifies to the continuing appeal of the Crusading ideal in the early 13th century, the episode contributed nothing to the achievement of the Crusades' goals. Instead, it is a pathetic tribute to the grip that the Holy Land held on the imagination of Europeans and to the fervour that the Crusades excited among all classes of the population.

3.10 Causes of Failure of the Crusaders

There were minor crusades, so called, but none deserving special mention. In fact, from 1270 onward any war undertaken even nominally on behalf of the church was called a crusade, even when against heretics in Christian countries.

- a) The crusaders failed to free the Holy Land from the dominion of the Muslims because the kings and princes who led the movement were perpetually quarreling, each chieftain caring more for his own interests than for the common cause; all jealous of one another, and fearful of a success which might promote the influence or fame of a rival. Against their divided, suspicious, half-hearted effort was arrayed a fearless, united people, a race always bold in war, and under the absolute rule of one commander, whether caliph or sultan.
- b) The leadership also possessed no large, far-sighted vision. Immediate results were all that they looked for. They did not realize that to found and maintain a kingdom in Palestine, a thousand kilometers from their own lands, required constant communication with Western Europe, a strong base of supply, continual reinforcement.
- c) The conquest of the land was an intrusion, not liberation. The people of Palestine were practically enslaved by the Crusaders; as slaves were compelled to build castles, fortresses, and palaces for their hated masters. They welcomed the return of their former Muslim rulers, for heavy as their yoke had been; it was lighter than that of the Christian kings of Jerusalem.

3.11-Benefits of Crusades

Yet, despite the failure to maintain a Christian kingdom in Palestine, certain good results came to Europe from the crusades.

- 1) After the crusades the pilgrims were protected by the Turkish government and persecution ceased. In fact, the land became more prosperous, and the cities of Bethlehem, Nazareth, and Jerusalem increased in population and in wealth, through the tide of pilgrims sweeping over Palestine, under guarantees of safety from the Turkish rulers.
- 2) After the crusades, Moslem aggressions on Europe were checked. The experience of those centuries awakened Europe to the danger from Islam. The Spaniards were encouraged to make war upon the Moors, who held half of the peninsula. Under Ferdinand and Isabella, the Spaniards in 1492, subjugated the Moorish kingdom, and expelled the Muslims from the land.
- 3) On the eastern frontier of Europe, Poland and Austria stood on guard, and in 1683 turned back the tide of Turkish invasion in a great battle won near the city of Vienna. This victory marked the beginning of decline in the power of the Turkish Empire.
- 4) Another result of the crusades was a better acquaintance of nations with each other. Not only the rulers and chieftains, but the inferior knights and even the soldiers of the different lands began to know each other, to recognize interests in common. Among nations a mutual respect for each other arose, and alliances were formed. The crusades were a great contribution toward the development of modern Europe.
- 5) The crusades furnished a great impulse to trade. The demand for supplies of every kind arms, provisions, guides, ships promoted manufactures and commerce.
- 6) The Crusaders brought home a knowledge of the wealth in the Orient, its carpets, silks, jewels, and a trade in these arose all over Western Europe.
- 7) Merchants grew rich; a middle class arose between lord and serf; the cities advanced in power, and the castles began to decline in their control over them.
- 8) In the after centuries, the cities became the centers of freedom and reform, breaking away from the arbitrary control of both princes and prelates.
- 9) The ecclesiastical power was at first greatly increased through the crusades. The wars were waged at the call of the church, which thereby showed its domination over princes and nations.
- 10) Moreover, the church bought lands, or loaned money on them as security to crusading knights and greatly enlarged its holdings throughout Europe.
- 11) And in the absence of temporal rulers, bishops and popes gained control.
- 12) But in the final result, the vast wealth, the over-weening ambition, and the unscrupulous use of power by churchmen, aroused discontent, and aided to pave the way for the approaching revolt against the Roman Catholic Church in the Reformation.

4.0 CONCLUSION

The crusades that were organized and sponsored in Europe around eleventh century had the following two themes; the holy war, or military expedition blessed by the church and the pilgrimage to a holy place.

5.0 SUMMARY

Throughout this unit you have learnt that:

- i. the two main goals of crusaders were: to recover the lost territories of Christendom and the pilgrimage to a holy land.
- ii. the crusaders were largely driven by religious motives.
the first crusade was far more successful than later expeditions.
- iii. from the beginning the papacy was prominently involved in the movement as it issued incentives to go on crusade, such as immunity from taxes and debt payment, the indulgence, which guaranteed the crusaders' entry into heaven and reduced or abolished his time in purgatory.
- iv. the popes sent out crusade preachers, organized financial support, and sought to provide transport.
- v. the number of crusades is normally given as seven or eight with many smaller expeditions and that after about 1150 A. D. there was a regular stream of soldiers, pilgrims and merchants from Europe to Syria.
- vi. one of the original crusader states, Edessa, fell to the Muslims in 1144 A. D. and the second crusade led by the Kings of France and Germany in 1147-1149 A. D. failed to recover Christian lands because the expedition was marked by a series of disasters.
- vii. after 1150 A. D. Nureddin and Saladin, two Islamic leaders united Muslim territories, in the near East, Egypt under one dynasty.
- viii. in 1187 A. D. Saladin sacked Jerusalem and overran crusaders lands. The third crusade was led by King Richard Lionheart of England and the rulers of France and Germany. Though they recovered part of the lost territory they were not able to recover Jerusalem itself.
- ix. in the thirteenth century the crusaders were restricted to a coastal strip, and the seaport Acre replaced Jerusalem as their capital.
- x. between 1228-1229 A. D., through negotiation, the Emperor Frederick II regained Jerusalem, however, it was lost again in 1244 A. D.
- xi. the Mamluke Sultans of Egypt captured Acre in 1291, thereby ending Christian rule in Syria.
- xii. the fourth crusade was the expedition of the Knights, the two new religious orders, to defend the holy land, and conquer the great Eastern City.
- xiii. there were other crusades up to the seventh one, then the children's crusade.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENTS

Discuss the role of papacy in the crusades

Discuss the successes and failures of the crusades

7.0 REFERENCES AND FURTHER READINGS

Cairns, Earle. E. *Christianity through the Century: A History of the Christian Church*. (Rev. & Enlarged Ed.) Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1981, p. 216; 219-221.

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**UNIT 3-FORERUNNERS OF THE REFORMATION AND
INVENTION OF PRINTING PRESS**

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1.0-INTRODUCTION

Probably, by now you are aware that you are gradually coming to the end of your study this first semester, therefore, there is a need for you to study some antecedent forces to Reformation of 1517 A. D.

There are five great movements to consider in this unit, prior to the dawn of the Christian Church Reformation. These groups paid the supreme sacrifice for the faith that was so dear to them. They operated when the papacy was almost at its peak. They witnessed the risen Savior at the expense of their lives. Indeed, they were hunted, but remained resolute to their Coming King.

Also, this unit highlights the breakthrough in the spread of the gospel's true message through the invention of printing press in 1456 A. D. Renaissance was another factor that aided the Christian Church Reformation of the sixteenth century. You will study this aspect in the next unit, which is the last for this semester.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit you should be able to:

- narrate the origin of religious reform
- describe the Puritan movement
- narrate the story of Peter Waldo and the Waldensians
- narrate the story of John Wycliffe (1329-1384 A. D.) and his role in the Reformation
- narrate the story of John Huss of Bohemia
- describe the life and time of Jerome Savonarola of Italy
- identify the contributions of Anselm, Abelard, Bernard and Thomas Aquinas
- identify the role of the invention of the Printing Press in the Reformation.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 The Albigenses or Cathari

The period of the Dark Ages has been sufficiently described in previous units when the papacy claimed to be all in all. It was a period of thick darkness concerning the teachings of the Bible. Most of the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church were dogmas that could not be challenged or refused by Christians of the Middle Ages. And as it were, those teachings were forced down the throats of people. However, there were a

few Christians who rejected doctrines that were contrary to the simple but basic teachings of the Bible. Jesse Hurlbut (1981) shed more light on the struggle that arose between the papacy and these groups. He said that between 1170 to 1498 A. D., the glimpse of religious light began to shoot over the age, foretokens of the coming Reformation. He explained that, at least, five to six great movements for reform in the church arose, but the world was not ready for them, and they were repressed with bloody persecution.

The Albigenses or Cathari or Puritans, grew up to prominence in Southern France, about 1170. It was said that the Puritans repudiated the authority of tradition; rather, they circulated the New Testament, and opposed the Romish doctrines of purgatory, image-worship, and priestly claims. It should be pointed out that the Albigenses held some peculiar views allied to the ancient Manicheans, who rejected the Old Testament. The papacy could not countenance these peculiar views, therefore, Pope Innocent III, in 1208, called for a crusade against them, and the sect was extirpated by the slaughter of almost the entire population of the region, including those that are Catholic as well as heretics.

3.2 Waldensians

The Waldensians were founded about the same time, 1170, by Peter Waldo, a merchant of Lyons, who read, explained, preached and circulated the Scriptures, to which he appealed against the doctrines of the Roman Catholics. Tim Dowley (1996) also confirmed that Peter Waldo or Valdes, experienced conversion about 1175 or 1176 A. D. It was said that immediately after his conversion, he gave away his merchandise and decided to follow the example of Christ by leading a simple life of poverty and preaching. It was also said that Waldo had translations made from the Latin New Testament into the vernacular, which formed the basis of his evangelism. With his followers, who were all dedicated men and women, they spread the message of the Bible and exalted the virtues of poverty. By so doing, they were a living condemnation of the wealth and laxity of the established church. Pope Lucius III was not happy with their preaching, so he directed that the Waldensians and other similar groups should be eliminated by the Episcopal inquisition. An inquisition is a special court set up by the Roman Catholic Church with a peculiar power to judge intentions as well as the actions of heretics. The outcomes of the above sanction, made the Waldensians flee from Lyons rather than submit. As for the Waldensians such outbursts by the Pope only tended to convince them that the Catholic Church was the "Whore of Babylon", and was not to be acknowledged. The Poor Men of Lyons went through central and southern France, where they gained more followers. However, they were bitterly persecuted severally and driven out of France, but found hiding places in the valleys of northern Italy. Providentially, in the face of centuries of persecution, the Waldensians have endured, and constitute a part of the comparatively small group of Protestants in Italy today. The Waldensians laid solid foundations on which the great religious changes of the sixteenth century would occur, as many Waldensians beliefs entered the mainstream of the Protestant movement.

3.3 John Wycliffe

John Wycliff began the movement in England for freedom from the Roman power and for reformation in the Church. Hurlbut (1981) said that he was born about 1329 A. D. and was educated at the University of Oxford, where he became a theologian, and became the leading spirit in its Councils. It was stated that John Wycliffe was bitter about the teachings of Roman Catholic Church. Therefore, he took the following actions against papacy.

He attacked the mendicant friars, and the system of monasticism.

He rejected and opposed the authority of the pope in England.

He wrote against the doctrine of transubstantiation. i.e., in the mass the bread and wine are transformed into the veritable body of Christ.

Wycliffe urged that the church service be made simpler, according to the New Testament pattern.

Hurlbut said that, in other lands Wycliffe would have suffered martyrdom, but in England he was protected by the most powerful among the nobles, and though the University condemned some of his doctrines, he was allowed to retire to his parish at Lutterworth and remain undisturbed as a priest. It was also pointed out that John Wycliffe's greatest work was his translation of the New Testament into English, finished in 1380, the Old Testament, in which he was aided by friends, appeared in 1384 A. D., the year of Wycliffe's death. His followers were called Lollards, at one time numerous, but under Kings Henry IV and Henry V were persecuted and finally exterminated. Wycliffe's preaching and his translation prepared the way for the Reformation. The next martyr was John Huss of Bohemia.

3.4 John Huss

John Huss, of Bohemia (born 1369 A. D. martyred 1415 A. D.), was a reader of Wycliffe's writings, and preached his doctrines, especially proclaiming freedom from papal authority. He was made Rector of the University of Prague, and for a time held a commanding influence throughout Bohemia. Tim Dowley (1996) said that through John Huss' preachings and writings, emphasis was laid on the following:

- i. personal piety and purity of life
- ii. the role of Scripture as an authority in the Church
- iii. the Church as the body of Christ, with Christ as its only head God as the only One who can forgive sin
- i. he preached that neither the Pope nor cardinals could establish a doctrine which was contrary to Scripture. He said that nobody should obey an order that is not based on the Bible. He condemned the corruptness of the clergy, criticized his people for worshipping images, believing in false miracles and undertaking superstitious pilgrimages. He condemned the sale of indulgences and also criticized the church for withholding the cup of wine from the people during communion

The papacy could not condone the above charges against her and therefore planned to exterminate John Huss.

The Pope excommunicated him, and laid the city of Prague under an interdict while he remained there. Huss retired, but from his hiding-place sent forth letters reaffirming his views. After two years he consented to go before the Council of the Roman Catholic Church at Constance, in Baden on the border of Switzerland, having received a safe conduct from the Emperor Sigismund. But the pledge was violated upon the principle that faith was not to be kept with heretics. Huss was condemned and burned to death in 1415 A. D. but his fate aroused the reforming element in his native land, and has influenced Bohemia through all the centuries since his day.

3.5 Jerome Savonarola

Jerome Savonarola was a monk of the Dominican order at Florence in Italy, and Prior of the Monastery of St. Mark. Savonarola was an Italian preacher who was born in Ferrara in 1452 and was executed in 1498 by papal authority. Savonarola studied humanism and medicine. He later renounced these pursuits to become a Dominican in 1474. He became a popular preacher in Florence. His sermons warned of the great judgement coming on the city after which Florence would unite with Italy in a just commonwealth. It was said that these predictions seemed to be fulfilled when Charles

VIII, King of France invaded Italy and the Medici rulers of Florence fled. Dowley said that under the new regime, Savonarola became a prominent leader who initiated series of reforms through his preachings some of these initiatives were:

- i. tax reforms
- ii. aid to the poor
- iii. reforms in the courts
- iv. changed the city from a lax corrupt, pleasure-loving place into a virtual monastery.
- v. Denunciation of Pope Alexander VI and the corrupt papal court.

Hurlbut (1981) in his own account said that Savonarola preached, like one of the old prophets, against the social, ecclesiastical, and political evils of his day. His preaching filled the great cathedral to overflowing with multitudes eager not only to listen, but to obey his teachings. For a time, he was the practical dictator of Florence and effected a seeming reformation. But he was excommunicated by the Pope, was imprisoned, condemned, hanged, and his body burned, in the great square of Florence. His martyrdom was in 1498 A. D., only nineteen years before Luther nailed his theses on the cathedral door at Wittenberg.

3.6 Scholars and Leaders

Let us mention very briefly some of the scholars and leaders of thought in the period, which we have studied. During the thousand years of the Medieval Church many great men arose, but we name only four of them as the intellectual leaders of their age.

3.6.1 Anselm

Anselm was born 1033 in Piedmont in Italy, and at first, like many others, was a wandering scholar in various lands, but became a monk at the Monastery of Bee in Normandy, and was made Abbot in 1078 A. D. He was appointed Archbishop of Canterbury and Primate of the Church of England by William Rufus in 1093 A. D but strove against William and his successor Henry I, for the liberty and authority of the church, and for a time suffered banishment. He was the writer of many theological and philosophical works, and has been called a second Augustine. He died in 1109 A. D.

- 1) Tim Dowley (1966) said that Anselm as Archbishop was known as a reformer, encouraging regular church synods, enforcing clerical celibacy and suppressing the slave trade.
- 2) Anselm was one of the early scholastic theologians, who taught that faith must lead to the right use of reason: I believe, in order that I may understand.
- 3) It was said that, Anselm was the first person to put forward the ontological argument for the existence of God. Perhaps, this was an attempt to prove Gods existence by reason alone.
- 4) However, Anselm's greatest work in theology was his *Cur Deus Homo* (Why God Became Man) Anselm replied that sin runs up a debt with God which humans can never themselves repay.
- 5) Anselm's work showed deep insight into humanity's need of atonement.

3.6.2 Peter Abelard

Peter Abelard, born 1079, died 1142, as a philosopher and theologian; he was the boldest thinker of the Middle Ages. He may be regarded as the founder of the University of Paris, which was the mother of the European Universities. His fame as a teacher drew students by the tens of thousand from every part of Europe and many of the great men in the

generation succeeding his own were influenced by his thought. His daring speculations and independent opinions more than once brought him under the ban of the church. Even more famous than his teachings and writings has been the romantic story of his love-affair with the beautiful Heloise for whom he broke his monastic vows. They were married, but afterward compelled to separate. Both entered convents; Abelard died an abbot and Heloise an abbess.

3.6.3 Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153)

Tim Dowley (1996) said that Bernard of Clairvaux was the first of the great medieval mystics and a leader of a new spirit of ascetic simplicity and personal devotion. Dowley added that Bernard wished to turn his back on the world and its comforts, and lead a life of prayer and self-denial. However, he did not hesitate to criticize and correct the powerful leaders of his age.

It was also said that Bernard of Clairvaux emphasized God's love and believed that Christians come to know God by loving him. Hurlbut (1981) also described him as Bernard of Clairvaux of a noble French family. He was educated for the court, but renounced it for the convent. In 1115 A. D., he established at Clairvaux a monastery of the reformed Cistercian order, and became its first Abbot. His branch of the order took root in many countries, and its members were commonly known as Bernardines. Bernard was a remarkable union of the mystic and the practical thinker. He preached and promoted the Second Crusade in 1147. A broad-minded gentle-hearted man, he opposed and wrote against the persecution of the Jews. Some of his hymns, as Jesus, the very thought of Thee, and O Sacred Head, now wounded, are sung in all the churches. Only twenty years after his death he was canonized as St. Bernard. Luther said If there ever lived on earth a God-fearing and holy monk, it was St. Bernard of Clairvaux.

3.6.4 Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274)

The greatest mind of the Middle Ages was that of Thomas Aquinas, who lived 1225 to 1274, and was called Universal Doctor, Angelical Doctor, and Prince of Scholastics. He was born at Aquino in the kingdom of Naples, and against the will of his family entered the Dominican order of monks. While a young student he was so silent that he was nicknamed the dumb ox; but his master, Albertus Magnus, said, "this ox will one day fill the world with his bellowing". He became the most celebrated and highest authority of all the medieval period in philosophy and theology, and his writings are still often quoted, especially by Roman Catholic scholars. He died in 1274 A. D.

Dowley said that Thomas was a prolific writer, whose works fill eighteen large volumes. They include commentaries on most of the books of the Bible, commentary on Peter Lombard's sentences, discussions on thirteen works of Aristotle and a variety of disputations and sermons.

He will forever be remembered for two most important works, which are the *Summa Theologiae* and the *Summa Contra Gentiles*. Together they represent an encyclopedic summary of Christian thought. The first based on revelation and the second designed to support Christian belief with human reason.

Thomas Aquinas emphasized that all human knowledge originates in the sense. He also emphasized that philosophy is based on data accessible to all men and that theology is based only on revelation and logical deduction comes from revelation. His teachings paved way for the development of sciences during the Renaissance Era.

3.7 Invention of the printing press

A completely new dimension in the history of books, scholarship and education opened up with the invention of printing – sometimes called

Germany's chief contribution to the Renaissance. The art of printing from handcut wooden blocks was invented in Asia about the fifth century A. D., and the first known printed book was produced by this means in China in 868. But Europe had to wait until the middle of the fifteenth century for the art to be rediscovered and developed. About 1445 Johann Guternberg (1400-68) began to pioneer with movable metal type at Mainz in Germany, and – significantly – the first complete book known to have been printed in the Christian world was the Bible (1456). Until 1462 the new art remained a closely guarded trade secret in Mainz but in that year the city was plundered and the printers dispersed. Within two decades the invention spread north, south, east and west; printing-presses were set up in Rome in 1467, Paris in 1470, Cracow in 1474 and Westminster in 1476. By the time Luther was born, in 1483, printing was well established throughout Europe. It was the most momentous invention since the stirrup, and a revolutionary step forward in technology. Like the invention of gunpowder (rediscovered at about the same time), the application of printing to book-production held a tremendous potential for good and evil in subsequent history.

The printing press was important in the early spread of the reformation. The writings of the first Germany reformers (Luther and Melanchthon) reached a comparatively wide public in printed form within weeks and were soon read in Paris and Rome. At the height of the Reformation, in the last years of Luthers life, busy printers enabled the anonymous work *Beneficio di Christo* (which more than any other book spread the doctrine of justification by faith in Italy) to sell 40,000 copies in Venice alone after its publication there in 1543. Even before the Reformation, printing had helped to create a wider and more critical reading-public than had ever been known in the Christian world. It also met the new demand for reading material with works such as the religious satires of Erasmus, which were a big commercial success. On hearing a rumour that the Sorbonne was about to condemn it, one Paris printer rushed through an edition of 24,000 copies of Erasmus *Colloquies*. Thus printing helped prepare the way for the Reformation.

3.8 Benefits of printing press

Some of the benefits of the printing press to Christianity are as follows:

- 1) The press brought the scriptures into common use.
- 2) The press led to their translation and circulation in all languages of Europe.
- 3) The people who read the New Testament soon realized that the papal Church was far from the New Testament ideal.
- 4) The new teachings of the Reformers, as fast as they appeared, were set forth in books and pamphlets, which were circulated in millions throughout Europe.

4.0-CONCLUSION

Throughout this unit you have studied the travails of faithful Christian, who stood for the correct teachings of the Bible. They gave their lives as a "living sacrifice" at the altar of freedom of religion. The irony of life was the strong conviction that the papacy had in clamping down "the heresy" as an act of God. Indeed, those five great movements bore and sealed the testimony of Jesus with their blood that eventually became the seeds of the gospel.

In addition, the invention of the printing press accelerated the growth of publishing works. Tracts were readily made available and circulated throughout the world. Through that great invention, translations of the Bible into several languages were

printed at a low cost. Therefore the above two major events set the stage for the Christian Reformation of the Sixteenth century in Europe.

5.0 SUMMARY

It is expected that you have learnt the following points from this unit:

- The exercise of choice in religious doctrine has posed a problem in Christianity, perhaps since the days of the Apostles
- Albigensians, Waldesians, the Lollards and others were declared heretics in the thirteenth century and were punished for their beliefs.
- Pope Alexander III, in the third Lateran Council of 1179 announced a Crusade against the Cathars (Albigensians) of France.
- Pope Innocent III was the first Pope to talk about heresy in terms of treason. Therefore in 1208, he launched a successful Crusade against the Albigensians that destroyed Cathar as a political power by 1250 ruining the civilization of the area in the process.
- Gregory IX and Pope Innocent IV incorporated all earlier Papal statements about the organization of the inquisition, as well as condoning the use of torture in dealing with heretics.
- Inquisition was a special court with a peculiar power to judge intentions as well as actions of heretics.
- The invention of the Printing Press and its benefits in terms of mass production of the Bible, leaflets and tracts which aided the works of Christian Missionaries.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Discuss the forerunners of the Christian Reformation of the century.
2. Discuss how the printing press was important to the early spread of the Reformation.

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS

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UNIT 4 RENAISSANCE AGE TO THE DAWN OF REFORMATION

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Perhaps, you need to congratulate yourself that you have come to Unit 4 of Module 3, which is the last unit of your study in the first semester. By now, you should understand the beginning of the Christian Church, its growth and persecutions. Without mincing words, you have understood how the Apostolic church metamorphosized into the Imperial Church and subsequently came under the control of the papacy. The absolute authority of papacy over the Christian church inhibited the spirit of enquiry. Those who dared the Pope paid the supreme sacrifice. Therefore, the period of the Dark Ages persisted till the Renaissance Age, the invention of the printing press and the time when forerunners of the Reformation were slaughtered. In the previous units, you became aware that the Roman Catholic Church prevailed over all aspects of human activities when she was at her peak. She asserted authority over Emperors, Kings, Queens and every other human establishment. In such an atmosphere, there was no meaningful growth or new developments. However, there came a new beginning, a rebirth of learning heralded by the Renaissance Age. This is an age, when every new thing was subjected to experiment, observation, rigorous verification and backed up with facts and data. This spirit of enquiry became the bedrock for scientists, philosophers, politicians and the Christian Church Reformers.

In this unit, you will study how the Renaissance Age, accelerated the dawn of the Christian Church Reformation. The word dawn, signifies, the early morning time or of a stage when a programme is at its infancy. Therefore, the word dawn suggests to you that you will only treat the beginning of the Christian Reformation in this semester. By the grace of God you will study in details the stories of the Christian Church Reformation in many countries of Europe and America in the second semester, as you register for CRS831: Reformation and Counter Reformation

2.0 OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- identify the spirit of investigation and experiments in the Renaissance
- identify the Italian and English fathers in Arts, Rhetoric, Religion, Painting and Sciences

- identify the motives that gave rise to the decisions made by forerunners of the Reformation
- analyze the life of Martin Luther and the resultant effect on the Christian Church.

3.0-MAIN CONTENT

3.1-Renaissance Defined

Renaissance stand for re-birth of learning and also tells of a new beginning that affected and transformed all aspects of life, political, economic and religious as well as intellectual and artistic.

Jesse Hurlbut has also lent his voice to the definition of Renaissance in the following sentence. He defined Renaissance as a very strong movement that awakened Europe to a new interest in literature, art and science, the change from medieval to modern aims and methods of thought.

He adds that during the Middle Ages, the interest of scholars had been in religious truth, with philosophy as related to religion by churchmen. However, in this new awakening, a new interest arose in classical literature, Greek and Latin, in art, that became the first gleams of modern science (Hurlbut, 1981, 117).

Tim Dowley said that, the Renaissance began with the revival of classical learning by scholars who have come to be called humanists. He quickly defined a humanist as someone who taught Latin grammar, originally. However, the humanists stand in contrast to the schoolmen, and humanism in contrast to scholasticism. He said that they were not necessarily opposed to Christianity in the early stage because some of them professed faith in Christ (Tim Dowley, 1996, 354).

3.2 The Renaissance and its Impacts

The period you are now studying started from the 9th to 15th Centuries. F. I. Akaneme (2004) said that during that period men began to be dissatisfied with a way of life, which made progress very slow. She added that, they were not satisfied to learn simply what those before them had written or taught. They tried to find out new things for themselves. She further explains that, they questioned most of the teachings that were forced on them by the Church. Therefore, the spirit of questioning old beliefs and forming new opinions generally came to be described as the Renaissance, which means rebirth or revival of learning. According to Akaneme, the revival was started in Italy by three famous scholars: Dante (1265-1321 A.D.), Petrarch (1304-1374 A. D.) and Giovanni Boccaccio 1313-1375. These artists tried to show how superior the learning, art and culture of the ancient Greeks were, and this led to a revival of interest in the Greek language.

F. I. Akaneme (2004) further stated that, in the field of science were two very influential theologians and philosophers: Albert the Great (1193-1280 A. D.), a Bavarian Dominican priest, and Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274 A. D.), an Italian monk. Both of them taught at the University of Paris. She stated further that they were the first to accept the idea of a distinction between knowledge of nature and revealed knowledge. It was said that, others who contributed to the revival of learning were Robert Grosseteste (1175-1253 A. D.), an English philosopher of science; and Roger Bacon (1290-1294 A. D.), an English Franciscan Monk, who insisted that for any truth or knowledge to be accepted it must be observed and experimented. Perhaps, one of the giants in the field of science was Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519 A. D.), an Italian who was a painter, a sculptor, an engineer, an architect, a physicist, a biologist and

a philosopher, who insisted that true learning must begin with observation and experiments.

Edward Burns (1986) concludes that other heroes of the era were William Ockham (1285-1349 A. D.), an abstract thinker; Giovanni Boccaccio (1313-1375 A. D.), the greatest writer of Vernacular prose-fiction and Geoffrey Chaucer (1340-1400 A. D.), the first major writer of English that can still be read today. There are others on the list of Renaissance humanists too numerous to mention.

However, suffice to say that the spirit of enquiry, doubt or questioning that came with Renaissance period, engendered discipline into the search of the Scriptures. The spirit of the age, motivated the reformers to question the dogmas of the Catholic Church. Therefore, in their search for the truth, as recorded in the Bible, they discovered that the Roman Catholic Church of their day needed to be straightened up. You could see how the Renaissance spirit spurred the Reformers into action. Therefore in this unit you shall study few other factors that cumulated to the dawn of Reformation and as relates to Martin Luther.

3.3 Renaissance and Humanists

Although the Renaissance culture was by no means pagan, it certainly was more secular in its orientation than the culture of the Middle Ages (Burns, 1986. Humanism in its technical sense was a program of studies which aimed to replace the medieval scholastic emphasis on logic and metaphysics with the study of language, literature, history and ethics. (Burns, 1986).

According to Burns however, the broader sense of humanism lies in a stress on the dignity of man as the most excellent of all Gods creatures below the angels. Therefore, Renaissance humanists had a firm belief in the nobility and possibilities of the human race.

Burns stated that one of the greatest Renaissance scholars and writers was Francis Petrarch, one of the first Italian humanists. He thought that the Christian writer must above all cultivate literary eloquence so that he could inspire people to do well. Burns added that civic humanists like the Florentines Leonardo Bruni (1370-1444) asserted that ambition and the quest for glory were noble impulses, which ought to be encouraged. Therefore, they refused to condemn the striving for material possessions, for they argued that the history of human progress is inseparable from mankind's success in gaining mastery over the earth and its resources.

Perhaps, one can agree with Burns, that Desiderius Erasmus (1467-1536 A.D.) was the prince of the Christian humanists. According to him, Erasmus intended that everything he wrote must propagate in one form or another, what he called the philosophy of Christ. Therefore, Burns said that, the essence of Erasmus' Christian humanist convictions was his belief that the entire society of his day was caught up in corruption and immorality as a result of having lost sight of the simple teachings of the gospels. Burns added that Erasmus categorically emphasized that no one could be a good Christian without being certain of exactly what Christ's message really was. Therefore, Erasmus spent ten years studying and comparing all the best early Greek biblical manuscripts he

could find in order to establish an authoritative text. Finally, in 1516, a year before Martin Luther wrote his 95 objections (thesis) against the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church, Erasmus published his Greek New testament, one of the most important landmarks of biblical scholarship of all time. Thus, a solid foundation was laid for the Christian Church Reformation of 1517 (Burns, 1986).

3.4 The Dawn of the Reformation

The Reformation caught the fancy of many people and became popular in Christian history from its inception to about two hundred years that it

took to take place actively. It began in Germany and spread over all northern Europe, resulting in the establishment of national churches owing no allegiance to Rome. You will now notice some antecedent forces leading to the Reformation, and greatly furthering its progress. The first to consider is the rise in the spirit of nationality.

3.5 The Rise in the Spirit of Nationalism

Hurlbut (1981) said that the spirit of nationalism that arose in Europe during the dawn of Reformation differed from the Medieval strifes between Emperors and Popes, in that it was more of a popular than a kingly movement. He said that the patriotism of the people was beginning to manifest itself in the following ways:

- i) an unwillingness to submit to a foreign rule over their own national churches;
 - ii) willingness to resist the appointment by a pope in a distant land, of bishops, abbots, and church dignitaries;
 - iii) a disposition to withhold the contribution of Peter's pence for the support of the Pope and the building of stately churches in Rome;
 - iv) and a determination to abridge the power of the church councils, bringing the clergy under the same laws and courts with the laity.
- This national spirit was a strong support to the reforming movement

3.6 The Reformation in Germany

While the spirit of reform and of independence was awakening through all Europe, the flame burst forth first in Germany, in the electorate of Saxony, under the leadership of Martin Luther, a monk and professor in the University of Wittenberg. Please notice some of its earlier stages, and the resultant effects on the world in general.

3.7 The Sale of Indulgencies

Perhaps, you need to have an insight to the Sales of tickets authorized by the papacy to raise funds for its projects. Hurlbut (1981) said that, the reigning pope, Leo X, needing large sums of money for the completion of St. Peters Church in Rome, permitted an agent named John Tetzel to go through Germany selling certificates, signed by the Pope himself, purporting to bestow the pardon of all sins, not only upon the holders of the certificates, but upon friends living or dead on whose behalf they were purchased, without confession, repentance, penance, or absolution by a priest. Hurlbut explained further that, Tetzel told the people that "as soon as your coin clinks in the chest, the souls of your friends will rise out of purgatory to heaven". Luther preached against Tetzel and his selling of pardons, denouncing his teaching in no measured terms. The papacy was rudely shocked and embarrassed. The church was exposed publicly, and the Pope determined to suppress the insurrection.

3.8 Martin Luther's Thesis of 1517

Meanwhile, Martin Luther catalogued the abuses in the Church and determined to make them known publicly. The exact date fixed upon by historians as the beginning of the Great Reformation, is October 31, 1517. on the morning of that day Martin Luther nailed to the oaken door of Wittenberg Cathedral a parchment containing ninety-five theses or statements, nearly all relating to the sale of indulgences, but in their application striking at the authority of the pope and the priesthood. The rulers of the church vainly endeavored to coerce and to cajole Luther. Martin Luther, however, trusted God as he stood firm, and the storm only made him resolute in his opposition to doctrines and practices not countenanced by Holy Scripture. He held on to the teachings of the Bible, and kept on exposing the corrupt practices of the papacy.

3.9 Burning the Papal Bull

After many controversies, and the publication of pamphlets, which made Luther's opinions known throughout Germany, Hurlbut (1981) said that his teachings were formally condemned, and he was excommunicated by a bull of Pope Leo X in June, 1520. The Elector Frederick of Saxony was commanded to deliver up Luther for trial and punishment, providentially, the Elector Frederick, instead, gave him ample protection, as he sympathized with his views. Therefore, Luther met the excommunication with defiance, called it the execrable bull of Antichrist. It was unbelievable that Martin Luther, on December 10, 1520, publicly at the gates of Wittenberg, before an assemblage of the University professors, the students, and the people burned the papal bull, and copies of the canons or laws enacted by the Roman authorities. This act constituted Luther's final renunciation of the Roman Catholic Church.

3.10 The Diet at Worms in 1521

It was said that the papacy was enraged with fury at the news of the burning of papal Bull. Hurlbut said that in 1521, Luther was summoned before the Diet or Supreme Council of the German rulers, meeting at Worms on the Rhine. Hurlbut stated further that, the new emperor, Charles V, gave him the promise of a safe conduct. Luther went to the assembly, though warned by his friends that he might meet the fate of John Huss in similar circumstances at the Council of Constance, in 1415. Luther could not be deterred at all, rather he said I will go to Worms, though as many devils were aiming at me as tiles on the roof. On April 17, 1521, Luther stood before the Diet, over which the emperor was presiding and in answer to the question whether he would retract the statements in his books, Luther replied, after consideration, that he could retract nothing except what was disproved by Scripture or reason. Martin Luther then ended with the words: Here I stand; I can do naught else. God help me. Amen. The Emperor Charles was urged to seize Luther, on the ground that no faith was to be kept with heretics, but he permitted him to leave Worms in peace. Perhaps, that was the greatest miracle the Lord God performed in the history of the Christian Church Reformation (Hurlbut, 1981).

3.11 The Wartburg Castle Experience

It was also said that, while Luther was traveling homeward, he was suddenly arrested by soldiers of the Elector Frederick, and taken, for his safety, to the castle of the Wartburg in Thuringia. Luther remained there nearly a year, in disguise, while storms of war and revolt were raging in the empire. Interestingly, Luther kept himself busy, for it was said that during this retirement he made his translation of the New Testament into the German tongue, a work, which alone would have made him immortal. Hurlbut said that Martin Luther's version, is regarded as the foundation of the German written language. This was in 1521; the Old Testament was not completed until several years later. It was said that Luther later left the Castle of Wartburg and went back to Wittenberg where he resumed his leadership in the movement for a Reformed Church, just in time to save it from extravagant excesses.

3.12 The Protestant Name

As five teachings of Martin Luther gained momentum throughout the land. There arose bitterness and opposition amongst Christians in Germany. The nation became polarized as it were. Hurlbut said that, the division of the German states into the reformed and Roman branches was between the North and South. He explained that the Southern princes, led by Austria, adhered to Rome, while those of the North were

mainly followers of Luther. Therefore, in order to find a solution to the thorny issue, a Diet was held at Speyer in 1529, to reconcile the two parties. Hurlbut stated that, at this Diet, the Catholic rulers were in the majority, and condemned the Lutheran doctrines. The princes forbade any teaching of Lutheranism in states where it had not become dominant; and in the states already Lutheran required that the Catholics should be allowed the free exercise of their religion. It was said that to this unequal ruling the Lutheran princes made a formal protest, and from that time they were known as Protestants and their doctrines as the Protestant religion.

4.0 CONCLUSION

The Renaissance, indeed, became a watershed for the Reformation that took place in the Christian Church in the 16th Century. The Age of Renaissance liberated the minds of scholars, politicians and scientists, as well as religious leaders. They were able to think alike as they challenged claims of the papacy throughout the late Middle Ages. As you may recollect, Popes, actually, inhibited the spirit of enquiry pertaining to religious matters. You remember in your studies that the papacy asserted that they were the vicar of Jesus Christ on earth. In that cloudy atmosphere, spirituality of Christians became retarded and corrupted.

As previously mentioned, other antecedent forces that led to the dawn of Reformation were the invention of printing press; the faithful witness bore by the Albigenses, the Waldensians, John Wycliff, John Huss and Jerome Savonarola; the spirit of Nationalism and the sales of indulgencies by Tetzal. Thus, the stage for the Reformation was set as Martin Luther nailed his 95 theses on the wooden door of the Church at Wittenberg on October 31, 1517.

5.0 SUMMARY

- You have studied the following points during the course of your studies:
- Renaissance is described as a re-birth of learning.
- The Renaissance period was marked and characterized by an increasing desire for knowledge such that critical power resurfaced.
- The Renaissance in science began with two theologians: Albert the Great (1193-1280 A. D.) and Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274 A. D.). They were the first to accept the idea of a distinction between knowledge of nature and revealed knowledge. Thus their attitude prepared the way for a relatively independent development of science.
- Humanism in its technical sense was a programme of studies that places importance on the study of language, literature, history and ethics. The broader sense of humanism lies in a stress on the dignity of man as the most excellent of all God's creature. Therefore, humanists firmly believed in the nobility and possibilities of the human race.
- Desiderius Erasmus was called the prince of the Christian humanists. Erasmus published his Greek New Testament in 1516, thus laying a solid foundation for the Reformation.
- One of antecedent forces to the Reformation and greatly furthering its progress was the spirit of Nationalism. The patriotism of the people was beginning to manifest itself in an unwillingness to submit to a foreign rule over their own national churches.

- The sales of indulgencies by John Tetzel as authorized by Pope Leo X; and the subsequent denunciation of the sales by Martin Luther heightened tension between the Roman Catholic Church and Martin Luther. The nailing of Martin Luther's 95 theses to the door of Wittenberg, on October 31, 1517 also aggravated the storm.
- Pope Leo X by his bull excommunicated Martin Luther in June 1520. On December 10, 1520, Martin Luther burnt the Papal bull and copies of the canons or laws enacted by the Roman authorities.
- On April 17, 1521, Martin Luther was brought before the Diet of Worms and was urged to renounce all his works and utterances against the Church. He refused bluntly, rather, he made the following statement: "Here I stand, I can do nothing else. God help me, Amen".
- While Martin Luther was returning home, he was arrested by the soldiers of the Elector Frederick and took him to the castle of the Wartburg for his safety; here Luther was able to translate the New Testament into German in 1521.
 - The German states were divided over the new teachings of Martin Luther. The Southern States led by Austria gave their allegiance to the Pope while the Northern States were followers of Luther. At the Diet of Speyer in 1529, the Catholic princes were in the majority and therefore they were favoured and the judgement was against the Lutheran princes. Therefore, to this unequal ruling, the Lutheran princes made a formal protest and from that time they were known as Protestants and their doctrines as the Protestant religion.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Discuss the effects of the Renaissance on the Christian Church Reformation of the Sixteenth Century.
2. Discuss a few other antecedent forces leading to the dawn of Reformation.

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