

LADIES' CHURCH HISTORY OVERVIEW

WHY STUDY CHURCH HISTORY ???

- To avoid repeating the same mistakes generation after generation
- To learn to see God's hand at work in the life of His church over time
- To discover "patterns of grace" in the ministries that God blesses
- Start with a "road map", but then be sure to visit the "destinations"

I. CANON OF THE BIBLE

- A. Greek manuscripts from the apostles were passed around the churches
- B. The Holy Spirit confirmed Scripture in shaping of the early church
 - 1. Not a group of men in a hidden room deciding what's in or out
 - 2. Not a church council taking a vote on which books to include
 - 3. Later church councils affirmed what the Holy Spirit inspired earlier
- C. Dead Sea Scrolls discovered in caves at Qumran (1947) confirming Bible
 - 1. Bedouin boys tossing stones in caves when a ceramic jar shattered
 - 2. Complete scroll of Isaiah over 1000 years older than previously found

II. EARLY CHURCH (30-500)

- A. Gospel spread through a common language & a safe system of roads
- B. Meetings held at night in secret, due to persecution (leading to rumors)
- C. "The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church." (Tertullian)
- D. Cycles of Persecutions lasted for almost three hundred years
- E. Christians were considered to be atheists by Romans (no idols or temples)
- F. The Early Church Fathers provided teaching against many heresies

III. ASCETICISM

- A. Resulted in a type of self-mortification that denied all bodily comfort
- B. The belief that the more one suffered, the closer one grew towards God
- C. Development of the Way of Negation (vs. the Way of Affirmation)
- D. Rise of Desert Hermits/pole sitters (stylites) like St. Simeon (521-597)
- E. Ascetics continued through the Middle Ages, and even exist today

IV. EMERGENCE OF THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

- A. "Conversion" of Emperor Constantine (312) ended formal persecutions
- B. Led to the marriage of church and state ("mass conversions")
- C. The city of Rome still held important political power, and so too its bishop
- D. Over time developed a formal liturgy and the primacy of the pope

V. MONASTICISM

- A. Fall of the Roman Empire (476) led to a partial retreat by the church
- B. Attempt to hold on to the purity of faith by a withdrawal from the world
- C. Monasteries preserved learning and writing, as well as agriculture
- D. Most monastic communities were left alone by invading barbarians
- E. The Rule of St. Benedict (530) became the model for monastic life

VI. RISE OF ISLAM

- A. Muhammad (570-632) was an illiterate camel driver
- B. Claimed to receive "revelations" which were written down by others (Koran)
- C. Islam spread through military conquests throughout Middle East
- D. Churches in North Africa & the Holy Land were virtually "wiped out"

VII. SPLIT WITH THE EASTERN CHURCH/EASTERN ORTHODOXY

- A. Differences developed in language, culture, politics, and theology
- B. Each church had opposing views on celibacy, icons, and the date of Easter
- C. Schism of 1054 – leaders excommunicate each other
- D. Eastern church struggled to exist, given their proximity to Muslim nations

VIII. DARK AGES (500-1000)/MIDDLE AGES (1000-1500)

- A. Literacy and education was limited to monasteries and royalty
- B. The rising power of the institutional church was based in Rome
- C. It was a difficult time filled with superstition, war, and plague
- D. The Great Plague (1347-1350) covered most of Europe

IX. CRUSADES (1096-1320)

- A. Religious motivations, but with political & economic considerations
- B. Various major and minor crusades were attempts to retake the Holy Land
- C. Behavior of crusaders was often deplorable (looting & murder of civilians)
- D. Children's Crusade (1212) and others ended in disaster (death or slavery)

X. MYSTICS IN THE CHURCH

- A. Often a reaction to periods of formalism in the history of the church
- B. Focus was on an experience of ecstasy thru contemplative union with God
- C. Julian of Norwich (1342-1417) wrote *Sixteen Revelations of Divine Love*
- D. Catherine of Siena (1347-1380) believed God spoke to her through visions
- E. St. John of the Cross (1542-1592) wrote about the "Dark Night of the Soul"
- F. Madame Jeanne Guyon (1648-1717) taught a form of "interior prayer"

XI. REFORMATION/COUNTER-REFORMATION

- A. Many political & social factors contributed to the Reformation
- B. Earlier work of John Wycliffe (1329-1384) & others in Bible translation
- C. Development of the Printing Press (1453) allowed God's Word to spread
- D. People found discrepancies between the Bible and Roman Catholic teaching
- E. While a priest, the sale of Indulgences infuriated Martin Luther in 1517
- F. Ninety-five Theses on the door of Castle Church in Wittenberg
- G. John Calvin (1509-1564) led the Reformation in Switzerland
- H. Protestants began tearing down the trappings of Catholicism in society
- I. The Roman Catholic Church responded with the Counter-Reformation
 - 1. Inquisition (1542-1854) – Tribunal based in Spain to prevent heresy
 - 2. Index of Prohibited Books (1559-1966) – Book burning

XII. PURITANS

- A. The Reformation in England produced the Anglican Church
- B. Puritans rejected the idea of a "state church" in favor of congregations
- C. They wrote works of intense piety in England and America
- D. John Owen (1616-1683) was one of the most famous Puritan writers

XIII. REVIVALISM, EVANGELISTS, & DENOMINATIONALISM

- A. New doctrinal emphasis resulted in splits and many creedal statements
- B. John Wesley (1703-1791) & brother (Charles) saw the birth of Methodism
- C. William Wilberforce (1759-1833) ran an evangelical crusade against slavery
- D. Charles Spurgeon (1834-1892) was a famous English Baptist preacher
- E. Great Awakening in America (1726-1756) rippled throughout society
 - 1. Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758) wrote *Sinners in the hands ...*
 - 2. David Brainerd (1718-1747) missionary work in American Frontier
 - 3. George Whitefield (1714-1770) preached in England and America
- F. Second Great Awakening in America (1787-1812) (from a prayer meeting)
- G. Revivalist Charles G. Finney (1792-1875) popular in America (altar call)
- H. Evangelist Dwight L. Moody (1837-1899) continues to have strong impact

XIV. MISSIONARY EXPLOSION

- A. William Carey (1761-1834) began his ministry to India in 1792
- B. Missionary societies established in 1800s (often independent of churches)
- C. Hudson Taylor (1832-1905) developed the China Inland Mission
- D. Mary Slessor (1848-1915) labored alone in Africa for nearly forty years
- E. Amy Carmichael (1867-1951) committed her life to reach India for Christ
- F. Gospel for Asia and the Native Missionary emphasis (1978-present)

XV. PRESENT DAY CHURCH

- A. Development of Liberal Theology & Mainline Denominations (20th Century)
- B. Billy Graham and the growth of evangelical Christians (vs. social gospel)
- C. Emergence of the Jesus Movement in the 1960s (counter-culture)
- D. Growth of Mega-churches around the world
- E. Chuck Smith and the Calvary Chapel Movement