



Church History, Neutralization of the Church: 375-590 AD

Neutralization of the church because of immaturity in production:

The two-fold problem in the empire. The decline of the Roman Empire placed upon the church the task of conserving Helleno-Hebraic culture. The task of giving the Gospel to the barbarians created an internal problem.

The results of these two problems in the church: The voice of the State became heard in the affairs of the church. A secularization took place in the church through the assimilation of the pagans into the assemblies.

A backward look at the buildup of the Church and state relations:

Anarchy ruled with all doing that which was right in their own eyes: 133-31 BC

Octavian and Mark Antony fight the battle of Axion: 31 BC

Octavian sets up a diarchy, two ruling head government: 31 BC - 192 AD

Revolution took place (192-284 AD) with Diocletian coming on the scene.

Strong emperors beginning with Diocletian: 285-305 AD

Diocletian: 285-205 AD

Constantine: in 311 AD moving toward Rome, saw a flaming cross. Defeated enemies at Milvian Bridge over the Tiber River. The battle was a result of a revolt in the west. Observation: The gravity of the Imperial Power was beginning to move to the East and the gravity of the Church powers was moving to the West.

State interferes in church affairs under Constantine. Restored the church property. Subsidized the church financially. Exempted the clergy from public office. Banned soothsaying. Officially set aside Sunday ("Day of the Sun") for the empire as the rest of worship. Intervened at the Council of Nicea.

Julian: set the church back.

Gratian: renounced the title, Pontifex Maximum, the title of the High Priest of the pagan emperor worship.

Theodocius: made Christianity the exclusive religion of the empire in 380 AD. Christianity recognized as the official and only religion of the Roman State in 395 AD.

Justinian: closed the school of philosophy in Athens and this was the final stroke at Paganism. Observation: The Pope in the West was stronger than the Emperor and the Patriarch in the East was weaker than the Emperor.

The advantages of the church at this time of church and state relations:

Increased the dignity of women. Stopped gladiatorial shows. Slaves received better treatment. Roman legislation was more just. Missionary work was speeded up.

The disadvantages of the Church at this time of church and state relations:

There was governmental interference in the Church. The Church became the persecutor rather than the



persecuted. It weakened the spiritual impact of the Church.

Observation: This basically gives the picture of the first of the two problems, the voice of the state in the affairs of the Church. This brings us to the problem of secularization and this is attributed to the great influx of pagans into the empire.

The neutralization of the Church through the entrance of barbarians into the empire:

Visigoths:

Asked permission to enter the empire as the Mongols were attacking them. Visigoths defeat the eastern empire in 378 AD at the Battle of Adrianople. Visigoths sacked Rome in 410 AD. Visigoths founded the kingdom of Spain in 426 AD.

Vandals:

They had preceded the Visigoths to Spain. They were driven out by the Visigoths.

Lombards, Burgundians, and Franks:

Crossed the Rhine and settled in the fifth century in modern France. The Mohammedians were militant and on the move at this time, 622 AD.

The evangelization of the barbarians:

Missionary to the Goths:

Ulfilas, 311-381 AD before the spread of barbarians. Was an Arian Christian. Reduced the language of the Goths to writing. Created an alphabet and gave them Scriptures in their own language. He left out Kings and Samuel because the Goths were warlike people. Many Visigoths became believers after they conquered the Goths.

Arianism: Arias claimed Christ had not existed from all eternity, but was created in past eternity and not of the same substance as the Father. Christ was not co-equal, co-eternal, and co-substantial with the Father. Christ was divine but not deity.

Missionary to the Burgundians:

Martin of Tours, 311-396 AD was the patron saint of France. He organized his soldier monks into bands. He set out to destroy the groves where the pagan gods were worshipped. When Clovis, King of the Franks, became a Christian the mass of the people also accepted Christianity. Whether real or not, this was going to be a big factor in the life of the church hereafter. Frankish kings crossed the Alps many times to save a Roman bishop in distress.

Missionaries to the British Isles:

Probably Roman soldiers and merchants. There were Celtic bishops at the Council of Arles in 314 AD. The British Celtic Church had certain interesting characteristics: The church had the opponent to Augustine there, by the name of Pelagius. Pelagius taught a heresy known by his name in 429 AD. It denied original sin and said that man has a complete free will unhindered by the old sin nature. The British church did not recognize the jurisdiction nor the primacy of the Roman bishop. When the Roman troops left, the British Celtic church was defenseless and was driven into the hills by the Angles, Saxons, and Jutes.



Missionary to the Celts of Ireland:

Patrick, 432-461 AD had opposition from the priests of the Druid religion but succeeded in establishing a strong Christian faith in Ireland. Later in the Dark Ages, Ireland was a center of culture out of which came missionaries and scholars. One man was Columba, who went to Scotland.

Missionary to Scotland:

Columba, 521-597 AD. In 563 AD, he founded a monastery on Iona, an island, which became the center for evangelization of Scotland. Both the Scotland Church and the Celtic British Church were definitely missionary churches. Celtic Christianity in Ireland and Scotland had become strong, while British Celtic Christianity had all but died out.

The neutralization of the church definitely felt in its worship and practice:

The church by 590 AD had passed on to the barbarian invaders the Greco-Roman culture. The church had assimilated many of these pagans into their churches. This assimilation resulted in many things still existing in the churches: Saint worship was substituted for hero worship. Many rituals and practices were incorporated.