

Church History I (HSTH 311; Zwaanstra)

- Snapshot:**
- I. Ancient Period** (close of the canon up to Gregory the Great)
 - A. from close of canon to 180 A.D.
 - B. from Gnostic Crisis to Constantine's conversion
 - C. from conversion of Constantine to Gregory the Great
 - II. Early Medieval Period** (Gregory the Great - forward)
 - A. Gregory the Great
 - B. Missions (the expansion of the Church)
 - C. Investiture Struggle (who selects bishops -- church or state ?)

I. Ancient Period**A. from close of canon to 180 A.D.**

1. Church & Roman Empire (20 AD to 180 AD) -- during "**Augustan Peace**" (named after Roman Emperor Caesar Augustus; a/k/a Pax Romana) from the time was right/full (Galatians 4:4) for the spread of Christianity; world at peace and politically unified, common language, culture flourishing, Roman order and organization (especially in their laws and govt.) lent stability, and emperors served as virtuous, benevolent servant-guardians; Western Church's theology being forensic and judicial comes from influence of Roman law; but, Roman society morals got bad (an opening for Xianity); **PERSECUTION** of Church was local and sporadic; Xianity had been regarded as Jewish sect (*religio licita*), but as differences became clear, persecution increased; 1st major persecution in 64 AD, as Nero blames Xians for Fire of Rome; Xians regarded as pagans (for refusing to sacrifice to Roman gods), cannibals, incestuous, and anarchists/rebellious; Xians refused to worship the deified emperors; although had tried, Xians could not be faithful citizens and also be faithful to God; under persecution, Xianity spread rapidly as people saw Xians' faith
2. Development of Christian Thought -- **Apostolic Fathers** (Clement of Rome [wrote Epistle to Corinth], Ignatius of Antioch, and Polycarp) wrote right after the last of the canonical writings; the "Didache", is reputed to have contained the teachings of the Apostles; very pastoral tone in "The Shepherd" of Hermas; as a group: 1) wrote just after the close of the canon, 2) affirmed deity and preexistence of Christ, and 3) works more concerned with morality and not rich in doctrinal content; **2nd Century Apologists** (e.g., Justin Martyr, Athenagoras) wrote defenses of Xianity against philosophical attacks, pled for justice related to the persecutions, and attacked irrationality of paganism; drew on philosophy to explain Xianity (e.g., teleological arguments, ontological arguments, and Christ is the divine Logos); use of philosophy was a bridge on which to take Xianity to the culture; **Deviating Movements** caused Christian thought and doctrine to be formalized (a very good result !); caused the canon to be agreed upon and formalized (even better !); **Gnosticism** (not a uniform system; but, biggies included special knowledge/revelation -- "*gnosis*" -- was key to life and afterlife, radical dualism [spirit good/body bad], OT and NT Gods different, and Christ only appeared to have a human body (Docetism); **Marcionism** (2nd Century, c. 144 AD; radical dualism, different God in OT & NT, and Docetism; distinctives = established own canon, ascetic, celibacy, salvation was by faith [not knowledge], and established their own churches); **Montanism** (2nd Century, c. 170 AD; Montanus proclaimed self to be the promised Paraclete, taught a "new prophecy", intense millenarianism, so-called "hyper-orthodox, extreme asceticism); **HERO: Irenaeus** (the Anti-Gnostic Father; born 135 AD) a representative

figure who combatted Gnostics and Marcionites; affirmed unity of God and unity of body, soul, and spirit; argued for rule of Apostolic faith and unity of OT and NT)

B. Gnostic Crisis to conversion of Constantine

3rd Century Crisis related to decline in Roman Empire (emperors became perverse despots [e.g., Commodus]; societal morals declined even more; religion became escapist, irrational, and supernaturalistic, and a radical metaphysical dualism [soul/body, good/evil] developed); **CRISIS** = Persecution became systematic; Emperor Decius demanded that all worship Rome's pagan gods, so that glory of Rome would be restored by gods; also demands to worship the Roman emperor as a god; many Xian bishops lapsed (**Novatians** said, "don't take 'em back" vs. **Cyprian** said, "be merciful"; **Donatists** said separate from the lapsers vs. **Augustine** argued against schism by saying sacraments make Church holy, not office of bishop)

Christological Controversies (see Christology class summary; see attached summary charts)

Trinitarian Controversies (

II. Early Medieval Period (Gregory the Great - forward)

A. Gregory the Great (590-604 AD) Pope and a "great transitional figure"; increased power of "Bishop of Rome"; defended Rome from invading Teutonic tribes; converted tribes by watering down Augustinian Christianity and by adding syncretistic elements (result: Xianity became highly superstitious; course set for Roman Catholic Church); mixed cross and sword (form of ecclesiastical imperialism) which set stage for medieval feudalism: Gregory hugely encouraged missions

B. Missions (the expansion of the Church)

Synod of Whitby (663-664 AD)

C. Investiture Struggle