

The Church Empowered (400-800 a.d.)  
Foundations ABF Lesson  
July 23 & 30, 2006  
Series: History of Christianity

ELEVEN OF "100 MOST IMPORTANT EVENTS OF CHRISTIAN HISTORY"

1. Jerome Completes Vulgate (405)

Bible in Latin

"Common language" (vulgar)

Respected so highly as translation that many even after reformation (Martin Luther) would quote it and refer to it rather than straight to Greek

Irony: "The translation of the Bible into a language every Western church could use probably caused the church to have a worship service and Bible no layman could understand. ... the Vulgate became so sacrosanct that eventually translating the Bible into common tongues was prohibited."

2. Patrick Goes as Missionary to Ireland (432)

NOTE: Rome is falling, Europe is being overtaken by the "Barbarians" (Vandals, Visigoths, Lombards, Franks, Saxons, Angles, etc.)

[Roman Empire 116 ad.gif](#)

[Roman Empire 336 ad.gif](#)

[Roman Empire 485 ad.gif](#)

<http://www.sci.gu.edu.au/~wiseman/Roman/19Maps.html>

Ireland was never part of Roman Empire but was Christianized, primarily because of Patrick.

History of Patrick:

- Circa 390 was born in Britain, son of Christian parents
- Captured at 16 and enslaved, taken to Northern Ireland
- Escaped, made it back home
- Had a vision/dream of Irish children begging him to come back to Ireland to tell them about Jesus.
- Felt unprepared to follow this call, went to France to study in a monastery
- Returned to Ireland circa 432.
- Converted most of Ireland over his lifetime.
- **Established 300 churches, baptized 120,000 people. (My dad - 35,000 converts)**
- Much legend surrounding his life (drove all snakes out of Ireland, etc.)
- Taught Irish about trinity using the shamrock.

NOTE: Scotch-Irish Christianity: simple, dependent upon monasteries, very sincere, clergy were “notable scholars and missionaries,” who “lived simple, devoted lives, often in rough circumstances” (Curtis, p. 48). ***This becomes important later when the Scotch-Irish brand of Christianity clashes with Roman Christianity.***

Ireland did not become Roman Catholic till 1100s!

### 3. Council of Chalcedon (451)

MAP:

[Council of Chalcedon 451 ad.gif](#)

Earlier councils had determined Jesus was fully God. What about his humanity?

Alexandria and Rome (west) v. Constantinople and Antioch (east)

First time Bishop of Rome (currently Leo) played such powerful role.

- asked emperor to call the council
- his *Tome* – long dissertation describing nature of Christ’s humanity – was very influential in the decision.

400 bishops – largest ever

Last council “in which all regions were represented and able to agree on key issues” (Curtis, p. 50). Naturally, then, last council that both east and west consider legitimate and authoritative.

### 4. Benedict Establishes *The Rule* for Monks (529)

Went to Rome to study.

Disgusted with immorality of Rome (one of most Christian cities in world)

Left to become hermit.

Gained reputation for spirituality, parents began bringing children to him for training in Christian life.

Was so strict he was hated, one monk even tried to poison him

Fled, moved to Monte Cassino (in Italy, 80 miles south of Rome)

[casino italy.bmp](#)

- built a monastery, had learned many lessons... Wrote *The Rule* to dictate rules for monastic living
- One year “novitiate,” a time for monk to decide whether or not he wanted to stay; if he decided to stay, he was expected to live there the rest of his life.
- Three vows: poverty, chastity, obedience
- Worship: seven service each day (including one at 2:00 a.m.!) lasting about 20 minutes
- Reciting of Psalms at every service. Divided among the monks... most monks eventually could quote the entire book of Psalms and other large portions of Scripture.
- Personal devotions (Bible reading, meditation and prayer)

- Manual labor. “Idleness is the enemy of the soul.” Jobs shared, including kitchen work. Kitchen duty was announced at worship – symbolic that our manual job is part of our worship.

Benedictine Monasticism and The Rule are still practiced today.

#### 5. Columba Goes as Missionary to Scotland (563)

Sent from Ireland

Set up similar monasteries and influenced Scotland

Significant because so many great Christian leaders throughout history have come from this tiny land.

#### 6. Gregory I Becomes Pope (590)

Pope = “Father” (papa)

- Many bishops before this era called pope
- First 150-200 years of church, bishops of Jerusalem and Antioch much more influential.
- Soon the Roman bishop was very respected, sometimes referred to as “bishop among bishops.” But had no authority over others.
- Became even more powerful after Constantine (325) made Christianity state religion, since Rome was capital of the empire.

“Leo the Great” (451) as we mentioned earlier played powerful role

- Leo thought Bishop of Rome should be the head of the church.
- But he still wasn’t followed simply because he was Bishop of Rome.

Gregory was first to be treated as head of the church. Partly political, partly because of the evolution of circumstances, partly because he was a great leader.

- MAP: [Roman Empire 623 ad.gif](#)
- Was a high-ranking official in Rome
- Left the political office, sold possessions, established a monastery
- Against his will was ordained Bishop of Rome
- Rome was in terrible shape, war-ravaged from repeated sieges, illness reigned.
- Gregory organized city: distribution of food to needy, rebuilding of aqueducts and defenses, etc.
- By default Gregory was acting as ruler of Rome.
- Follower of Augustine, believed in purgatory and superstitions
- Was a good man, pastoral, interested in music; “Gregorian Chant” named after him

NOTE: After Gregory, papacy fell on hard times for next 200 years. Further division between east and west, emperors of Constantinople demanded authority to declare the next bishop of Rome. Eventually popes began to look to the Franks for help... alliance grew until it led to the “Holy Roman Empire” in 800 a.d.

#### 7. Synod of Whitby (664)

[whitby and northumbria.gif](#)

<http://www.queensland.co.uk/whitby.html>

In England (Northumbria), two Christianities: Scotch-Irish (Celtic) v. Roman. Oswy, king of Northumbria, was from Scotch-Irish tradition, but his wife was Roman Christian.

- Two different Easters.
- He was celebrating Easter while queen was fasting for lent!
- Called a synod at Whitby.

Synod of Whitby:

- Argued about Easter: Celts quoted Columba; Romans quoted Saint Peter.
- King said he'd go with Saint Peter, since he was the keeper of the keys to heaven.

England became Roman Catholic

8. Boniface Goes as Missionary to Germany (716)

Saxon missionary from England

Assured that Germany would be Roman Catholic

helped unify this area of Europe and prepare for Holy Roman Empire.

9. The Venerable Bede Completes *Ecclesiastical History of the English Nation* (731)

Much of what we know of history from this era we owe to Bede.

One of the first to insist on accuracy and inspiration in writing of history

10. Charles Martel Defeats Muslims at Battle of Tours (732)

Ruler of Franks, one of the Germanic tribes that had overrun the Western empire.

Muslims were invading.

- 622: Muhammad's flight to Medina, considered beginning of Muslim era.
- Throughout rest of that century Muslims began conquest of Palestine, North Africa, headed toward Europe
- Made it deep into France before Charles Martel finally beat them back
- MAP: [Roman Empire 754 ad.gif](#)
- Battle of Tours (732) most famous battle on the western front, turning point in ending the Muslim advance on Europe.

11. Pope Leo II Crowns Charlemagne Emperor of Rome (800)

Alliance between the Pope and the Franks grew stronger, especially after Muslim invasion.

Charles Martel's son Pepin III had conferred a large territory to the Pope, giving him political clout but not ultimate power.

Martel's Grandson (Pepin's son) Charles the Great or Charlemagne became a great conqueror, uniting the western Roman empire for first time in centuries.

MAP: [Roman Empire 812 ad.gif](#)

Charlemagne held title *king* until Christmas Day, 800. Pope Leo II crowned him emperor of the west, ushering in the days of Holy Roman Empire

- Significant that the Pope crowned him emperor
- Power of Church and state was interwoven

NOTE: EASTERN AND WESTERN CHRISTIANITY ARE GROWING APART.

APPLICATIONS:

- What should relationship between church and state be?
  - 1 Pet. 2:12-17
  - 1 Tim. 2:1-4
  - Rom 13:1-8

THESE SCRIPTURES COMMAND OR IMPLY:

- Christians (and “the church”?) should submit to the governing authorities
- The governing authorities are established by God, whether they are pagan or Christian
- We should pray for those authorities; and pray WITH THANKSGIVING!
- Authorities that look favorably upon Christians are a blessing (we can live in peace, freedom, evangelism is easier)
- (other Scriptures show that being a soldier or political official and being a Christian are not necessarily opposed to one another)

Is it OK for Christians to be in government? (Yes, it is good)

Is it OK for “The Church” to control the government? (Scripture does not say)

- It may not clearly be wrong, but you could make a case against it.
  - Paul says, “What business is it of mine to judge those outside of the church?” but that’s not a mandate for the church to stay within certain bounds.
  - You could ask yourself, “what is purpose of church, of each office – pastor, deacon, etc.?” but again this would not be a clear Scriptural indication that what Gregory the Great did, for example, in desperate times, was wrong.
  - If Christians are to submit to government, certainly “the church” should submit to government. But what if they’re one and the same? Again, no clear Scriptural mandate to say this is wrong.
- Argument from wisdom/experience: It is unwise and dangerous.

SUMMARY:

Christians should be in government influencing as much as possible.

The authority of the church should not supersede the authority of the government.

The church/Christians are to be submissive to the governing authorities (no matter how moral or immoral, except at those points where we are asked to disobey God)

... Not vice versa. (it seems Bible is saying that government officials should be submitting to God, but not to “the church.”)