

Christian, Lutheran, Confessional

Instructor's Guide

The purpose of this course is to gain an understanding of 1) how the early church developed, 2) the growth of Roman Catholicism, 3) the Lutheran Reformation, 4) the church's trials and tribulations since the Reformation, and 5) the dangers in the future. The instructor needs to invest sufficient time to comprehend the material and present it in a way that people who do not have formal training in theology and history can understand the important issues.

In teaching advanced topics, it is important for the instructor to realize the goal of his teaching. The saving truths are presented in the Scriptures, but they do not benefit a person's soul unless they are transcribed from the Scriptures onto the wall of faith in the mind and heart of the believer. Ideally, a Christian's faith will be a beautiful mural of all the teachings of the Bible appropriately linked with each other to give the Christian a perfect knowledge of God's will. This mural will never be completed in this world, but it is important that the Christian and those that teach him or her work to make it more complete. While pastors have a well-developed mural based on long and systematic training, laypeople often have scattered facts from the Bible placed here and there on their wall of faith. Sometimes they are misconnected with each other, and sometimes wrong information learned from non-Scriptural sources will be intertwined with Scriptural truth. In his presentation of the Scriptural and historical material, the teacher will always try to guide his hearers so that they will put it into the correct place in the mural and make the correct attachments to the other materials that are there. This is what makes teaching the Word of God challenging and rewarding.

For this course, you will first need to put aside your Lutheran biases and place yourself into the various historical accounts. People made decisions that they thought were for the glory of God and the benefit of His church, but they were often wrong. Why did this happen? You can only know by putting yourself into the position of the people making the decisions and getting your students to do the same.

This course is set up to be taught in eight 90-minute sessions, but the material in the lessons can be regrouped for any number of class periods that are available. From educational research we know that reading the material before the class, answering the study questions, and considering the issues that are being raised by the readings are essential to maximizing learning. Students should be strongly encouraged to do so. It is good to close the lessons with hymns written by Lutheran lyricists. The texts of suitable hymns are included in the student notes.

Note that the study questions and answers are inserted in the teaching text where they might be used, but they can be moved in the actual presentation or ignored.

1. Introduction & Apostolic Times

I. Introduction

A. Getting started

Q1. What is the purpose of *Christian, Lutheran, Confessional*? A: To explain the history of the Christian church in simple terms.

1. Purpose of the book. It is important that we identify with the people we read about, but that we do not moralize about history. a) This book is intended to be brief but to discuss key people and events with enough detail to aid the average layperson in appreciating the whys and wherefores of how we became

Confessional Lutherans. b) The title of the book refers to the three eras of which people have some knowledge. The book will provide important specifics from the times between.

2. Contents. a) The book discusses key topics that were important in the development of Confessional Lutheranism as we know it today. b) The book presents many prominent figures in Christian history, that is, the people who are sometimes mentioned in religious discussions.

B. Writing considerations

1. The style of the book. *The activities in the church cannot be separated from the events around them.* a) The book examines the real-world context in which the religious events occurred and in which the historical Christians lived. The Christian church threaded throughout the growth and evolution of Western civilization, often influencing and being influenced by it. b) Informal language is sometimes used to give a more realistic feel to the situations as they were experienced. c) The book begins with the whole Christian church, gradually narrows to Western Christianity, then to Lutheranism, and finally to Confessional Lutheranism as it proceeds to its conclusion. *This helps us understand the reasons we are as we are.*
2. There are many sources of historical information available today, but they seldom bring relevant people and events together to form a cohesive picture. Creating such a picture is the goal of this book.

II. Apostolic Times

A. The Roman World

1. The empire. a) By the time Christ was born, the Roman Empire dominated the Middle East and the Mediterranean Basin, producing a peace, known as the “Pax Romana.” *In many respects, it was the America of its day.* b) Roman laws and justice, although often harsh, were, at least in principle, fair and consistent. Although the Jews hated their Roman overlords, many of the people in the empire were quite content with Roman rule.

Q2. What languages were used in the Roman Empire? In which parts? A: East – Greek and Aramaic, West – Latin.

2. The languages. a) Latin was the imperial language in the western parts of the empire, including Italy, Spain, Portugal, France, England, and western North Africa. b) Greek was the imperial language in the eastern parts of the empire, including the Balkan states, Greece, Turkey, Egypt, and the Middle East. c) Most of the people in the Middle East spoke Aramaic as their first language. *Hebrew was not used extensively.*

Q3. What is the “diaspora”? A: The Jews who had been scattered among the nations.

3. The diaspora. a) Jews had been dispersed to many parts of the empire and beyond because of the Assyrian and Babylonian captivities of Israel and Judah. b) Jews had fled to Egypt at various times for safety. Jewish entrepreneurs had moved into Syria, Asia Minor, Greece, and Rome looking for more opportunities. *Jews were more cultural in their behavior than religious.*

B. The Great Commission (Marching orders for the church.)

1. The instructions. a) After his resurrection Jesus gave His disciples the Great Commission {“Go and gather disciples from all nations by baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and by teaching them to keep all the instructions I have given you.” Matthew 28:19, 20} b) Jesus promised that he would be with them with his sustaining and spiritual presence *even though He was not visibly present* {Matthew 28:20} and to send the Holy Spirit to guide them into a correct understanding of His teachings {John 15:26}.
2. The first Pentecost. (Feast of weeks) a) All the men of Israel were to assemble in Jerusalem to celebrate this festival. Many Jewish men did come from across the Roman Empire for such festivals. b) On the Pentecost festival that occurred 50 days after Jesus’ resurrection, the Lord God poured out His Spirit on the disciples. Their understanding of Jesus’s message became much clearer, and their fear of the Jewish leaders receded. c) They were able to proclaim the message of salvation through Jesus Christ in a miraculous way so that all the people from the various parts of the Roman Empire could understand the message in their own languages {Acts 2}.

C. The Mission to the Jews

Q4. Who composed the initial “Jewish mission team”? A: The apostles whom Jesus had trained.

1. The Jewish Team. a) Jesus had concentrated on creating a Jewish missionary team. Its mission field ran from Alexandria in Egypt, through Palestine, Syria, and Mesopotamia, all the way to the area where once the great city of Babylon had stood. *A map would be helpful.* b) Jesus had directed his followers to begin their work in Jerusalem. The church grew so rapidly, and the members became so numerous that it was soon necessary to put into place the beginnings of a management structure (i.e., deacons). c) Jewish leaders feared this growth. They began a program of persecuting the leaders of the church. *This only moved their problem.* Members of the church began to flee, seeking the relative safety of other cities in Judea and Samaria.
2. Persecution followed the Christians. a) The message was spread to areas near Judea, such as Samaria, Caesarea, Damascus, and Antioch (*which was the largest city in the area*). The Jewish religious leaders in Jerusalem feared this “Messiah movement” and began sending agents to cities to round up these “Christians.” *These fears proved to be legitimate.* b) The Jewish religious leaders couldn’t risk waiting out the movement. The apostles had been given miraculous powers for healing the sick and the disabled. These healings proved difficult to challenge and undermined their arguments.

Q5. Why was the book of Matthew written? A: To standardize the message of the Jewish mission team.

3. Early problems for the Jewish Christian church. a) There was a danger that the message would become garbled. A written record of the events and the message of Jesus’s ministry was needed. Guided by the Holy Spirit, the book of Matthew was produced. It portrays Jesus as the fulfilment of the Messianic prophecy and was exactly what the missionaries to the Jews needed to do their work. b) The missionary team needed to explain to the Jews which parts of the teachings of Moses were still relevant and which parts were no longer necessary because Christ had fulfilled them. Some Jewish Christians wanted to

keep all the regulations, while others wanted to toss out everything not directly related to the Gospel. **There was a difference in their understanding of what Jesus had accomplished.** c) The work among the Jews as a separate activity from the work among the Gentiles continued throughout the first century, but it became more difficult as time passed. **Separate work had a time limit.** After the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70, Jewish Christians scattered from Jerusalem. Gradually, they became integrated into the Gentile branch of the church, which was growing much more rapidly. d) The destruction of the temple and much of the priestly class (i.e., the Sadducees) left the Pharisees as the dominant party in Judaism. **Pharisaism was centered on the synagogue rather than the temple.** They began a theological counteroffensive against Christianity to retain and regain Jews for Judaism. This resulted in the production of *The Mishnah*, which was completed in approximately 200, with some parts available much earlier.

D. The Mission to the Gentiles

1. Early beginnings. a) Jesus healed the daughter of a Syrophenician woman and the servant of a Roman centurion. His parable about the Good Samaritan and His dealings with the woman at the well of Sychar showed His interest in the neighboring peoples. **He made it clear that what was important was faith, not culture.** b) Philip was told to join an Ethiopian official who was reading Isaiah. Peter was “reprogrammed” and sent to the centurion Cornelius. The Jewish Christians in Antioch on their own started to teach the good news of Jesus to Gentiles. **The work started slowly.**

Q6. Who were the members of the “Gentile mission team”? A: Paul, Silas, Barnabus, Timothy, Titus, Luke.

2. Paul and the Gentile team. a) The Jewish Pharisee Saul, an archenemy of the Christian church, was brought to faith, renamed Paul, and sent on missionary journeys westward, first into Asia Minor and then into Europe. b) Others (e.g., Barnabas, Silas, Mark, Luke, Timothy, and Titus) joined the team. As he traveled, Paul distributed these fellow workers among the various churches which he had founded. His general pattern was to start at the local Jewish synagogue and to preach Jesus as the promised Messiah. **The pattern was to start with a Jewish nucleus.** c) Paul, like Moses, also made a major literary contribution to the church through the many letters he wrote to Christian congregations and to individuals. These letters laid out Christian doctrine and practice. Thirteen letters became part of the Bible.
3. Other Gospel writers. **Each had his place in building the church.** a) Mark was a versatile member of the Christian missionary teams because he traveled to many congregations across both the Gentile and Jewish areas of the church. He wrote a gospel that has many similarities to that of Matthew, but it was tailored more toward the common people in Greek communities. b) Luke, who was the writer of the book of Acts, also wrote a gospel. He was a physician, and his attention to detail gained through his profession is evident in his writings. His gospel would have been more appealing to the better-educated Greek-speaking Christians. c) The Apostle John, who outlived the rest of the apostles, wrote a gospel that emphasized important doctrinal matters of Jesus’s teachings as they contrasted with the teachings of the Jewish leaders. d) The four gospels, the letters of Paul, and the book of Acts formed the core teaching material used by the Christian church at the end of the first century. Other books by apostles also existed at this time, but they had not yet been so widely circulated and accepted.

III. Growing Pains

A. Early heresies

Q7. Who were the “Judaizers?” A: Jews who wanted to force Gentile Christians to follow Jewish ceremonial customs.

1. Heresies troubled the church from its very beginning. a) Many Jews who accepted Jesus as the Messiah struggled to break free of the requirements of the Law of Moses. *These regulations had established the framework of their lives.* They wanted to mandate that all the Jews who joined the church be required to continue to keep these laws. b) Some also wanted the Gentile Christians to keep the Mosaic requirements as a condition of salvation. This latter group was referred to as “Judaizers.”
2. Some in the church developed their own ideas about what the church should teach and challenged the church leaders. Other false teachers wormed their way into the church from the outside. As the church grew, these invaders sought to redirect the church and use it as a platform for their own ideas.

B. The Apostolic Fathers

Q8. Why is Polycarp considered so important? A: He was the bridge of the church to John, the last of the apostles to die.

1. People. a) There was no formal program of religious training for the church’s spiritual leaders. The leaders from this period of church history have subsequently come to be called the “Apostolic Fathers.” b) **Clement of Rome** (died AD 99) was *perhaps* the *fourth* Bishop of Rome near the end of the first century. He is known as the writer of a letter to the congregation in Corinth, which is now called the *First Epistle of Clement*. c) **Ignatius** of Antioch (AD 35–110) was sent to Rome to be executed but, on his way there, he wrote numerous letters. He was particularly influential in the codifying of the church organization and of the power of the bishops. d) **Polycarp** of Smyrna (AD 69–155) apparently was a disciple of the Apostle John and an early writer in the church. *He was an important bridge person.* He was martyred by the Romans.
2. Books. a) A book entitled *Didache* (from the Greek word for “teachings”) was written late in the 1st century and contained instructions for Christian communities. It covered Holy Baptism, Holy Communion, and church organization. The book was lost for many years, but a copy was finally found in the late 19th century. *This book proves the church and its doctrine existed at this early time.* b) *The Shepherd of Hermas* was written in Greek in Rome early in the second century. The unknown author’s position in the church is uncertain. It was widely used and was even considered to be part of the Bible by some. *People were desperate for guidance.* It contains many heretical ideas, including one concerning the nature of the incarnation. The book subsequently fell out of favor.

2. The Early Centuries of the Church & The Christianization of the Empire

IV. The early church and its issues

A. Church gestalt

Q1. How were bishops for Christian congregations chosen? A: By election of the congregation members.

1. The church organizational. a) The church spread more quickly in larger cities than in smaller villages. A structure of church offices developed with multiple levels of clergy. b) All bishops were nominally equal, but the bishops of four important cities, Jerusalem, Antioch, Alexandria, and Rome became known as “patriarchs.” c) Problem of choosing church leaders. Elections for church offices, such as bishop and elder, were common. Sometimes the theological soundness of the candidates was ignored in favor of other factors. Even popular non-Christians were elected as bishops, if they were willing to be baptized.
2. The church operational. a) Gradually, congregations required that new adult members be instructed in the faith for one to two years before being accepted as members and given a voice in church affairs. A sponsor needed to vouch for the genuineness of the proselyte’s intentions and watch over his or her instruction in the faith. The church feared infiltration by government spies and those who had their own agenda. b) Creeds were introduced. Adults and children had to be baptized to become members of the Christian church. Adults also had to make a confession of faith according to a local “baptismal standard.” In the Western church, the Apostles’ Creed gradually became the common standard. c) Worship forms evolved. Worship in the Christian church was initially patterned after the worship in the Jewish synagogue, with readings from the Old Testament, the four gospels, and/or the writings of Paul, and with sermons, the singing of psalms and hymns, and the Lord’s Supper.

B. Church issues

Q2. What are some reasons why Christians were persecuted? A: They were regarded as a secret society. They refused to burn incense to the emperor.

1. Persecution. a) The persecution of the Christian church was not universal or continual. The Christians were considered secretive because they met in houses and were suspected of immoral practices. b) Christians refused to worship the emperor as a god, making them “suspect” citizens. Actual persecutions were usually triggered by local events. Local rulers found persecuting Christians to be a way to gain favor or to shift blame.

Q3. What was the “Antilegomena”? A: The books that were proposed for the Bible but that were questioned by some members of the church.

2. The Canon. a) The Holy Spirit guided the church to recognize its need for a set of writings, comparable to those of the Old Testament. b) The four gospels and the Pauline epistles were easily recognized as the Word of God and of known authorship. Luke’s Acts of the Apostles, 1st John and 1st Peter were also quickly recognized as works by the apostles. These 20 books are called the “homologomena.” c) Phony books arose because people craved information about Jesus. Books such as “The Gospel of the Birth of Mary” and the “General Epistle of Barnabas” were falsely ascribed to the apostles or their traveling companions. d) After further intensive study, 12 books remained which were called the “Antilegomena,” (i.e., “spoken against”) Of these, only 7 were deemed to be of the same spirit with the other 20 books,

namely, Hebrews, 2 and 3 John, 2 Peter, James, Jude, and Revelation. Examples of rejected books are the Epistle of Barnabas, the Acts of Paul, and the Apocalypse of Peter.

Q4. Why did some people argue against the marriage of clergymen? A: Christ and Paul had not been married. Marriage divided a clergyman's loyalties.

3. Marriage of clergy. a) Concerning the clergy, St. Paul wrote, "*Such a man is to be blameless, the husband of only one wife, and to have believing children who are not open to a charge of wild living or disobedience.*" {Titus 1:6} b) Some argued that Paul himself was not married and that wives diverted husbands' attention from their church work. There was a widespread effort to discourage clerical marriages, particularly in the higher levels of the clergy. c) Some men became "hermits," isolating themselves to study God's Word. This lifestyle, the forerunner of monasticism, was incompatible with marriage. Women were also encouraged not to marry but serve the church as "brides of Christ."
4. Marriage of the laity. a) While most men in the Old Testament had one wife or remained single, some had more than one wife. Polygyny was never specifically forbidden in the Old Testament. Wives and concubine had various legal protections and property rights for themselves and their children. Roots of the Roman Catholic doctrine on marriage. b) Under Roman law, a man could have only one wife at a time, but divorces were easy to get, and serial polygyny was accepted. Concubinary was not recognized, but a man could take his slaves as mistresses and buy or sell them at will. c) Antimarrriage sentiment extended to the laity. It was argued that people's loyalty to Christ should reduce their need for spouses. Many argued that remaining single was a holier state and that polygyny was founded on lust, not love.

V. Truth and Error

A. Heresies

Q5. What was Gnosticism? A: A pseudo-Christian religion that taught people needed more and secret knowledge which had not been revealed by Jesus to be saved. It had numerous additional gods.

1. Gnosticism. a) It comes from a Greek word meaning "having knowledge." Its origins are unclear. Its adherents emphasized personal spiritual knowledge gained from contemplation and from the wisdom that had been gained by the philosophers rather than the written Scriptures. A matter of knowledge versus faith. b) Their core belief was that there was a mind-spirit dichotomy, i.e., dualism (good-evil). They minimized the need for an acknowledgement of sin and the necessity of repentance which is essential in Christianity. Important Gnostics were Valentinus and Marcion of Sinope.
2. Manichaeism. a) It was founded by a Persian named Mani (216–274). It taught that there were both a great good god (The Father of Greatness) and an evil god (The Prince of Darkness) in the universe, neither of which was omnipotent. b) Manichaeism became a great world religion from the 3rd through the 7th century but declined as Christianity and Islam became more established.
3. Montanism. a) It was founded by Montanus in the late 2nd century in Phrygia in Asia Minor. He and his consorts Pepuza and Tymion claimed the Holy Spirit had spoken to them. b) Having Christian-like teachings, Montanism spread westward from Greece. The church rejected it due to its claim of a direct

connection between the worshiper and the Holy Spirit (Religious “Enthusiasm”). It was suppressed and disappeared in the 6th century.

4. Adoptionism. a) It taught that Jesus was born a human being but that he was adopted into the Godhead because of his stellar qualities and then commissioned to carry out the saving work for mankind. b) The idea first appeared in the book *The Shepherd of Hermas*, but it was championed during the 3rd century by Paul of Samosata (200–275).

B. Great Theologians

1. **Justin Martyr** (100–165) was born a pagan in Samaria. He loved the study of moral philosophy. He began with Stoicism, but finally settled on Platonism. He was beheaded in Rome for not burning incense to the gods. Most of his writings have been lost. What has survived strongly emphasizes moral behavior, not saving grace. *His teachings were Law-heavy.*
2. **Irenaeus** (130–202) was born in Smyrna in Asia Minor. He was a disciple of Polycarp, who had been a disciple of the Apostle John. He traveled to Lyon in Gaul, where He became a priest and then the bishop. He rigorously defended Christian orthodoxy. He emphasized the importance of reading the Scriptures in the churches. His major writing *Against Heresies* attacked the history of Gnosticism. *He was generally sound, but a Millennialist.*
3. **Tertullian** (155–225) was a lawyer born near Carthage. He converted from paganism in 197 and is regarded by many as the father of Latin Christianity. He wrote about discipline and morals, church organization, and apologetics. He was the first Latin writer to use the word “Trinity,” but his views about God were unbiblical. *He seems to have drifted away from Christianity after a while.*
4. **Origen** (185–253) was born in Alexandria. Origen studied Christianity and philosophy and traveled widely around the Mediterranean region. Origen was a prolific writer, famous for *On the First Principles* and *Hexapla*. He was enamored with allegory, which led him into numerous heresies. *He had numerous doctrinal problems, and his theology was unstable.*

VI. The declining empire

A. The Struggle for Control in the Empire

1. Instability at the top. a) Between AD 235 and 284, there were 23 emperors, only one reigning more than 10 years. Most were murdered. Consistent governmental policy was impossible. b) *Defense took a backseat to politics.* Germanic tribes crossed the Rhine to raid, to settle in, and eventually to claim dominance over parts of the empire. The Roman legions were more and more populated by foreigners.
2. The empire partitioned. a) Beginning in 284, the empire was effectively split into two empires, *a two-headed monster*. The Latin-speaking western and Greek-speaking eastern each had a senior “Augustus” and a deputy “Caesar.” b) This was a poor idea that never worked well. After a few untimely natural deaths in the western part of the empire, Constantine the Great’s father became Caesar in the western empire in 306.

B. The Growing Persecution of Christians

1. Periodic large-scale persecutions had occurred about every 30 years from AD 64 to 235. Many regarded the Christians as traitors who were undermining the empire by not worshiping its gods. It was politically popular to kill or torture local Christians for the “common good of the state.”
2. *Desperate times require enemies of the state to blame.* Persecutions became severe before the rise of Constantine. The era of Diocletian and Galerius has been labeled the “Great Persecution.” Persecutions became empire-wide, and many Christian manuscripts were burned.

C. The Donatist Controversy

1. In North Africa, the persecution of the church led to ultra-pious Christians who called themselves Donatists, after Donatus Magnus. They insisted that those who had “betrayed Christ” during the persecutions could never be forgiven by the church and readmitted to it. They could only be forgiven by God Himself. *Donatists wanted only “perfect” Christians.*
2. The Donatists claimed only sacred acts which had been performed by faithful priests were valid before God. Sacred acts done by hypocrites or those without a “pedigree” running back through a continuous line of faithful bishops were invalid.

D. Constantine the Great (272–337)

Q6. Who was Constantine the Great? *A: The son of a Roman general who became emperor, united the empire, and legalized Christianity.*

1. The civil leader. a) He was born in Serbia, the son of a Roman army officer. In the eastern empire he achieved the rank of military tribune. When his father became Caesar in the West in 306, Constantine was called to lead the Roman armies in Britain. b) *Politics degenerated into warfare.* When his father died, Constantine was declared Caesar by his troops. He headed for Rome, eliminating other claimants to the throne along the way. In 324 he defeated Licinius, the eastern ruler, and became emperor over the whole empire. c) As emperor, Constantine strengthened the governmental infrastructure, issued a new coinage, and reestablished Roman control of its frontiers. d) Constantine founded Constantinople on the site of Byzantium as the new capital of the Roman Empire. The eastern portion had become the critical heartland.
2. The Christianity of Constantine. *Use of religion as a national unifying force.* a) Constantine believed that he had been victorious because he adopted the cross as his emblem. He legalized Christianity in the empire. He wanted to use Christianity to help him unify his empire. When he learned that there was a dispute within the church, he called a general council. b) Constantine was not consistently Christian for most of his life. Only as death was approaching did he become a catechumen in the church. He was not baptized until he was on his deathbed, an unfortunately too common practice of the time. c) Constantine established the “official” date on which to celebrate Christ’s birth.

VII. Theological conflicts

A. The Dispute over the Nature of God and Christ

1. The weak church structure permitted doctrinal problems. a) Many bishops were not great theological leaders. b) Gnosticism introduced false ideas about the relationship of the persons of God. Was there a hierarchy? Were all three persons eternal? Were persons just roles? c) Was Jesus true God? Was He true man? How were His natures joined? [Lots of false possibilities.](#)
2. Arianism. a) **Arius** (256–336) was from Alexandria in Egypt. He was ordained a deacon, excommunicated, but reinstated. He was well-mannered and a good speaker. b) [He tried to rationalize the structure of God.](#) Arius argued that the Son was not equal to the Father and not eternal. He was the Father's first creature and given divine status to create and save the world.

Q7. Why was the Council of Nicaea held? What was the result? [A: Emperor Constantine called it to deal with divisions in the church. The Son of God was indeed eternal and of the same essence as God the Father.](#)

3. The First Council of Nicaea (325). a) All 1800 bishops of the church were invited, but only about 300 attended. b) Emperor Constantine presided. The leaders of both sides came from Alexandria. c) The issue was whether the Son was *homoousios* ("of the same substance") with the Father or only *homoiousios* ("of similar substance") with the Father, [which rationalized Scripture.](#) d) The council drafted the Nicene Creed which declared the Son was uncreated.
4. The First Council of Constantinople (381). a) Emperor Theodosius called another council over the Arian heresy in 381. The orthodox bishops defrocked and excommunicated the followers of Arianism. b) The council strengthened the Nicene Creed by rewriting the third article to firmly declare that the Holy Spirit was God and the third person of the Trinity. [This is the modern creed format.](#)

B. Constantine's family

1. His mother Helena. a) She was not of noble birth, and her legal relationship with Constantine's father is uncertain. As emperor, Constantine gave her the royal title "Augusta" in 325. b) She traveled to Palestine during 326–328 to seek "relics" of Jesus. She identified many places supposedly connected with Jesus's life and death, where she ordered churches to be built. She claimed to have found many relics of Christ. [This created a religious tourist industry.](#)
2. His successors. a) Constantine gave joint rule of the empire to his sons Constantine II, Constans and Constantius after his death in 337. The brothers generally cooperated peacefully, [but the empire was too diverse.](#) b) The empire remained too unwieldy for one man to rule, however, so emperors in Constantinople were forced to place an assistant in Rome. This power-sharing was often imperfect. Theodosius reunited the empire for the last time in 394.

C. The Great Theologians

Q8. Who was Athanasius? [A: The Patriarch of Alexandria and a leading defender of the trinitarian view of God.](#)

1. **Athanasius** (296–373) was born in Egypt. He became secretary to the Patriarch of Alexandria and was elected patriarch at age 30. Arius' supporters drove him into exile 5 times. He was excommunicated, deposed, and exiled repeatedly. *All were the result of the Arian Controversy.*
2. **Ambrose** (340–397) was born in northeastern Gaul. He held minor government posts in Rome. In 372 he was appointed governor of Liguria and Emilia. He was elected Bishop of Milan even though he was not baptized! He steadfastly resisted the Arians.
3. **John Chrysostom** (340–407) was born in Antioch and became a deacon. He favored a literal interpretation of the Scriptures and was active in the development of the eastern church's liturgy. In 397, he was chosen as Patriarch of Constantinople but was exiled in 405 for reasons that are unclear.

3. The Collapse of the Western Empire & The Early Middle Ages

VIII. The Collapse of the Western Empire

A. Political decline

1. General chaos. a) By the 5th century, Germanic tribes were moving into Gaul and staking out areas of influence. Visigoths, Vandals, Franks, and numerous other tribes were vying for territory. The Ostrogoths and the Huns (*steppe people*) were trying to cut the empire asunder by attacking in the Balkans. b) The western church *had lots of problems*. It struggled to assimilate all the people forced into it when Christianity was made the state religion. There was determined opposition. The church had to deal with the remnants of prior heretical movements and the Germanic tribes, who were mostly Arians. c) The Bishop/Patriarch of Rome became known as the "pope," a word derived from the Latin word for "papa."

Q1. Who was the first "German" emperor of Rome? A: Odoacer

2. The Fall of Rome. a) Under Alaric in 410, the Visigoths penetrated further southward and sacked Rome. By 418 the Romans had granted the Visigoths land in Gaul. The Visigoths spread throughout Gaul, driving the Vandals into Hispania. b) The Germanic tribes were being shoved westward by the pressure of the Huns. Under Attila, the push by the Huns intensified, *as the horse archers from the steppes became an unstoppable force*. Attila bled ransom money from governors and emperors to leave them alone, but he died suddenly in 452. c) After the collapse of the Huns, the Ostrogoths seized the Adriatic coastal areas and the land north of Italy. *Roman resistance then ceased*. On September 4, 476, soldiers loyal to Germanic leader Odoacer captured Rome, and Odoacer declared himself emperor.

Q2. Who eventually obtained control of Gaul? A: The Franks

3. The chaos in the remnants of the western empire. *Christianity as an organized religion began to decline*. a) In the 5th century the Visigoths shoved the Vandals out of Hispania into northern Africa. The western Roman armies there had collapsed. The struggle for control became one between the Vandals and the native Berbers. b) *Then a major change occurred*. The Franks entered into Gaul and by 507 had pushed the Visigoths into Hispania. In 589 the Visigoths converted from Arian to Nicene Christianity and became assimilated into the native population of Hispania. c) *Foreigners began killing each other in*

Italy. The Ostrogoths invaded Italy in 493 and killed Odoacer. Their kingdom included Italy, Sicily, Switzerland, and Slovenia but only lasted until 552 when the Byzantine troops defeated them. In 568 the Germanic Lombards invaded. By 605 no aura of Roman civilization remained in Italy. d) **After its abandonment by the Roman army, the collapse of Roman civilization in Britain was rapid.** When Roman legions withdrew from England, the Celts from Scotland swept in. The English abandoned Roman ways, and buildings and roads fell into decay. Many Saxons who had fought for the Romans returned to raid the coast and later settle in the British countryside. Paganism and barbarism grew. e) By the end of the 6th century, much of the culture and learning of the Roman era had been lost. Survival became the central issue for the common people.

B. The great theologians and their craft

Q3. Who was St. Benedict? A: He was a religious hermit who turned to gathering monks to study together. He devised the Rule of St. Benedict, involving poverty, chastity, and obedience.

1. **Monasticism.** **Scholars retreated from the chaos of the world.** a) It grew out of the traditions of the Christian hermits in the Eastern church, who went to remote places to practice their faith through asceticism. b) Benedict of Nursia (480–543) systematized monastic life in the Catholic Church and became known as “the Father of Western Monasticism.” c) To show their commitment to the ascetic life, monks were required under the “Rule of St. Benedict” to take vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience.
2. **Jerome** (347–420). a) He was born in what is now Bosnia but later moved to Rome. Subsequently, he began his theological studies in France and then moved eastward through Greece and Asia Minor. He became a scholar in Latin, Greek, and Hebrew. b) **He believed in working in isolation, not with a pool of scholars.** He moved to Palestine and spent the next 20 years creating a new Latin Bible, known as the *Vulgate*, from the original Greek and Hebrew. This became the official Bible of the Roman Catholic Church for 15 centuries.

Q4. What was the teaching of Pelagius? A: Original sin had no effect on man’s ability to keep God’s Law because of God’s general grace for mankind.

3. **Pelagius** (354–418). a) He was born in the British Isles and well versed in Latin, Greek, and theology. **He believed that God never intended to give man easy forgiveness through repentance.** He moved to Rome but remained committed to asceticism. He claimed the Fall had not damaged man’s ability to obey God’s laws and earn salvation. b) Pelagius therefore denied original sin existed. He claimed man could come to a saving faith on his own. He was condemned by the Council of Carthage in 418.
4. **Augustine** of Hippo (354–430) **was the most important Catholic scholar until Thomas Aquinas.** a) He was born in Algeria. His mother, Monica, was a Christian. At age 20 he started a school of rhetoric in Carthage. He moved the school to Rome and joined the Manichaeans. In 384 he became a professor of rhetoric in Milan. b) Augustine went to hear Ambrose preach and was converted to Christianity. He returned to Africa, sold his family property, and became a monk, a priest, and finally the bishop of Hippo Regius. He was a champion of orthodox Christianity and wrote *The Confessions of St Augustine* and *The City of God*.

B. Ecumenical councils

Q5. What was the Nestorian Schism about? A: Whether Christ was one person or two persons joined together.

1. The Council of Ephesus (431) a) **Nestorius**, Patriarch of Constantinople and **Cyril**, Patriarch of Alexandria, disputed whether Mary should be referred to as “Christ bearer” or “God bearer.” Nestorius believed that there could not be a union between Christ’s human and divine natures. In effect, the two natures dwelled in one body, but they were not one person, i.e., there was not a personal union of the natures. b) This important council condemned Nestorius’s teaching and deposed him. This caused the “Nestorian Schism,” which still exists today. c) The council also reaffirmed the Nicene Creed, rejected Pelagianism, and declared that amillennialism was the only correct teaching.
2. The Council of Chalcedon (451). a) People called “Monophysites” claimed that Christ originally had two natures, but that they had merged at the incarnation into one nature. The orthodox party claimed that Christ continued to have two natures, but the two natures were united in one person. More than 500 bishops attended this council. b) The majority quickly decided for the orthodox teaching and adopted what is called the “Chalcedonian Definition,” effectively a creed so stating.
3. The Second Council of Constantinople (553). a) Monophysitism did not go away simply because it was condemned. Many in Egypt had accepted it, based on Cyril’s unclear statement at the Council of Ephesus. They formed the “Oriental Orthodox” churches. The pope, though he was residing in Constantinople at the time, refused to attend. b) The council quickly reaffirmed the decision of Chalcedon, but the pope condemned the action even though he agreed with it. He was therefore excommunicated and arrested with his advisors and held for 6 months. Popes were extremely proud and demanded to be the final decision-makers on all religious matters.

IX. The Early Middle Ages

A. The rise of Islam

Q6. Who was Muhammad? What did he claim to be? A: He was an illiterate businessman who claimed he was directed by the angel Gabriel to become the Arabian prophet of Allah.

1. Islam (obedience). a) Muhammad (570–632) lived in Mecca and was an illiterate caravan trader. The Arabian tribes at the time worshiped many gods who dwelled in the Kaaba. Muhammad learned monotheism from local Jews and heretical Christians. He called Jews and Christians “the people of the book.” b) In 610 Muhammad claimed the angel Gabriel commissioned him a prophet of the one god “Allah.” He admitted that he could not work miracles. Most people ignored him, so he fled to Medina in 622. He built a following and returned to capture Mecca in 630. c) In 610 he began making prophetic statements (“suras”). A few ran hundreds of lines, while others were only a few lines. After Muhammad’s death they were collected into the holy book of Islam, the Qur’an, which means “recite.”
2. The Spread of Islam was extremely rapid. a) After Muhammad’s death the leadership of Islam fell to Abu Bakr and then to Umar ibn al-Khattab. Within 5 years, Muslim armies defeated both the Byzantine Empire and Persia. They overran Syria, Palestine, Lebanon, Iraq, and finally Persia itself. They pushed

across North Africa to the Atlantic Ocean by 700. b) [Disorganized Europe was totally unprepared for a Muslim invasion](#). In 711 the Muslim general Tariq ibn-Ziyad attacked Hispania and overthrew the Visigoths. Next the Muslims crossed the Pyrenees into Gaul but were stopped by **Charles Martel** at the battle of Tours in 732. Muslims soon also overran Sicily.

Q7. What were the two major factors contributing to the disarray in the church at this time? **A:** [The number of educated clergy was very limited, and the practice of celibacy.](#)

3. Disarray Across “Christian” Europe. a) During the 7th century little of significance was happening in Europe, except the Franks were haphazardly consolidating their power in Gaul (France). b) The papal control of the church was quite limited, but monasticism grew in Ireland. Irish monks came to the continent as missionaries to the Germans. c) The Catholic churchmen spoke Latin; the laity gradually did not. The educational level of the parish priests declined. [Ignorant clergy became the rule](#). Religious symbols and rituals were used to communicate church teachings. *Ex opere operato* became an accepted doctrine. d) To meet the need for clergy, numerous married men from the lower classes were allowed to enter the ministry as “secular clergy.” They were poorly educated and often badly behaved. [The celibacy problem](#). To lure men into the “celibate” priesthood, many bishops allowed men who agreed not to marry to keep a concubine for an annual fee. e) “Penance” in place of “repentance” came to be the teaching in many parishes.

B. Religious developments

1. General changes. [Christianity in western Europe turned into a quagmire](#). a) The western Germanic tribes came to accept orthodox Christianity. b) Regional church councils met, but they had little power to compel conformity. c) Many intelligent men abandoned the unstable secular society for the monasteries. d) Latin-speaking churches became known as “Catholic,” and the Greek-speaking churches as “Orthodox.”
2. The Third Council of Constantinople (680–681). a) The issues of whether Christ had two natures but only one “energy” (Monoenergism) or two natures with separate energies and of whether he had one will (Monothelitism) or two wills again appeared in the East but not in the West. [Another council struggled with the nature of Christ](#). b) Only 37 bishops met in Constantinople for the council, with the Byzantine emperor presiding at some of the sessions. The orthodox position was adopted.
3. The Second Council of Nicaea (787). [The growth of superstition](#). a) People had begun venerating Christian “saints” as they had done the pagan deities, e.g., St. Joseph for carpentry. Some church leaders supported this. In the 8th century Byzantine Emperor Constantine V banned the veneration of icons, initiating what has come to be called the Iconoclastic Controversy. b) After his death, the Second Council of Nicaea was called in 787 to review the issue. This council legalized the veneration of icons and religious art and decreed that each altar should contain a relic of a saint.
4. The Sacramental System. a) “Sacred acts” were solemn rites of the Christian church performed to bring the people closer to God by emphasizing God’s love for them. b) Church leaders called them “sacraments” and tried to control who could do them by creating a bishop-performed ordination sacrament called “Holy Orders.” [Controlling the use of the sacraments was a means of controlling the church members by restricting how they could earn merit](#). c) What were sacraments differed by time and

place, but usually included Baptism, Holy Communion, marriage, penance, confirmation or christening, and last rites.

C. The political arena

1. The Merovingian Kingdom (481–751). a) The Merovingians were a Frankish family that came to power at the start of the 6th century as Roman rule collapsed. King Clovis I, a “catholic” Christian, united other Frankish tribes and gained control of most of France. The policy of dividing a ruler’s lands among all of his sons hampered future development. [This practice undermined the family’s ability to grow stronger.](#) b) In 613 Chlothar II reunited the Merovingians into a single kingdom, but subsequently divided inheritances and feuds exhausted the family.

Q8. Who were the Carolingians? [A: A Frankish tribe that gained power through their work as administrators.](#)

2. The Carolingian Empire (751–843). a) Charles Martel’s (688–741) family had become “mayors of the palace” for the king and for other key leaders. By 723 he had defeated his rivals and was mayor of the palace under the Merovingian king. In 732 he defeated the Muslims. [He became a power in France.](#) b) Martel’s son, Pepin the Short, defeated his half-brother in battle. By 747 he controlled the power of France, and in 751, with the support of Pope Zachary, he ousted the last Merovingian king and declared himself king. [A “palace coup.”](#) c) His son Charlemagne became king of France and then king of the Lombards through marriage. He defeated the Germanic tribes as far as the Elbe River. On Christmas Day 800, the pope crowned Charlemagne the “Roman Emperor,” thereby creating the Holy Roman Empire, which lasted until 1806. d) After Charlemagne’s death, his son, Louis the Pious, inherited the vast empire. Louis divided his empire into three kingdoms for his sons. This division led to civil wars and the eventual emergence of France, Germany, and smaller nations. [Successful conquest led to disunity.](#)
3. The Appearance of the Vikings. [Vikings caused terrible dread in northern Europe.](#) a) Starting in the 790s, the pagan Scandinavian Vikings began raiding the British Isles and continental Europe from Brittany to the Volga River. They sailed the North Sea and the Baltic Sea, the Atlantic Ocean and even up rivers. They plundered, destroyed villages and monasteries, and kidnapped lords and peasants. b) A great monastic tradition arose in England and Scotland. Large monasteries, with both literary and monetary wealth, were easy targets for the Viking raiders. The English rulers paid “danegeld” to buy them off. They were finally stopped by the king of Wessex. They settled and began to convert to Christianity. c) The wealth of France was not on its coasts, so eventually the Vikings began coming up the French rivers and raiding places well inland. The Vikings could move too quickly by water to be threatened by land armies. In 911 the French king ceded the area now called Normandy to a strong Viking group. In return for the land, these Vikings became vassals of the king of France and agreed to help defend France.

4. The Growth of the Papacy & The High Middle Ages

X. The papacy

A. Its establishment

Q1. Why did Rome gain prominence in the Christian church? A: Seat of government. “Capital of the world. It became an arbitrator in disputes among the Greeks.

1. Early Roots. a) He has been called the “Bishop of Rome,” the Patriarch of Rome,” the “pope,” the “holy father,” “Christ’s vicar on earth,” and the “Great Antichrist.” b) The church at Rome dates back to the first Pentecost. The people who heard Peter’s sermon may have been his only connection with Rome. The church in Rome was very fluid in its early days. Romans had a habit of making up stories about their history. *There was a great air of superiority among the Romans.* c) The exact order of bishops in Rome during the first century is unclear. Rome was an outpost of Christianity in the west, not its center. Latin Christianity grew more vigorously in North Africa and Gaul. Ambrose in Milan was better known than most of the Roman bishops of the time. d) Despite this, the citizens of Rome argued that Rome, the nominal capitol of the empire, was where Christ wanted his church headquartered. By the 4th century Rome had come to be regarded throughout Christendom as the “See of St. Peter.” *They engaged in “good” politics and psychology.* e) The Bishop of Rome was able to maintain his prestigious position due to the growing doctrinal divisions within the eastern church. Even Athanasius, the Patriarch of Alexandria, needed to appeal to Rome. Rome was regarded as an objective ear. Moreover, the popes refused to degrade themselves by attending ecumenical councils called by emperors (who were laymen) and sitting as equals with their fellow patriarchs.

Q2. Who was Gregory I? Why was he important? A: First well-known pope. He conducted liturgical reforms and converted many Arians.

2. Dealing with Unstable Times. a) Pope Leo I (400–461) worked to promote the doctrine of Petrine supremacy. The popes had to deal with the German tribes as the Roman government collapsed. They and their allies slowly pushed the Arians out of the churches in Gaul and regained the territory north of the Alps for catholic Christianity. However, the Arian Lombards in northern Italy did not recognize papal authority and threatened the popes. b) There was a constant struggle with the patriarchs of Constantinople over which represented the seat of Christianity. For example, the Acacian Schism in 484 occurred because Monophysitism was tolerated in the Greek-speaking East. c) **Gregory I** (540–604), the great-grandson of Pope Felix III, was the first pope about whom much is known. He managed to get many of the Germanic Arians to join the Catholic Church. He introduced Gregorian chant to the worship service *and made numerous changes in the Roman Rite.* d) In the 8th century the popes struggled with the Byzantine emperors. They appealed to the Franks for aid, and they defeated the Lombards. Charlemagne gave the pope “the Papal States” from the Lombards, and Pope Leo II crowned him emperor. *This led to the formal break with the Eastern Emperor.* e) Carolingian power in Italy soon declined. In 846 Muslim pirates sacked Catholic churches in Rome. Pope John VIII was brutally murdered in 882. *This was a truly awful period for Rome.* Murder, mayhem and mistresses controlled papal politics in Rome for 80 years. Marozia (890–937), an Italian noblewoman, became a dominant presence in Rome. Pope John XII finally cut a deal with German King Otto I for protection in exchange for trading privileges.

Q3. What was the Donation of Constantine? A: The false claim that Constantine had given the Western Empire to the pope.

3. Manufactured history. a) About the 3rd century, the Roman church forged a letter, supposedly from Peter to James, to bolster its claim to be the legitimate seat of Christianity. James's alleged acknowledgement letter was dated in AD 65, 3 years after his death! b) The Donation of Constantine was a decree, supposedly written in 315, which gave control of the western part of the empire to the pope in perpetuity as a reward for curing Constantine of leprosy. [This was the basis for the claim of papal superiority over kings.](#) Both the cure and decree were probably from the 8th century. c) The *Pseudo-Isidorian Decretals* (845) were a complete fabrication of church history, indicating that papal authority had always been over the whole Christian church. d) A Latin forger created a large number of manufactured quotations allegedly from the Greek church fathers and interspersed these with genuine quotations to create the *Thesaurus of Greek Fathers*. This book deceived even Thomas Aquinas. e) Locals in Palestine duped Helena and subsequently the crusaders into believing they had genuine relics from the time of Christ. [This became a big business.](#) Anything allegedly from Palestine brought a good price. The manufacture of "sacred relics" flourished across Europe.

B. Changes in the religious world

1. **The Great Schism.** a) Latin gradually became the church language in the west. Switching languages changed attitudes. The Romans were better builders; the Greeks better philosophers. b) The pope had insisted he was the senior church leader when the capital was in Rome, but the Patriarch of Constantinople began to assert his influence when the capital moved to the eastern empire. Constantinople's position strengthened as eastern Sees fell into Muslim hands. [The Muslim conquests thereby strengthened the Patriarch of Constantinople.](#) c) Theological differences grew between the branches of the church, such as whether the Holy Spirit proceeded only from the Father and the type of bread to use in the Lord's Supper. d) In 1053 the pope directed the churches in southern Italy to stop using Greek practices. In the ensuing power struggle, representatives of Pope Leo IX in 1054 excommunicated Patriarch Cerularius. Leo died, and his successor, Victor II, feared to change this action. [The actual break was more of an accident than a planned action.](#)

Q4. Why was Hildebrand so important to the Catholic church? [A: He was a political operative. He codified the papal election process. He forced the Holy Roman Emperor to submit to the papacy.](#)

2. **Hildebrand** (1015–1085). a) He was named Lidebrando di Soana at birth and died as Pope Gregory VII. He was educated at the monastery of St. Mary on the Aventine. He was chaplain to Johannes Gratianus (Pope Gregory VI in 1045), [but he had backed the wrong candidate.](#) He followed Gratianus into exile in Cologne and became a monk at Cluny after Gratianus' death. b) Hildebrand accompanied Abbot Bruno of Toul to Rome, who became Pope Leo IX. Leo named Hildebrand as a deacon and papal administrator. Victor II reaffirmed Hildebrand as legate. When Pope Stephen IX died, Hildebrand returned to Rome to depose the new (anti-)pope, Benedict X. Nicholas II then assumed the papal throne for two years. c) Nicholas made Hildebrand archdeacon of the Roman church, the position that held the real papal power, [and he codified the papal election process.](#) Nicholas restricted papal electors to "cardinal bishops." In 1061 Alexander III became pope, but Hildebrand kept his political power. Deals were cut with local rulers to give the pope some protection against the German emperors. d) After Alexander's death there was a popular outcry in Rome to make Hildebrand pope. He insisted that his election be by the new rules. He first had to be ordained as a priest, then consecrated as a bishop, and then made pope. He worked to assert papal authority over all secular rulers. In 1085 Gregory was forced to flee Rome for the Italian coast.

Q5. What was the purpose of the crusades? A: 1) Recapture the Holy Lands. 2) Reduce violence in Europe.

3. The Crusades. a) **The 1st**. The Muslims had overrun Palestine in the 7th century. In 1095 the Byzantine emperor requested military support from the western Christians to defend his territory. Pope Urban II saw this as an opportunity to assert his control over the eastern church. He offered a plenary indulgence to anyone who joined the crusade to regain the Holy Lands. b) Many poor people followed Peter the Hermit on a mob march across Europe to Constantinople. **This was lunacy!** They killed Jews and extorted supplies from Christians. After passing Constantinople, they were massacred by the Turks. c) Perhaps 100,000 soldiers also marched into Muslim territory. Poor planning led to heavy casualties. **This was incredibly stupid.** They captured Antioch and withstood a Muslim counterattack. They proceeded to capture Jerusalem but senselessly killed Muslims, Jews, and Christians along the way and in the city. d) **The 2nd**. Within a few decades the Muslims pushed the depleted crusader forces back, capturing Edessa in 1144. In 1146 Pope Eugenius III called for a second crusade. The results of this crusade were meager due to understaffing, but it led to numerous massacres of Jews and a new zeal for Christians to drive the Muslims out of Hispania. e) **The 3rd**. Saladin gained control over the Muslim Middle East from the Nile to the Euphrates. He recaptured Jerusalem and drove the crusaders to the sea. In 1189 Pope Gregory VIII called for the Third Crusade, but a lack of resources prevented any significant gains. f) **The 4th**. In 1198 Pope Innocent III launched the Fourth Crusade. 35,000 soldiers came, but the Venetians made the travel arrangements into a nightmare. **Because of money problems,** the crusaders sacked Constantinople rather than moving south against the Muslims in Palestine. g) Crusade financing was a constant problem, causing the popes to offer the same indulgence to those who contributed money to support the crusades as to those who went to fight. This greatly decreased the zeal to crusade. h) The main orders of the crusade knights were the Templars, the Hospitallers (also called the Knights of St John and Knights of Malta) and the Teutonic Knights. They were monks as well as knights, who became a major nuisance to European rulers when they returned from Palestine. i) The papacy became corrupted by its desire to rule the Christian world. It permitted and sanctioned lying, stealing, murder, rebellion, simony, and sexual sins to further its cause. **Rome became a moral sewer.**

XI. The High Middle Ages

A. Secular society

Q6. What is feudalism? A: **Interlocking lieges running from the king to the peasant.**

1. **Feudalism.** a) It arose under the Carolingians. It was a structure of interlocking lieges. The incumbent (i.e., liege) at each level in the hierarchy owed the land he ruled to the next highest rank. The men in this feudal web structure were referred to as “those who fought.” b) At the bottom of this structure were the people referred to as “those who worked.” The peasants and craftsmen were not really owned by their lord as if they were slaves, but they were bound to the land of their lord. In “free” cities merchants and tradesmen could practice their crafts without undo interference from the neighboring lords. c) The various church officiants, priests, deacons, monks, friars, nuns, abbots, and bishops were called “those who prayed.” They all had a sworn loyalty to those above them in their ecclesiastical group. Whether clergy could marry was a continuing issue.

2. Changes in the Norse. a) During the 9th and 10th centuries Viking sea-kings had been the bane of Christian Europe. They pillaged, stole, destroyed, and killed. They were brave and skilled at navigating. They discovered and settled Iceland. They discovered Greenland and even reached North America. b) By the 11th century the Vikings began settling in the British Isles and northern France and converting to Christianity. In eastern Europe things remained more fluid. c) The Vikings traveled rivers into western Russia. In fact, the name “Russia” comes from the Vikings who were known in eastern Europe as the “Russ.” Their activities had a major impact on the history of the east. Vikings penetrated southward all the way to Constantinople. They captured and sold Poles as slaves to the Muslims. They chose Byzantine Christianity as they integrated with their Slavic subjects.

Q7. Why did the Norman conquest of England have such a great effect on history? A: It gave one family control of England and a major part of France.

3. The Norman conquest of England. a) For centuries, the Anglo-Saxons in Wessex, various Viking groups, and the Celts of Scotland and Wales struggled for control of the British Isles. In northern France, the Vikings had become known as the “Normans.” b) In 1016 the Danes conquered England, but they lost their grip on it in 1042 when Edward the Confessor became king. At his death in 1066, Harold Godwinson, Harold III of Norway, and William of Normandy all claimed the English throne. c) Harold Godwinson, being in England, was granted the throne by the Witan, while the other claimants prepared to attack. King Harold raced north to defeat and kill his Norwegian rival. Meanwhile, William landed in Sussex and prepared to meet Harold in battle. Harold and his army returned southward after their victory over the Vikings, but they were outnumbered and defeated by the Normans. Harold was killed in the Battle of Hastings. d) Norman nobles seized as much English land as they could, but they were resented at all levels. They tried to retain their holdings in northern France as well. William became king of England, but he was still a vassal to the king of France in Normandy.
4. France. a) By the 11th century, France was still greatly divided among warring families. The kings depended on marriages and military force to control what they could of the country. Due to William’s conquest, the English kings ruled large sections of western France. b) Then came the first battles for France. Wars were struggles between cadres of mounted knights accompanied by small groups of foot soldiers who were bound to their lords by feudal oaths. These private armies lived off the land, frequently plundering the peasants and the townspeople. c) Things changed with the coronation of Philip II (reigned 1179–1223). He conspired with Richard Lionheart, the son of King Henry II of England, to defeat Henry in France. This alliance broke down during the Third Crusade, and Richard captured almost all of France. He was then killed fighting his own vassals.
5. The Magna Carta. a) After Richard Lionheart’s defeated his father, he went off on the Third Crusade. His brother, Prince John, became his regent, leading to Robin Hood. After Richard’s death, John became king but lost much of his land in France to Philip II, incurring large debts in the process. b) Nobles who had lost land in France were angry with King John and revolted. At Runnymede in 1215, John was forced to sign the Magna Carta, giving the nobles essential rights vis-à-vis the king. This major change became part of English common law.
6. By the High Middle Ages, Christians were on the offensive in Hispania, but it took a long time. They held several kingdoms in the northeastern portion of the peninsula. Over the next 300 years, much of the center of Spain, as well as most of what is now Portugal, came under Christian rule.

B. The church

1. Empire versus papacy. a) The HRE had a special relationship with the popes. HRE rulers originally had significant authority to appoint bishops and abbots within the church, which led to the Investiture Controversy in 1076 between Pope Gregory VII and Emperor Henry IV. [Through it the popes crippled the emperors' ability to control the HRE.](#) b) In the 1080's Henry V and Pope Callixtus II signed the Concord of Worms. This treaty significantly weakened the emperor and would ultimately delay the unification of Germany and Italy until the 19th century.
2. Heresies. a) The **Waldensians** were a group founded at Lyon in 1173 by Peter Waldo. The Waldensians wanted the Bible in the language of, and in the hands of, the common people. The group was declared heretical in 1215 and was intensively and brutally persecuted. b) The **Cathars**, the remnants of a Gnostic sect, appeared in southeastern France and northwestern Italy. They were dualists, believing in two gods, one good and the other evil. In 1208 Pope Innocent III launched a crusade until 1321 to exterminate them as pagans.

Q8. Who was Thomas Aquinas? **A:** [A great Roman Catholic scholar who favored natural theology and was highly influenced by the work of Aristotle.](#)

3. Scholasticism. a) In 1079 a decree by Pope Gregory VII began the establishment of cathedral schools and subsequently universities in Italy, France, and England. This led to the birth of scholastic theology, which was an attempt to reconcile reason and faith. b) **Anselm of Canterbury** (1033–1109) was born in northwestern Italy. He became a Benedictine monk at Bec. He rose to be its abbot. He became the Archbishop of Canterbury in 1093, but he was twice exiled. Anselm has been called “the Father of Scholasticism.” He tried to rationalize the teachings of the Christian church with the ideas of Aristotle. [He developed a proof for the existence of God, but it was based on a fallacy.](#) c) **Peter Lombard** (1096–1160) was born in poverty in northwestern Italy. By 1145 he was a professor at the cathedral school of Notre Dame. He is most famous for his *Four Books of Sentences* which earned him the title “Master of the Sentences.” These books of biblical commentary became the framework of scholarship [and Scholasticism](#) for the next four centuries. d) **Thomas Aquinas**, (1225–1274) was born in southern Italy and joined the Dominican monastic order. He was an outspoken proponent of natural theology and the father of Thomism. [He was a strong advocate of the ideas of Aristotle and reason.](#) His best-known works are *Disputed Questions on Truth*, the *Summa Contra Gentiles*, and his massively influential *Summa Theologica*. e) **John Duns Scotus** (1266–1308) was a Scottish priest and a Franciscan friar, who opposed Thomism. He died unexpectedly in Cologne in 1308. Scotus's great work is his commentary on the *Sentences*. He is sometimes referred to as the “Subtle Doctor” of the Roman church.
4. The Resurgence of Monasticism. a) In the 11th century, new monastic orders began to appear, boosted by the crusader orders. The Rule of St. Augustine ([which was more intellectual](#)) began replacing the Rule of St. Benedict in various orders. Monastic orders could be formed only with the approval of the pope. b) **Francis of Assisi** (1181–1226) believed that the way to true holiness before God was to live in the manner of Jesus, owning nothing and begging or working for food. He finally convinced Pope Innocent III ([a key historical figure](#)) to let him create his new order [of beggars and teachers](#), the Franciscans. Discipline was strict, and monks often appeared half-starved. They were referred to as the “barefoot friars” because some were too poor to even own a pair of sandals.

5. The Late Middle Ages & The Lutheran Reformation

XII. The Late Middle Ages

A. Church issues

Q1. What was the Babylonian captivity of the papacy? A: The pope moved to Avignon in France.

1. The **Babylonian Captivity**. a) Pope Boniface VIII was elected after his predecessor had resigned. King Philip IV of France questioned his legitimacy and, after a war of words, kidnapped him. He soon died, and his successor also died within a year. **An example of political power rather than spiritual concern.** b) The next pope was Clement V, the archbishop of Bordeaux, who never went to Rome. He set up his papal court at Avignon in southern France in 1309 to be near the political action. The popes made various excuses to remain in France until 1377. c) Philip IV wanted to dissolve the Knights Templar because they had become rich through banking, and Philip was deeply in debt to them. He pressured Clement to permit him to seize and execute all the leaders of the order.
2. The **Papal Schism**. a) Romans were hurt financially by the pope living in France. They lobbied to force the Bishop of Rome to return to Rome. Pope Gregory XI and his court did return to Rome in 1377 for a visit, and he died there. The Romans pressured the cardinals to elect Urban VI as pope. He soon made the cardinals regret their decision. They left Rome and elected a new pope, Clement VII, who moved to Avignon. b) The papal split led to mass disruption within the parishes and monasteries. Each pope died and was replaced. All the cardinals then met in Pisa, voted to depose both popes, and elected Alexander V, who was succeeded by John XXIII. Then there were three popes. c) A movement of laity and clergy called “conciliarism” demanded a council to resolve the issue. Finally, John XXIII agreed to call a council, which met at Constance in 1414.

Q2. Who was William of Ockham? A: An English Franciscan monk. He wrote commentaries on the Bible called “The Sentences.”

3. Dissenting Theologians. **A scholarly rebellion.** a) **William of Ockham** (1285-1347) was a Franciscan monk from Ockham in Surrey. He attended Oxford and eventually became an instructor there. He wrote controversial commentaries on Peter Lombard’s *Sentences* and was sent to the papal court at Avignon for trial in 1327. He fled to the court of Holy Roman Emperor Louis IV in Bavaria. b) Ockham argued that the ways of God are not discernable by reason; they had to be revealed to men through the Scriptures. He is best known for “Ockham’s Razor.” c) **John Wycliffe** (1328–1384) was born in Yorkshire and educated at Oxford. He wrote treatises against church abuses. He also led an effort to translate the Vulgate into Middle English, producing the Wycliffe Bible, which got him into deep trouble with the church. d) Wycliffe foreshadowed Martin Luther to a large extent. He claimed that the Bible was the only source of doctrine. He attacked the sacramental system and transubstantiation. He advocated predestination and the concept of the invisible church. He rejected purgatory, pilgrimages to shrines, indulgences, and prayers to the saints.
4. Church Corruption. **An organized religious crime syndicate.** a) Corruption in the Roman church reached unimaginable levels as documented in Giovanni Boccaccio’s *The Decameron*. Some claimed that

everyone from the pope to the parish priest had a wench. The office of bishop was regarded as a private possession by the rich. b) Simony and the bending of church laws for money were common. The higher clergy needed money for their lifestyles and for building massive churches and monasteries. c) To get money from the poor as well as the rich, the Catholic Church made extensive use of the sacramental system and the sale of indulgences. This led to the wholesale manufacturing of phony relics and false documents. d) Although Ockham and Wycliffe had raised questions about the church's doctrine and practices, it was **Jan Hus** (1372–1415) who caused the greatest concern to the papists. He was born to poor Bohemian parents and became a priest. In Prague he preached the ideas of Wycliffe. He was excommunicated and forced to go into exile.

Q3. What happened at the Council of Constance? A: The council deposed three popes, elected a new pope, and executed Jan Hus.

5. Council of Constance. This was the last attempt to control papal power. a) The council met from 1414 to 1418. Mostly doctors of theology and of the Canon Law came. Voting was done by nation. All three popes refused to resign, so the council deposed all of them and elected Martin V at the very end of the council. It demanded that he call regular councils whose authority would be supreme within the church. b) Jan Hus, who had been summoned to the council, was condemned, along with Jerome of Prague, and both were handed over to the civil authorities to be burned at the stake.

B. Secular issues

1. The **Black Death** was a pandemic. a) By the start of the 14th century, Europe was unable to reliably feed its population. Years of bad weather made marginal land unproductive and famines ensued, killing and weakening many. The “Great Mortality” began in modern-day Kyrgyzstan in 1338 and within the next decade overran Europe. It killed 30% of the European population in 4 years. It then periodically returned in a weaker but still deadly form. b) The plague, caused by *Yersinia pestis*, could affect the skin from bites by the fleas of ground rodents (bubonic), be inhaled into the lungs (pneumatic), or enter the bloodstream through breaks in the skin (septicemic). After the plague, wages rose due to the reduction in the number of workers, and conditions of the lower classes improved. The state and the church were weakened because they could not stop the plague.

Q4. Why was the Hundred Years War fought? A: The French wanted England out of France.

2. The Hundred Years War (1337–1453). This war was a series of wars with the same goal. a) The kings of France wanted to push the English out of France. Philip VI attacked the holdings of Edward III of England. The fighting continued, with numerous truces, for 116 years before the French finally were able to defeat the English. b) **Joan of Arc** (1412–1431) was born in the northeast of France. As a teenager, she claimed that she was seeing visions and sought out yet-uncrowned King Charles VII. He sent her with a relief army to lift the siege of Orleans. A year later she was captured by the army of Burgundy, turned over to the English, and burned at the stake as a heretic.
3. The Hussite Wars. a) The Bohemians were outraged at Hus' murder and rebelled. King Wenceslaus IV and his brother Sigismund tried to stamp out the Hussite rebellion. The popes authorized three crusades against it, but the Hussites responded by plundering nearby Saxony. b) The fighting ended because the

Catholic rulers realized they had better things to do and the Hussites had become exhausted from the constant warfare.

4. Christians Versus Muslims. a) The Muslims had taken northern Africa, Hispania, and Sicily before the High Middle Ages. Sicily had been cleared of Muslims in the 11th century by the Normans. In the East, the Byzantines were being worn down by the Ottoman Turks. In 1453 Constantinople fell when the Turks used a huge cannon to break down the thick walls of the city. b) By the start of the 14th century, Portugal and all of Spain, except for Granada, were under Christian control. In 1469 Ferdinand of Aragon married Isabella of Castile. They launched the Spanish Inquisition to stamp out all religious dissent. On January 2, 1492, Granada surrendered, and Spain was reunited under Christian rule.
5. Italian Renaissance. a) The Black Death in the 14th century decimated Italy, but relative prosperity returned quickly to northern Italy. The north of Italy had a better infrastructure to survive disasters. In Florence men began painting and writing. The chancellor of Florence and the de Medici family became patrons of the arts. b) Creative people divided history into 3 eras: the greatness of Greece and Rome, the decline of the Middle Ages, and the “Rebirth,” i.e., the Renaissance. This concept spread north to France, the Low Countries, and England during the following century.

XIII. The Lutheran Reformation

A. Religion and Politics in the Holy Roman Empire

Q5. Who was Leo X? A: A member of the Medici family who was the pope who confronted Luther.

1. The church operational. a) The cardinals were politicians who had little interest in church service. When Rodrigo de Borgia became Pope Alexander VI in 1492, only 4 of 27 cardinals were actual clergy. Alexander had a concubine and children. He schemed and warred. His son is said to have been the model for Machiavelli’s book entitled “The Prince.” He was followed by other popes who also had a low regard for the purpose of the papal office. b) In 1513 Leo X (1475–1521), of the de Medici family, became pope. He was a Renaissance humanist, not a priest. He was not even slightly religious. He loved art and philosophy, not theology. He spent money recklessly. He decided to build St. Peter’s Basilica. He sold indulgences and church offices to raise the funds. c) Although people objected to the corruption in the church, the pope could excommunicate anyone who challenged him and issue interdicts against the territory of any ruler. Papal power was ruthlessly used.
2. Humanism. a) Many involved in the Reformation were humanists. Classical humanists placed a high value on human reason but also on the ability to appreciate the finer arts of painting, music, literature, and sculpture. The core belief of Humanism: As creatures of God, they thought they could discern the ways of God through their intellects. b) Gutenberg’s printing press made books much more available, thereby increasing the ability of humanist scholars to read works by authors from numerous eras and locations. This was a paradigm shift. It awoke a love of learning among the general population. c) Humanism caused changes in the scope and content of the curriculum of the schools and universities. Classical humanists saw themselves not as opposed to Christianity but as trying to supplement it through their study of other sources of God-inspired wisdom.

3. Luther, the Troubled Monk. a) **Martin Luther** was born in 1483 in Eisleben, Saxony. His father wanted him to become a lawyer. Luther studied at Mansfield, Magdeburg, Eisenach and finally the university at Erfurt. He was troubled about his standing before God **because of his sin**. After being frightened by a thunderstorm, he entered the Augustinian monastery in Erfurt. He worked to be the best monk possible, but he fell short of what he thought God demanded. He also became a priest. b) In 1511 Martin Luther was sent to be a professor at the University of Wittenberg. Teaching the Bible made him study the Bible in terms of its actual text. In Romans he found the key he had so long sought: “*The just shall live by faith.*” {Romans 1:17} c) Luther became disturbed by the Dominican monk John Tetzel who was selling indulgences and causing the people of Luther’s congregation to stop coming to confession. On October 31, 1517, Luther posted a challenge to debate 95 statements about indulgences. **Then the improbable happened.**

Q6. Who was Desiderius Erasmus? A: A Dutch Humanist who opposed church corruption but was also a semi-Pelagian who disagreed with Luther.

4. Luther’s scholarly opponents. a) Dr. **John Eck** (1486-1543), a Dominican monk, was an ardent defender of the papacy. He and Luther engaged in a debate at Leipzig. Eck dogged Luther for many years, both through various writings and as an agent of the pope. b) **Desiderius Erasmus** (1466-1536) was a Dutch Humanist who was troubled by the corruption in both the doctrine of the church and the practices of its clergy. He believed that the will was able to choose good or evil (**called “Semi-Pelagianism”**), even after the Fall.

B. The religious developments

1. “My Conscience is Bound by the Word of God.” a) Luther’s popularity grew. Pope Leo decided to excommunicate him and have him sent to Rome. Duke Frederick the Wise demanded his star professor be tried in Germany. Luther was invited for a hearing before the Imperial Diet at Worms in April 1521. **Erasmus said Luther was guilty of only two offenses: attacking the bellies of the monks and the crown of the pope.** b) The hearing was not a fair trial. The emperor and the pope wanted him to recant or be executed as a heretic. Luther stalled as his supporters spread the rumor of a peasant uprising. Luther gave a carefully crafted speech that threw the diet into temporary confusion. c) Fearing violence, efforts were made to change Luther’s mind in private. When these failed, he was permitted to leave for home but was placed “under the ban.” He was “kidnapped” by representatives of Frederick the Wise and hidden in the Wartburg Castle.
2. Rebuilding the church. a) **The purpose:** Luther repeatedly stressed that the sole purpose of the Reformation was to return the church to the teachings of the Scriptures. b) **The procedure:** Luther cleansed the Catholic mass of its false doctrine, changed its language to German, added hymns, and shifted the emphasis from ceremony to the sermon. He changed other practices slowly so as not to create distress among churchgoers. c) Luther opposed those who preached revolt, such as the Peasant War in 1525. He refused to associate with anyone who did not restrict their teachings to those of the Bible. d) Luther determined that not only the people, but also many of the clergy did not understand even the basics of Christianity. He wrote two catechisms for use in training the people. Luther worked to translate the Old Testament into the German language. e) Luther taught at the university, preached in the churches of Wittenberg, and wrote many books and tracts to deal with the issues which the Reformation had raised. He sent representatives to other countries to help them establish the Reformation there.

3. Church and State. a) Luther viewed the church and the state to be two separate institutions established by God. They had different responsibilities and therefore should not interfere with each other. b) [Luther needed allies](#). Because the Catholic bishops had abandoned their spiritual leadership role, Luther asked the princes to act as “emergency bishops” to establish good order in the church until the church itself could take over this role. Many temporal rulers took advantage of the situation to make the church subservient to the state.

Q7. What led to the writing of the Augsburg Confession? A: [The demand by the emperor for rulers to clarify what doctrine was taught in their territories.](#)

4. The Augsburg Confession. a) Emperor Charles V called a diet at Augsburg in 1530 to deal with the spread of Lutheranism. He asked all members to present a written statement of their teachings. Philip Melanchthon drafted such a statement for the Lutheran states and cities. b) [The birth of the Lutheran Church](#). On June 25 the Saxon chancellor, Dr. Christian Beyer, read the German version of this **Augsburg Confession** before the emperor, the diet, and a packed house. c) The Catholic theologians drew up a refutation of the Augsburg Confession called the **Confutation**. In Wittenberg Melanchthon subsequently drew up the Lutheran response to the Confutation called the **Apology to the Augsburg Confession**.
2. The English reformation. [The arrogance of Henry](#). a) **Henry VIII** of England (1491–1547) married Catherine of Aragon, his brother Arthur’s widow. Henry failed to get a papal dispensation to marry her. Pope Leo named Henry “Defender of the Faith” for his opposition to Luther. b) Catherine failed to produce a surviving male heir, only a daughter Mary. [\(Perhaps this was caused by an Rh problem, because she bore several sons who died soon after birth.\)](#) He chose Anne Boleyn to replace Catherine, [because he needed a male heir to prevent a resumption of the War of the Roses](#). The pope could not afford to offend Charles V by granting a divorce, so in 1533 Henry VIII broke with Rome and declared himself head of the Christian church in England. Efforts to establish a united front with the Lutherans failed.

C. The other theologians of the era

1. **Huldrych Zwingli** (1484–1531) was born in central Switzerland. He studied at Vienna and Basel and became a humanist. He studied Greek and Hebrew. In 1519 he became a priest in Zürich where he introduced his own reformation. By 1526 his [semi-Pelagian](#) teachings had spread within Switzerland. Zwingli battled both the Catholics and the Anabaptists. In 1529 he sought to make common cause with Luther at the Marburg Colloquy. Luther refused due to lack of doctrinal unity. In October 1531, Zwingli was killed fighting the Catholics near Zürich.
2. **Philip Melanchthon** (1497–1560) gained a master’s degree from Heidelberg in 1516 and came to Wittenberg as a professor of Greek in 1518. He soon became Luther’s right-hand man. Melanchthon wrote the first dogmatics textbook of Lutheranism in 1521 and three Lutheran confessions. He edited the Augsburg Confession so John Calvin would sign it. [\(Lutherans rejected the changes and held to the Unaltered Augsburg Confession \(U.A.C.\)\)](#) After Luther’s death, Melanchthon became a divisive force in Lutheranism by working with the emperor to produce a compromise document detailing allowable worship practices. [His teachings became synergistic.](#)

Q8. How did Calvin differ from Luther? A: 1) The interpretation of the Scriptures. 2) The handling of irreconcilable statements in the Scriptures. 3) Whether Christianity centered on God's grace or God's sovereignty.

3. **John Calvin** (1509–1564) was born in Noyon, France, the son of a lay church official. He studied law at the University of Orleans and became a lawyer. There he became indoctrinated in humanism but also was troubled concerning his spiritual welfare. He took up residence in Paris but was eventually forced to flee the city for Basel in Switzerland because of theological issues. a) In Basel he began to study theology in earnest. In 1536 he published the first edition of his influential work *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. He traveled to Italy and France but was forced to flee again. He retreated to Geneva, where he was convinced to stay. Church and local politics led to Calvin being expelled from the city. After a stint in Strasburg, Calvin was invited back to Geneva in 1541. b) He began a massive reform and reorganization of the church in Geneva. By 1555 Calvin had gained control of the religious and political life in the city. Geneva had effectively become a theocracy. Calvin engaged in many of the same activities as Luther. c) Luther looked to Scripture to interpret Scripture; Calvin looked to reason to interpret Scripture. Luther embraced the irreconcilable teachings that he found in the Bible; Calvin tried to reconcile them by stressing some statements in the Bible in preference to others. Luther's emphasis was on God's **grace**; Calvin's emphasis was on God's **sovereignty**.

6. The Struggle for Orthodoxy & The Onslaught of Human Ideas

XIV. The Struggle for Orthodoxy

A. The aftermath of Luther's death

Q1. What was the Smalcaldic War? A: A Catholic effort to stamp out Lutheranism.

1. The Smalcaldic War. a) The emperor tried to deal with the Lutherans militarily in 1546. The Smalcaldic League was unprepared. Duke Maurice deserted to the emperor's side. Duke John Frederick of Saxony and Philip of Hesse were captured and imprisoned. This was a very dangerous period. b) The emperor imposed the Augsburg Interim for the purpose of regulating worship and other church practices in Lutheran churches. When this failed, he negotiated with Melancthon and others to establish a new interim set of rules, called the Leipzig Interim (or Protocol). c) Duke Maurice then changed sides and defeated the emperor. In 1555 the Peace of Augsburg was signed, permitting the Lutheran rulers and free cities to determine the religion to be practiced within the territories that they controlled.

Q2. What was the Majoristic Controversy? A: A dispute over the role of good works in salvation.

2. Trouble among the Lutherans. These conflicts made developing a Formula of Concord necessary to resolve them. a) The Lutherans fragmented into three groups. The Philippists were willing to compromise Luther's theology to form a union of all Protestants. The Gnesio-Lutherans were not. The central party sought a peaceful resolution among Lutherans. b) **Adiaphoristic Controversy**: The Philippists defended the Leipzig Interim. The Gnesio-Lutherans opposed any compromise. The Formula of Concord (X) declared in a time when a confession of faith is required, nothing can be conceded to be an adiaphoron. c) **Majoristic Controversy**: George Major said, "Good works are necessary for

salvation.” Nicolaus von Amsdorf said, “Good works are detrimental to salvation.” The FOC (IV) declared that good works are a natural outgrowth of faith. d) **Synergistic Controversy**: The Philippists claimed man cooperates in his conversion. The Gnesio-Lutherans denied this, which became the position adopted in FOC (II). e) **Flacian Controversy**: Mathias Flacius claimed original sin is the very essence of the soul of fallen man. Almost everyone else opposed this, and the idea was condemned in FOC (I). f) **Antinomian Controversy**: Various factions argued how the Law and Gospel applied to repentance and the sanctified life of the Christian. This was settled by the FOC (V & VI). g) **Crypto-Calvinistic Controversy**: The Philippists tried to gradually insert Calvinistic teachings into Lutheran dogmatics. This was condemned in FOC (VII & VIII).

3. Council of Trent. a) The Council of Trent was summoned to deal with the “Lutheran heresy,” to codify Roman Catholic doctrine, and to eliminate abuses in the church which were causing people to flee it or ignore it. No genuine Lutherans were invited to make a presentation to the council. The council met in 3 sessions: 1545–49, 1551–52, and 1562–63. b) The council worked through the doctrines of the Roman church, making decisions on every important topic not previously addressed. The final product was a no-nonsense approach to Catholic doctrine and to dealing with the rebelling Protestants. [This was the basis of the Catholic Catechism](#). c) The church launched the Counter Reformation, a systematic effort to protect Catholic areas from the inroads of Protestantism. The Jesuit monastic order spearheaded the effort, using the Inquisition as needed. The momentum quickly swung to the Catholics.
4. The Lutheran Response to Trent. a) **Martin Chemnitz** (1522–1586), called the “second Martin,” was born in Brandenburg and educated in Königsberg. [For a while Königsberg came to play an important role in Lutheranism](#). He taught at Wittenberg and was ordained in 1554. b) He wrote his *Examination of the Council of Trent*, a 4-volume Lutheran response between 1567 and 1573. It looked at the entire work of the council from the viewpoint of Scripture and of the writings of the church fathers and the historical events of the Christian church up to that point.

Q3. What is the Formula of Concord? [A: A document to resolve the theological issues among 16th century Lutherans.](#)

5. Formula of Concord. a) Because the Peace of Augsburg had recognized only Roman Catholicism and Lutheranism, Calvinists, Anabaptists, and others had to stay underground or infiltrate the Lutheran churches to teach their doctrine. [Infiltration was an extremely troubling problem](#). This led to disputes among “Lutherans.” b) All [formal](#) efforts at unity failed. **Jacob Andreae** (1528–1590), a professor at Tübingen, traveled to all the German Lutheran universities and courts. In 1567 he drafted positions on 5 key articles. [This was a painstaking process](#). By 1570 these were accepted by all Lutheran theologians, except those at Wittenberg. c) In 1573 Andreae and Chemnitz drafted a confession with 11 articles. This “Swabian-Saxon Concord” was accepted in Swabia and in ducal Saxony. In 1574 Duke August of electoral Saxony expelled the Crypto-Calvinists from Wittenberg. The theologians then drafted the “Maulbronn Formula.” A meeting at Torgau led to the production of the “Torgau Book.” d) In 1577 the theologians and the rulers approved the final product entitled “The Formula of Concord.” More than 8000 Lutheran pastors signed it. It was combined with the Apostles’, Nicene and Athanasian creeds, Luther’s Large and Small catechisms, the Unaltered Augsburg Confession, the Apology to the Augsburg Confession, the Smalcald Articles, and the Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope into a volume called the *Book of Concord*.

B. The long-term struggle

1. The Silver Age of Lutheran Orthodoxy (1615-1685). a) The Holy Scriptures (*norma normans*) are the standard for all Lutheran teachings. The Book of Concord (*norma normata*) has formed the basis of explaining Lutheran theology ever since 1580. The latter is accepted **because** it agrees with the former. b) Lutheran scholars developed their own form of scholasticism to counter the new Jesuit threat. This era is known as the “Silver Age of Lutheran Orthodoxy.” The first and greatest theologian was **Johann Gerhard** (1582–1637), based primarily at the University in Jena. He wrote extensively and became highly respected throughout Lutheranism. The final great theologian of the era was **Abraham Calov** (1612–86) from East Prussia, who taught at Wittenberg. c) The theologians of the Silver Age were thorough and were forced to be polemical by the situation vis-à-vis both the Roman Catholics and the Calvinists in Germany. They preserved the faith, improved Lutheran dogmatics, and produced many lasting documents. While technically correct, their work overwhelmed most of the people in the local congregations. *There is a difference between doctrinal theology and practical theology.*

Q4. Who was Jacobus Arminius? *A: A Dutch pastor/professor who revolted against Calvinism.*

2. Further divisions in Protestantism. a) John Calvin’s teachings agreed more closely with human reason than did Luther’s and spread up the Rhine Basin from Switzerland to the Netherlands. Yet, some humanists found his teachings hard to accept, particularly double predestination. b) **Jacobus Arminius** (1560–1609) was born in Utrecht and studied at Leiden, Basel, and Geneva. *He became a synergist.* As a preacher, he soon ran afoul of his colleagues for teaching that man could seek the LORD before being moved by the Gospel and by the work of the Holy Spirit. When he was condemned by the Dutch Reformed Church, his followers fled, many to England.

Q5. Describe what happened in the Thirty Years War. *A: There are many relevant points that might be mentioned.*

3. The Thirty Years War (1618–1648). a) The Thirty Years War began over the issue of the succession to the Bohemian throne. Fearing the new Catholic ruler would infringe on their religious freedoms, the Bohemians threw his ambassadors out of a window and invited Frederick V of the Palatinate to be their king. b) The Protestants in Europe were handcuffed by the Lutheran/Calvinist split. Catholics were uneasy about helping the overbearing Hapsburgs. The Turks invaded, and the Netherlands rebelled, but by 1625 the Hapsburgs won the first phase of the war. Things looked bleak. c) The Lutheran King of Denmark entered the war, but Albrecht von Wallenstein’s army occupied much of northern Germany and Jutland, forcing him out of the war in 1629. *Things were looking bad for the Protestants.* d) In 1631 Lutheran King Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden brought his excellent army into the fray. He quickly overran northern Germany and came extremely close to capturing all of Germany before he was killed in battle in 1632. e) The French attacked Spain. The Dutch also continued to revolt. The Swedes, who had reorganized their army, again marched south. French troops pillaged Germany. More than eight million people died in the war, and Germany was in ruins. f) In 1648 the Peace of Westphalia redrew borders, allowed the Netherlands to become independent, gave Alsace to France, and extended wider religious freedoms to Calvinists. *It destroyed morality in the war zones.*

XV. The Onslaught of Human Ideas

A. The specific Lutheran issues

1. Problems in the pastoral ministry. a) In the period after the Thirty Years War, too many pastors were more prepared for academic sparring with the Calvinists than for parish service. [This led to a disconnect between pastor and people.](#) b) Sermons tended to be polemic rather than focusing on strengthening faith and Christian living. The people needed practical help to turn from lives filled only with cares over daily survival to lives of service to the LORD. This situation opened the door to preachers of civil righteousness at the expense of doctrinal faithfulness.

Q6. What is Pietism? [A: An effort to make Christianity a means to improve human conduct.](#)

2. **Pietism.** a) **Philipp Spener** (1635–1705) was born in Alsace and educated at Strasburg. He was impressed by the piety of the people of Geneva. As a lecturer at Strasburg and chief pastor of a Lutheran church in Frankfort am Main, he fleshed out his ideas of how to bring individual piety and vigorous Christian living to the Lutheran church. b) His great theological works *Pia desideria* (1675) and *Allgemeine Gottesgelehrtheit* (1680). He was ousted from Saxony for condemning the morals of its court but was hired in Berlin. [There was a large Calvinistic community in Berlin.](#) He founded the University of Halle (1694) but was condemned for 264 errors by Wittenberg. c) The Pietist Movement grew around 6 proposals set forth in *Pia desideria*: 1) small-group, pastor-led Bible study, 2) lay involvement in the spiritual governance, 3) emphasis on visible Christian works, 4) toleration of heretics and unbelievers, 5) pastoral training emphasizing devotional life, 6) preaching emphasizing the growth of the new man and the fruits of faith. [These changed the emphasis of the Gospel.](#) d) When Pietism became influential in a congregation, its members began more and more looking to their own behavior rather than the work of the Holy Spirit to build their faith. Sound doctrine became secondary to a holy life. [This is what has happened to American Evangelicals.](#) e) **August Francke** (1663–1727) was born in Lübeck and educated in Erfurt and Kiel. He was impressed by Spener and put Spener's teachings into practice in Leipzig. He was expelled from Leipzig and Erfurt. He taught Greek at Halle and succeeded Spener there. f) From Halle, the Pietistic movement spread throughout northern and central Germany and to Scandinavia, where it effectively took over much of Lutheranism. [It produced "how to be good" Christians.](#) Pietism influenced much of the Lutheran church for two centuries and also John Wesley, the founder of Methodism.

B. Rationalism

Q7. What is Rationalism? [A: The effort to make the human mind capable of understanding and explaining everything.](#)

1. The Age of Reason (The **Enlightenment**). a) Greek philosophers believed in self-evidence as a source of truth and that all truth is interconnected. This "one-truth" thesis has troubled the Christian church throughout its history because theologians have tried to link revealed and natural truth. [The concept of the "power of the mind" grew, and people wanted to outthink God.](#) b) **René Descartes** (1596–1650) argued absolute truths (e.g., mathematics) could be gained from reason alone. The knowledge of the things of nature required the use of the scientific method. Reason alone determined knowledge. He said, "I think, therefore I am."

2. Rationalism and Christianity. a) Theologians applied reason to Christian teachings, disconnecting them from the Bible. It was a “man over God” approach. **John Toland** (1670–1722) claimed, “There is nothing in the Gospels contrary to reason, nor above it.” **Matthew Tindal** (1657–1733) said the only essential part of Christianity was its ethics. b) In France, **Voltaire** (1694–1778) thought that a belief in God was acceptable, but a belief in divine revelation irrational. In East Prussia, **Immanuel Kant** (1724–1804) argued that human perception defines the laws of nature and that reason is the source of morality. Reason trumped religion. c) The effects of Rationalism on the Christian church were devastating. Church members were told to rationalize what they found in the Bible so biblical teachings would benefit their material and intellectual lives. Such preaching gave no comfort to the troubled soul.
3. Rationalism and Colonialism. a) Because European nations could build better weapons of war and ocean-going ships, they argued, they had superior minds to other peoples. It was rational that they should rule them. They should take those things that were necessary for their own prosperity, such as land, minerals, timber, etc., which other peoples were underusing. In short, rationalizing robbery. b) European settlers often seized everything in sight or established a dominant presence in other nations so as to exploit both natural resources and “cheap” local labor. The arrogance of power. European settlers expected the same rights as people back home but did not give them to the natives. The Declaration of Independence is an example of the Rationalism in vogue at the time. c) Europeans claimed they had to bear the “white man’s burden” of managing the world, in the name of God, for the benefit of all and to train the natives to adopt superior European ways. Its literary champion was Kipling.
4. Rationalism and the Industrial Revolution. a) The Industrial Revolution began when clever people found ways to do things more efficiently. Many small changes produced major improvements. This use of the mind to ease the work of the hands was visible proof to many of the rightness of their cause. b) Industrialization was a “snowballing” process. Technology outran the human ability to manage it. When curious minds and able hands had free time, inventions appeared. The Enlightenment united these people to form “the invisible hand” that **Adam Smith** declared would drive practical economics in the right direction. c) Before the Industrial Revolution, people had looked to God to sustain and prosper their work. With more material goods and a higher standard of living, people began looking more to themselves than to God. Urbanization separated many Lutheran pastors from their members. People’s attention was directed away from God.

C. Theological Liberalism

Q8. What is Theological Liberalism? A: An effort to rationalize the things of God by the association of the teachings of Jesus with human experience.

1. **Friedrich Schleiermacher** (1768–1834) wanted to reconcile Rationalism with traditional Protestant Christianity. He rejected traditional Biblical interpretation and read the Bible like other ancient books, with myths and other cultural artifacts that shaped the underlying truth. He tried to tame Rationalism.
2. **Albrecht Ritschl** (1822–1889) placed faith in the context of experiences. He dismissed the textual meaning of the Scriptures for a mystical “real message of God.” It needed to be a community-building message, and it was to be spread for the purpose of including others in the community. He wanted to “feel” God.

3. **Charles Darwin**'s books on the evolution of plants and animals, particularly *On the Origin of Species*, had a major impact on the development of Theological Liberalism. The theologians saw this development in science as a validation of their approach to the Bible. Science could explain all.
4. **Walter Rauschenbusch** (1861–1918) felt that alleviating poverty should be a major function of the Christian church. He helped develop the "social gospel," which pointed the church's activities away from the direct proclamation of the real Gospel. It was a form of synergism in which works and faith became intermingled and political activity was a legitimate church function. He championed the social gospel.
5. Theological Liberalism emphasized "community Christianity" rather than "personal Christianity." Working together, church members could eventually transform the world into a paradise. Why wait until death for a divine heaven on a different plane of existence. This was not Scriptural, but numerous Lutherans became involved in this movement. It was the dream of a world village.
6. Liberalist Christianity was quite popular in Europe, but it experienced a crushing blow with the destructiveness of World War I and the subsequent Spanish Flu. A utopia where mankind would live free of mental anguish and physical need was not in God's plan. This world exists under the curse of sin. God may allow economic or social improvements, but not man to glorify himself. The world's problems could not be easily solved.

7. The Confessional Reawakening & Unity vs. Confessionalism

XVI. The Confessional Reawakening

A. Historic Lutheranism

1. Its nature. a) Martin Luther established a gestalt: A Lutheran learns his theology from the Scriptures, has complete confidence in the LORD, and does not inquisitively look beyond the Bible to find explanations for how God dealt with mankind. b) Lutheranism was strong in rural areas where people could see God's control of nature. As people migrated to the cities, it seemed to them that humans had become dominant. c) Numerous Lutheran professors became disconnected from the parish ministry by the 18th century. The Lutheran laity was left open to the encroachment of non-biblical ideas in a period of rapid technological and economic growth.

Q1. What was the Prussian Union? A: The placing of Lutherans and Calvinists into a single administrative organization to permit joint communion.

2. The Prussian Union. a) The Peace of Westphalia allowed rulers to determine the religion of their subjects. If a ruler converted to Calvinism, he was faced with an entrenched Lutheran population and had to permit both churches to exist. This caused strife and disunity on many places. b) Funding for the churches came from members, from the lord of the manor, from endowments by rulers, and from rich people for special projects. Rulers regulated the churches as much as they could but lacked complete financial control. c) Napoleon forbade churches from collecting money from their members and put them on state subsidy. After he was defeated, rulers across Europe retained this practice, which forced churches to conform more closely to governmental policies. d) On the 300th anniversary of the Lutheran

Reformation in 1817, the Calvinist King Frederick Wilhelm III of Prussia declared an administrative union of the Lutheran and Calvinist churches. They could retain their doctrine, but they had to work out a compromise **based on clever wording** that would permit members of both churches to take the Sacrament of the Altar together.

3. The “Old Lutherans” Underground. a) Although weakened by Pietism and Rationalism, many Lutherans resisted the royal edict. **Could today’s Lutherans in America do the same?** Government agents seized pastors to force compliance. Some Lutherans held unauthorized services in open spaces or in people’s houses. Others moved out of Prussia. **The resistance was determined.** b) When possible, Lutherans formed congregations outside of the official government church. These were called “free” churches. King Frederick Wilhelm IV, a rationalist, formally permitted free churches after 1845.

Q2. Who was Heinrich Melchior Mühlberg? A: An early Lutheran pastor in America who worked to gather Lutherans into congregations and synods.

4. Lutheranism in the New World. a) Lutheran settlers in North America came from Scandinavia, the Netherlands, and Germany, with Swedes building the first Lutheran church in 1646. Congregations remained small until refugees from the Palatinate and Salzburg arrived in the early 18th century. b) **Heinrich Melchior Mühlberg** (1711–87), the “Father of American Lutheranism” traveled throughout the colonies to reach scattered Lutherans. He founded the Pennsylvania Ministerium in 1748. Doctrinal unity was an issue. c) The General Synod was organized in 1820 by 4 synods but lacked a common doctrinal standard. **It could not correctly answer the question, “What is a Lutheran?”** Ten regional synods formed the General Council in 1867, adopting the Akron-Galesburg Rule: Lutheran pulpits for Lutheran pastors; Lutheran altars for Lutheran communicants.

B. The reawakening of authentic Lutheranism

Q3. Who was C.F.W. Walther? A: A pastor, professor, theologian, and editor who led the Missouri Synod in its early days.

1. The Saxon Migration – the Confessional Lutheran influx. a) **Martin Stephan** (1777–1846), a Lutheran pastor in Dresden, began preaching a confessional Lutheran message in 1830. A small band of pastors, seminarians, and laypeople sailed on 5 ships from Bremen to New Orleans in 1838. They continued to St. Louis, and most settled in Perry County, Missouri. They founded the Missouri Synod in 1847. b) Leadership next fell to **C.F.W. Walther** (1811–87). He was a parish pastor, synod president, seminary president, the leading theologian, and editor of two national publications. His standard of orthodoxy was strict. c) German immigrants often joined state synods, like the Wisconsin Synod. It was sponsored by the unionistic Prussian Union missionary societies, but it became confessional under the theological leadership of **Adolf Hoenecke** (1835–1908). d) Many Lutherans had a weak loyalty to the Lutheran Confessions. Lutheran synods were forced to sort out their theology. Some joined the General Synod, others the General Council, and some were repelled by the doctrinal laxity in these groups.

Q4. What was the election controversy? A: A disagreement among Lutherans as to whether people were elected “into faith” or “in view of their faith.”

2. The Synodical Conference. a) In 1872 the Missouri, Ohio, Wisconsin, Illinois, Minnesota, and Norwegian synods formed an orthodox Lutheran organization called the Synodical Conference. b) To reduce confusion and improve church discipline, it was decided to work toward three larger synods, the Ohio Synod in the east, the Missouri Synod in the southwest and the Wisconsin Synod in the north central region, absorbing the smaller synods, but the election controversy destroyed this goal. c) In 1877 the **election controversy** arose over whether people were elected “into faith” or “in view of faith” (*intuitu fidei*). Missouri and Wisconsin adopted the former position. The Ohio and Norwegian synods disagreed and left the Synodical Conference. d) The English Lutheran Synod of Missouri merged into the Missouri Synod. The Michigan and Minnesota synods merged into the Wisconsin Synod.
3. The Scandinavian influx. a) Scandinavians migrated to America due to the lack of quality farmland. Although nominally Lutheran, most of their churches had accepted only the Augsburg Confession and Luther’s Small Catechism. Their churches had been heavily influenced by Pietism. b) The immigrants formed synods based on their native languages: The Finns formed the Suomi Synod. The Swedes formed the Augustana Synod. The Norwegians were divided among three synods based on which of three great Norwegian pastors they followed. Those from the Baltic states were generally absorbed into German congregations.
4. Further efforts at seeking Lutheran unity. a) From the 1880s until 1917, the various Lutheran synods worked to guarantee themselves a reliable source of sound pastors and to increase their membership through associations and organic mergers. Doctrinal disagreements often retarded progress. b) The Ohio Synod began working with the less-orthodox Iowa Synod and the Buffalo Synod to form a doctrinally middle party of German synods. c) By the 1890s Norwegians were organized into three synods: the Norwegian Synod, the United Norwegian Synod, and the Hauge Synod. These 3 synods had significant theological differences, but their members were highly interrelated. d) The 3 synods prepared a new Norwegian hymnal together. [Working together facilitated union](#). After this project and turnover in synodical leadership, the 3 groups merged in 1917 to form the Norwegian Lutheran Church in America. Dissidents formed the future Evangelical Lutheran Synod in 1918.

XVII. Unity vs. Confessionalism

A. The Lutheran scene

1. Societal changes in the early twentieth century. a) Changing conditions reduced immigration from Northern and Central Europe. Lutheran churches, which had grown because of immigration, were having to serve a population becoming more American in behavior and language. b) [Enter Materialism](#). After 1905, science and engineering began to rapidly advance. The Wright brothers flew, Thomas Edison churned out inventions, and Henry Ford mass-produced cars. Christianity came under pressure to justify its relevance in an era of human ingenuity. c) Then World War I killed millions and devastated France and Western Russia. The Spanish Flu also left millions dead. After WWI, Europe became even more unstable. In America the war produced a radical change in the political environment for Lutheran churches. The government became hostile to anyone speaking a foreign language. d) [Lutherans began language transition](#). Numerous Lutheran churches moved to worshipping only in English. Lutheran religious materials in English were in short supply. Materials from the Episcopal and Methodist churches often ended up in Lutheran homes. e) In Lutheran families, daily devotions in their mother

tongue found their children no longer being able to participate. The number of families holding daily devotions plummeted. Feeling pressure to choose, many picked Americanism over their Lutheran faith.

Q5. What was the United Lutheran Church of America (ULCA)? A: A merger of the General Synod and the General Council into a single church body.

2. Changes in American Lutheranism after World War I. a) Lutheran synods had been divided by language, doctrine, organization, and personality differences. WWI drove Lutherans to seek common ground. Smaller synods used the seminaries of other synods, and this encouraged numerous organizational mergers. b) **The unification of Lutherans began.** In 1918 the General Council, the General Synod, and the General Synod South merged to form the United Lutheran Church of America (ULCA). Some smaller Lutheran synods then allied themselves with the ULCA to form a loose confederation. c) In 1930 the Ohio, Iowa and Buffalo synods merged to form the American Lutheran Church (ALC). The Norwegian, Danish, and Augustana (Swedish) synods affiliated with the ALC to form the more moderate American Lutheran Conference.

Q6. What is Neo-orthodoxy? A: The use of biblical terms but with a reduced meaning.

3. **Neo-Orthodoxy.** a) The movement began before the 20th century and replaced Theological Liberalism in mainline Protestant circles after WWI. Neo-orthodoxy used, rather than discarded, the terminology of the Bible, but it removed the requirement to understand the Bible literally. **Things sounded the same, but their meanings changed.** b) **Soren Kierkegaard** (1813–55) wrote in Danish and was ignored until his books were translated. He differentiated between the biblical proof-text version of Christianity and the individual's subjective relationship with the God-man Jesus Christ. c) **Karl Barth** (1886–1968), a Swiss Reformed theologian, wrote a commentary on Romans that promoted the importance of knowing God only through Christ. Barth, however, claimed that man's ability to grasp Christ needed to be greater than just "book faith." d) **Dietrich Bonhoeffer** (1906–45), a young German ecumenical pastor and professor, was executed by the Nazis. He wrote *The Cost of Discipleship*. e) **Rudolf Bultmann** (1884–1976), a Lutheran professor of the New Testament at Marburg. He believed in demythologizing the biblical texts of the New Testament. The details of Jesus's life were unimportant; only his existence, his preaching, and his death mattered.
4. Changes in American Lutheranism after World War II. a) Many Lutheran synods participated in the military chaplaincy program during WWII. Lutheran pastors worked with clergymen from other churches. This led to teachers of Neo-orthodoxy appearing at seminaries (**infiltrating**) of the ULCA and then of the ALC. b) A consensus on important doctrinal issues evolved across "mainline Protestantism." **Corruption of doctrine.** This soon entered Lutheran synods. In 1960 the ALC Conference merged into The American Lutheran Church (TALC) and ULCA group into the Lutheran Church in America (LCA). c) The Lutheran World Federation formed in 1947, attracting most liberal Lutheran bodies from around the world. Its doctrinal standard was loose, and it was dominated by churches willing to have religious working relationships with other Protestant groups.

Q7. What led to the dissolution of the Synodical Conference? A: The doctrine of fellowship and a suspicion of growing neo-orthodoxy in the Missouri Synod.

5. The Dissolution of the Synodical Conference. a) Mergers and name changes occurred within the Synodical Conference. The now familiar names—the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (LCMS), the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS) and the Evangelical Lutheran Synod (ELS)—resulted. b) The doctrine of church fellowship became an issue in the 1940s. [What do we need to work together?](#) The ELS severed fellowship with the LCMS in 1955, and the WELS severed fellowship with the LCMS in 1961. Meanwhile, a fraction of the WELS left to form the Church of the Lutheran Confession (CLC) in 1955. The Synodical Conference dissolved in 1963. c) The issue of fellowship dated back to World War I and included LCMS' participation in the military chaplaincy program and its relationship with the Boy Scouts. [LCMS flirted with other church bodies.](#) Talks between the LCMS and the ALC only heightened the concern. There were also the well-founded suspicions that neo-orthodoxy was creeping into the LCMS seminary in St. Louis.
4. Difficulties within the LCMS. a) In the 1960's the LCMS joined the Lutheran Council in the USA (LCUSA). In 1969 the LCMS selected Dr. John Tietjen, a proponent of neo-orthodoxy, to be president of its St. Louis seminary. [This led to a major conflict.](#) This resulted in Dr. Jacob Preus being elected LCMS president and an investigation into the teachings at the seminary. b) In 1974, Tietjen was suspended, and most of the faculty members and students walked out in support of him. The departing group formed a seminary-in-exile known as Seminex. After an LCMS national convention condemned Seminex and its supporters, they withdrew and formed the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches (AELC). c) In 1977 the LCMS withdrew from the LCUSA and in 1981 ended its fellowship with TALC. In 1988 the AELC, TALC and the LCA merged to form the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). Numerous congregations have left this heterodox union. [A realignment of Lutheranism had occurred.](#)

B. The broader religious scene

1. The Ecumenical Movement. a) In 1962 mainline Protestant groups formed the Consultation on Church Unity (COCU) to resolve issues dividing the Protestant churches. [The goal was to redefine Christianity.](#) Doctrinal and organizational issues proved impossible to resolve. In 2002 the COCU scaled back its goals. b) The Jesus Seminar was a semi-annual gathering of several hundred ecumenical theologians to discuss the statements of Jesus contained in the gospels and vote on whether Jesus had said them or not. Over a 10-year period, they dismissed almost everything Jesus said.

Q8. What is Secularism? [A: A godless religion that is also called "Secular Humanism."](#)

2. Secular Humanism. [This is a godless religion based on whatever science is in vogue at the time.](#) a) In the 1850s, George Holyoake and Charles Bradlaugh started a movement they called "secularism." It emphasized 1) Morality changes as civilization advances; 2) Philanthropy is a moral obligation in advanced societies; 3) Self-reform is as necessary as social reform; 4) Governments must become democratic; and 5) Education is essential. b) Secularism drove the intelligentsia in Russia and the socialist movements across Europe before WWI. Militants formed the Communist Party under Vladimir Lenin. Moderates favored democratic socialism. Reaction to the Humanists in Europe produced the fascists. c) **Mohandas Gandhi** (1869–1948), an Indian lawyer, developed the principles of non-violent civil disobedience in South Africa. As head of the Indian National Congress, he campaigned for Humanistic goals and independence for India from the British. d) **Martin Luther King, Jr.** (1929–68), gained notice because of his "non-violent" actions and rhetoric, as well as his speaking ability. The

lopsided Democratic election victory in 1964 and numerous court decisions led to massive changes in the national laws. e) The teachings of Secularism permeate every aspect of American life, dethroning Christianity as the *de facto* religion in America. Lutherans were slow to recognize the face of this new type of false religion. *The fabric of society had changed.*

3. **Postmodernism.** a) Whereas **modernity** emphasizes rational thought, reliable rules of nature, and a middle-class morality, the advance of Secularism changed people's willingness to be bound by any laws formulated by others, whether through religious teachings or through popular consensus. *Self-centeredness became fashionable.* b) These ideas can be traced back to Descartes and German philosopher **Georg Hegel** (1770–1831). They have now become part of the American body politic, primarily as a result of court decisions. Under the influence of this philosophy, more and more people are becoming atheists and agnostics. *Godlessness and lack of serious commitment have become the norm in America.*

8. Walking in Danger

XVIII. Doctrinal dangers

A. The history of theological wandering

1. Old Testament Israel. a) History did not end with yesterday. b) We are all blind by nature to our own errors. Each generation thinks it will not be the one that allows the pure message of God's Word to become polluted. St. Paul wrote, *"So let him who thinks he stands be careful that he does not fall."* {1 Corinthians 10:12} c) Moses warned the Israelites *against rebellion*, *"When you eat and are satisfied, and you build nice houses and move into them, and your herds and your flocks multiply, and your silver and gold increase, and everything that you have prospers, watch out so that your heart does not become arrogant and forget the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, where you were slaves."* {Deuteronomy 8:12–14} d) Under the judges, the Israelites fell away from the LORD repeatedly. The LORD rescued them, but once the God-sent deliverer had died, they quickly went back to idols. Under the kings of the unified kingdom and Judah, it was the same story.
2. The New Testament church. *The recurrence of heresies.* a) Paul's ministry was troubled by false teachers. In the letters to the 7 churches, Jesus came down hard on straying congregations. The early centuries of the church were plagued with heresy after heresy. The Roman Catholic Church spiraled downward as false doctrine mounted during the Middle Ages. Orthodox bishops abandoned the faithful. b) After Luther's death, the Philippists troubled the Lutheran church. They were followed by Pietism, Rationalism, Theological Liberalism, and Neo-orthodoxy. The Ohio Synod lost its bearings over the doctrine of election. The Missouri Synod has struggled with church fellowship and Neo-orthodoxy.

B. Dangers we face today

Q1. What does the "shrunk God" mean? A: That the "undesirable" attributes of God have been eliminated.

Q2. What is the Great Commandment? A: Deuteronomy 6:6-13 "You shall love the LORD your God with all...."

1. The danger of the shrunken God. a) The people do not like the God of the Bible. “Who is the LORD?” They try to shrink Him, place restrictions on what He can do, and remove from Him those attributes that trouble them. As Confessional Lutherans we are exposed to this revisionist God every day. If our God becomes distorted by our changing His attributes, then we are believing in a worthless idol. b) Our faith in God must come from the Scriptures. Moses began the Great Commandment by reminding the Israelites who their God was. People cannot believe in a God about whom they know little {Romans 10:14}. Our laity must learn the attributes of the LORD revealed in the Bible—through sermons, through Bible classes, and through regular personal study of doctrines. Our memories are self-editing and must be constantly reminded of the attributes of the LORD. Without this, our laypeople will become worshipers of a generic god.

Q3. What is meant by the “half-hearted commitment of regular worshippers”? A: “Pew potatoes” who like the church climate and want to feel pious.

2. The danger of half-hearted commitment. People settle for form in their religion rather than substance. a) Regular worship service attenders are committed Christians. But are they committed to Christ or only to the society of the local congregation? How much of their lives are invested in the substance of their religion rather than just the form? b) The laity needs to understand what commitment to the LORD really means. We do not have ceremonial laws, yet God expects to be imbedded in our daily lives. How that is accomplished is an adiaphoron; that it must be accomplished is not! Placing God first in our lives, the essence of the Great Commandment, is not merely a divine suggestion. c) Psalm 1:2 says of the believer, “His delight is in the teaching of the LORD, and on his teaching he meditates day and night.” The Christian life is a life of commitment to the study of God’s Word. It is not a life of mere passive acceptance of facts. If there is not a driving desire to know the LORD better, then there is no saving faith. The urgency of getting church members to understand this matter cannot be overstated. There is no such thing as “good enough” Christianity.

Q4. Why is the Augsburg Confession of particular importance to laypeople? A: It was given and attested to by laypeople before Emperor Charles V.

3. The danger of losing the Lutheran heritage. a) Through the LORD, Martin Luther and his colleagues gave us a treasure of unfathomable worth which had been lost for centuries. We cannot rest on the work of our spiritual fathers, thinking the battle has been won. Daily the hosts of hell are trying to undermine the biblical teachings of our Confessional Lutheran churches. b) Confessional Lutherans are viewed as just another Protestant group because Lutheran congregations are not emphasizing their Lutheran heritage. They do not celebrate Luther before the Diet of Worms (April 18, 1521) or the reading of the Augsburg Confession (June 25, 1530). How many lay Lutherans own a copy of the Lutheran Confessions and have read them? We are in grave danger of forgetting who we are. c) Martin Luther did not die to save us, and his writings were not given by verbal inspiration. Yet he gave us an approach to the study of God’s Word which allows the Holy Spirit to use it to preserve the faith of the saints. It is imperative that every Confessional Lutheran crave the pure Word of God, lest we lose it.

Q5. What is “I” theology? A: The belief that my actions to some extent are necessary for my salvation.

Q8. Why is Arminianism such a challenge to the Lutheran church today? A: It sounds very Christian,

and its followers dominate the religious stage.

4. The danger of Arminian infiltration. a) Arminianism permeates the “Christian” world. Its greatest danger is its emphasis on the individual’s role in coming to and remaining in the faith. This “I” theology ultimately places our salvation into our hands instead of God’s. Although some Evangelicals may strongly defend the Bible, they undermine it by teaching the theology of synergism. b) In Lutheran theology we are always the object of, not an actor in, the events that save us. That is what *sola gratia* is all about. It is not just that God has done great things for me; it is that He has done *everything* for me. c) Arminian theology is seductive because it makes people feel good about being Christians. The longer and harder one works under the Arminian system, the better and more worthy one feels (the theology of glory). The longer people are Lutherans, the more they learn of God’s Law, of their own unworthiness, and of their need for a Savior (the theology of the cross).

Q6. Why did the Christian church lose its missionary zeal? A: At one point everyone in Europe was nominally Christian.

5. The danger of the loss of missionary zeal. We have learned to sit on the message. a) Missionary zeal died out because everyone in Europe was nominally Christian. Luther reintroduced the responsibility for teaching the Christian message within the family, but the zeal to spread the message to others was not stoked. b) In America it is easy to avoid talking about religion. If we do talk, it is often about our visible church, not the message it proclaims. We fear to tell about sin and grace. We need to reach people’s minds with the saving message so the Holy Spirit can change their hearts. We need to prepare ourselves to help other members grow in their faith and their understanding of God’s Word. c) Confessional Lutherans dread telling others about Jesus Christ. Most do not engage in the lifelong practice of applying the mirror of the law and the grace of God to themselves. The joy of salvation comes from active repentance. Moreover, people are afraid someone might ask questions that they cannot answer. Therefore, they clam up. d) Church outreach, merely showing our congregation’s flag in the community rather than evangelism, has come to dominate our efforts. First, Lutherans need to learn more; then Lutherans need to tell more.

XIX. Operational dangers

A. The danger in theocracy

Q7. Why is it important for us not to try to make America into a theocracy? A: When the state and church merge, the Gospel gets squeezed out.

1. What is a theocracy? a) The Israelites in the Old Testament lived in a theocracy. They were God’s chosen people living in a nation governed by God’s civil laws. b) Christians are also God’s chosen people, but we do not live in a theocracy. America is not the LORD’s special nation that should be governed by the Old Testament laws. In fact, the “god” often mentioned in America is only a generic god, not the LORD God of the Bible. God rules, but not always through the policies of the state.
2. The nature of patriotism. a) There is nothing inherently wrong about being patriotic. Jeremiah told the Jews in Babylon to pray and work for the good of the nation of their captors. Paul urged Christians to be law-abiding citizens of their nations. b) Although the church can cooperate with the state on activities of

mutual interest, the church must not use its moral authority to promote the programs of the state. *This is not the church's commission.* The symbols and heroes of the state are not the symbols and heroes of the church.

B. Dangers in the church organizational

1. German efficiency. a) Many in Confessional Lutheranism have come to equate good organization with faithfulness to the mission of the church. All it takes is having programs and committees to address all the issues. God, after all, will bless the well-organized! *Organization and faithfulness are two different things.* b) A well-polished organization can easily conceal a church which is little more than a social association of pleasant people with enough trappings of religion to make the parishioners feel pious.
2. Religious Materialism. a) Americans tend to buy in excess. The physical things people own are often idols that own their owners' souls. Lutherans need to enumerate God's blessings and thank God rather than to enlarge their wish lists. b) Materialism also exists in Lutheran congregations and schools. Many of them strive to have an ideal place of worship or an impressive sports facility. *They want to be rich in the things of this world.* The LORD is only impressed by the quality of our faith, not the magnificence of our buildings and programs. It is easy to have our eyes more on the methods and mechanisms rather than the mission.
3. Worship Format. a) In the Old Testament the LORD prescribed in great detail the manner in which the Israelites were to worship him. Yet, even at those times in their history when they followed the prescribed liturgies and animal sacrifices, the LORD was often unhappy with them. b) In the New Testament the format of worship is not prescribed; it is an adiaphoron. The purpose of worship is helping the congregation members grow in their faith, in their understanding of God's Word, and in their trust in their LORD. The laity must understand that just attending church and going through the liturgy, no matter how beautiful, does not aid in their salvation *ex opere operato*. *Lutherans are in danger of worshipping their worship.*
4. Christian Education. a) Solomon wrote, "*Dedicate a child to the way he should go, and even when he becomes old, he will not turn away from it.*" {Proverbs 22:6} Children need to be brought to understand that their commitment to the service of the LORD must be the first thing in their lives, underlying all their choices in life—their profession, their spouse, the location of their residence, and even their hobbies. The salvation of their souls is at stake. b) The traditional Lutheran elementary school has been the right tool in the past in many places for thoroughly indoctrinating children in the Lutheran faith and for building a relationship between the school and the parents for proper learning. It still is such a tool in some places today. c) Changes in demographics, technology and educational demands, however, have created a need to reevaluate how to accomplish our educational goals. *They cannot afford to be wedded to the past.* Do we need to be more into the distance-learning and homeschooling arenas today? d) An important issue is that the teaching materials used in our schools often come from publishers who do not have a Lutheran agenda. This can lead children astray. *It is necessary to try every spirit.* Should we be working to produce more Lutheran materials? e) Pressures on our schools to add additional programs and objectives may compromise our primary goals. We must weigh everything, so we do not lose more than we gain.

5. Conclusion. a) As Confessional Lutherans we do not have the slightest reason to boast. We are what we are completely by God's grace. St. Paul's warning to beware of falling away needs to be continually ringing in our ears. An honest verdict on Confessional Lutheranism is that it is slowly dying through the loss of members and the loss of zeal. [We should be concerned, but not despair.](#) b) We do need to review what we are doing, but we should not despair. We have the LORD's commission, and we have his promise. Let us renew our confirmation vows to be faithful unto death, study God's Word with all diligence, adhere to all its teachings with tenacity, and proclaim it in every place we can, in season and out of season. It is the LORD's mission, and we have been given the wonderful privilege of being allowed to be part of it.