

Lesson 19

Teacher's Manual

THE CHURCH

READ & MEDITATE ON: I Corinthians 12:12-27 MEMORIZE: I Timothy 3:15

INTRODUCTION

The word "church" comes from the Greek word "Ekklesia" which literally means "a called out assembly." It is used in the scriptures to identify any assembly. Jesus took this general term and applied it to a particular group calling them His "ekklesia." Jesus referred to His own called out ones as MY CHURCH (Matthew 16:16-18). Thus, the church was divinely instituted. It was founded nearly 2,000 years ago upon the faith of Peter who proclaimed Jesus was, "...the Christ, the Son of the living God." Our Lord promised, "...upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." God has fulfilled His Word. Throughout the ages the church has survived bloody persecution from without and damnable heresies from within. It is now alive and well in these last days, for Christ is the One who gives the church its life.

I. THE CHURCH IN HISTORY

(Editor's Note: This portion of the lesson was adapted from Margaret Calhoun's Church History outlines published by the Foreign Missions Division of the United Pentecostal Church, International.)

With tears the Apostle Paul warned the first century believers that the church would be corrupted by "...grievous wolves..." who would enter in and not spare the flock, "...speaking perverse things..." (Acts 20:29-30), whose heresies would ultimately result in "...a falling away..." (II Thessalonians 2:3). However, in the prophetic allegory of the early and latter rain, (Joel 2:21-32 and James 5:7), we also have the promise of scripture that the church would be restored to its original splendor just before the Lord returns to catch His glorious bride away (Ephesians 5:27). Let us now follow the DECLINE and RENEWAL of the church through seven general periods of church history: (1) original Apostolic, (2) Persecutions, (3) Imperialism, (4) the Dark Ages, (5) Reformation, (6) Revival and, (7) the Apostolic church restored.

During these Second and Third Centuries the church experienced severe and repeated persecution by the emperors of Rome. The persecutions were brought on because Christians did not believe in idol worship at home or in church. To the heathens they seemed to be anti-social and atheistic because they did not have gods that could be seen. Furthermore, Christians would not worship the emperor as Lord, (a common practice of the day), and appeared disloyal. As their meetings became secret they aroused government suspicion, especially since slaves were sometimes appointed to spiritual leadership positions. The Romans, who were under a system of slavery, felt this was subversive and disrupted their social order. The majority of Roman emperors bitterly opposed Christianity and crucified, burned at the stake, and fed to lions followers of Jesus. The last and most terrible of the persecutions lasted about 7 years during which time it was commanded that all Bibles be burned and churches torn down. Christians lost all rights of citizenship and protection of the law. However, in 313 A.D. the emperor Constantine made an Edict of Toleration which sanctioned Christianity and put an end to approximately 200 years of fierce opposition. During this period of church history, various schools of theology and several heresies arose. However, the church was still not drastically removed from original apostolic doctrine, although seeds of error were beginning to be planted.

C. Imperialism

(This general period of church history covers a span of time from the Edict of Constantine in 313 A.D. to the Fall of Rome in 476 A.D.)

The emperor Constantine professed Christianity and proclaimed his allegiance to the church by ceasing all persecution, restoring public worship, instituting Sunday as a day of rest, giving public funds to support churches, and bestowing special privileges on the clergy. Although a great relief to a long persecuted people, there were some evil results of this "victory." Everyone in the empire was expected to be a Christian. Church membership was sought for mere social and political gain. Converts were accepted without the proper new birth experience. Pagan practices crept into worship services including: heathenistic feasts and worship of images. Low morals and worldliness swept in. Before long the church became a political machine without the Spirit's power. Doctrinal controversies began to arise over the dual nature of Christ and the three manifestations of God. In 325 A.D. the Nicean Council asserted its erroneous belief in a trinity of three co-equal, co-eternal persons. It was during this period that the Roman empire became split into eastern and western factions and Constantinople became a world capitol as well as Rome. The bishop of Rome claimed absolute authority over the western Christian world as its "papa" or pope. The church in the east was headed by the emperor from Constantinople. Because of state leadership in the eastern church, people began to look to the Roman pontiff as a political as well as spiritual leader. The fall of Roman imperial power in 476 A.D. increased the governmental influence of the Roman Church and its popes even more.

Bible into the German tongue and began the protestant movement. Simultaneously in Switzerland, Ulrich Zwingli broke ties with Rome refuting their doctrines. He was killed in a war between Catholics and Protestants but John Calvin, a fearless theologian of reform, continued where Zwingli left off. The countries of Denmark, Sweden, and Norway eagerly embraced the spirit and teachings of the reformers. In Spain and Italy, the protestants were relentlessly persecuted. Untold multitudes were tortured and burned in a vicious effort to stop the spread of reform. In Holland and Belgium dissenters were bitterly persecuted until Holland drove out the Spanish and became a protestant country. France experienced a temporary revival until reform leaders and countless thousands of their followers were murdered. A minority of influential protestants remained after the massacre. England passed through stages of advance and retrogression under various kings and queens who favored and opposed the protestors until the Anglican church was founded. John Knox in Scotland brought about sweeping, radical changes in religion until the Presbyterian church became the established church of the Scots. During this 16th century period, western Europe was totally changed, from being Roman Catholic, to having every northern European country west of Russia, Protestant. Inevitable political and religious strife erupted in Germany, eventually involving most of Europe. A Thirty Years War followed ending in 1648 which established the boundaries of Roman Catholic and Protestant States.

F. Revival

(This general period of church history covers a span of time from the end of the Thirty Years War in 1648 until the Twentieth Century.)

After the dust of the Thirty Years War had settled, the newly formed churches began to grow lax and complacent during the following century. Earnest men in England saw the need for revival in view of the Protestant churches' cold, formal services and moral decay. John Wesley, an Anglican clergyman, led the way for a great religious awakening in Europe and America. His followers were nicknamed "Methodists" because of Wesley's organized outreach methods. The succeeding and powerful Bible preaching of George Whitefield, Johnathan Edwards, Charles Finney, D. L. Moody, and others kept revival fires burning until the end of the 19th century. In great outdoor campaigns and camp meetings, many miraculous healings were experienced, people were "slain in the Spirit" and many received the baptism of the Holy Ghost with the evidence of speaking in other tongues. (It has been verified by historical records that many reformation and revival leaders experienced these "strange trance utterances" including Luther, Knox, Wesley, and others). The Baptists, headed by John Smythe rediscovered water baptism by immersion and spread the light in Holland and America. More light of truth began to shine as preachers and people were discovering the long-hidden truths of scripture and the power of God.

Thus, we see that God indeed has fulfilled his promise to send forth the early and latter rain. Although we live in a day of eccumenicalism, compromise, deadness and cold formality in many denominal churches, the true church is proclaiming apostolic truth and experiencing apostolic revival. All the miracles, signs and wonders of the early church are being duplicated as the unstoppable church of the living God marches forward carrying the blood-stained banner of Jesus Christ. The heart-cry of Twentieth Century apostolics world-wide is "Back to Pentecost"!

II. THE BODY OF CHRIST

The reason the church is alive today is because Almighty God Himself has lived in it through the ages of time. In fact the church is HIS BODY. The Word of God compares the church to several things - a family, a flock, a bride, a building and a body - none of these allegorical pictures is made quite so clear as that of the Body of Christ. The Apostle Paul seems to have especially emphasized the idea that the church is representative of Christ's body. Not only is the church like a body but it is the body of Christ. This analogy is very appropriate, easy to identify with and can be readily understood by most everyone. We all know that a body must have a head and various members cooperating together. So it is with Christ's body - the Church. He is the Head. Each born-again individual is a member of this supernatural body. These truths have some important implications regarding our association with the church. Each member of Christ's body has been placed there by Him for a special purpose. Each member is vitally important and has a unique function to perform.

"For as the body is one, and hath many members,
and all the members of that one body, being
many, are one body: so also is Christ."

(I Corinthians 12:12)

A. The Members

The Word of God pictures most beautifully the way in which we have been placed into the body of Christ.

"For by one Spirit are we all BAPTIZED INTO one
body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we
be bond or free; and have been all made to drink
into one Spirit."

(I Corinthians 12:13)

B. The Head

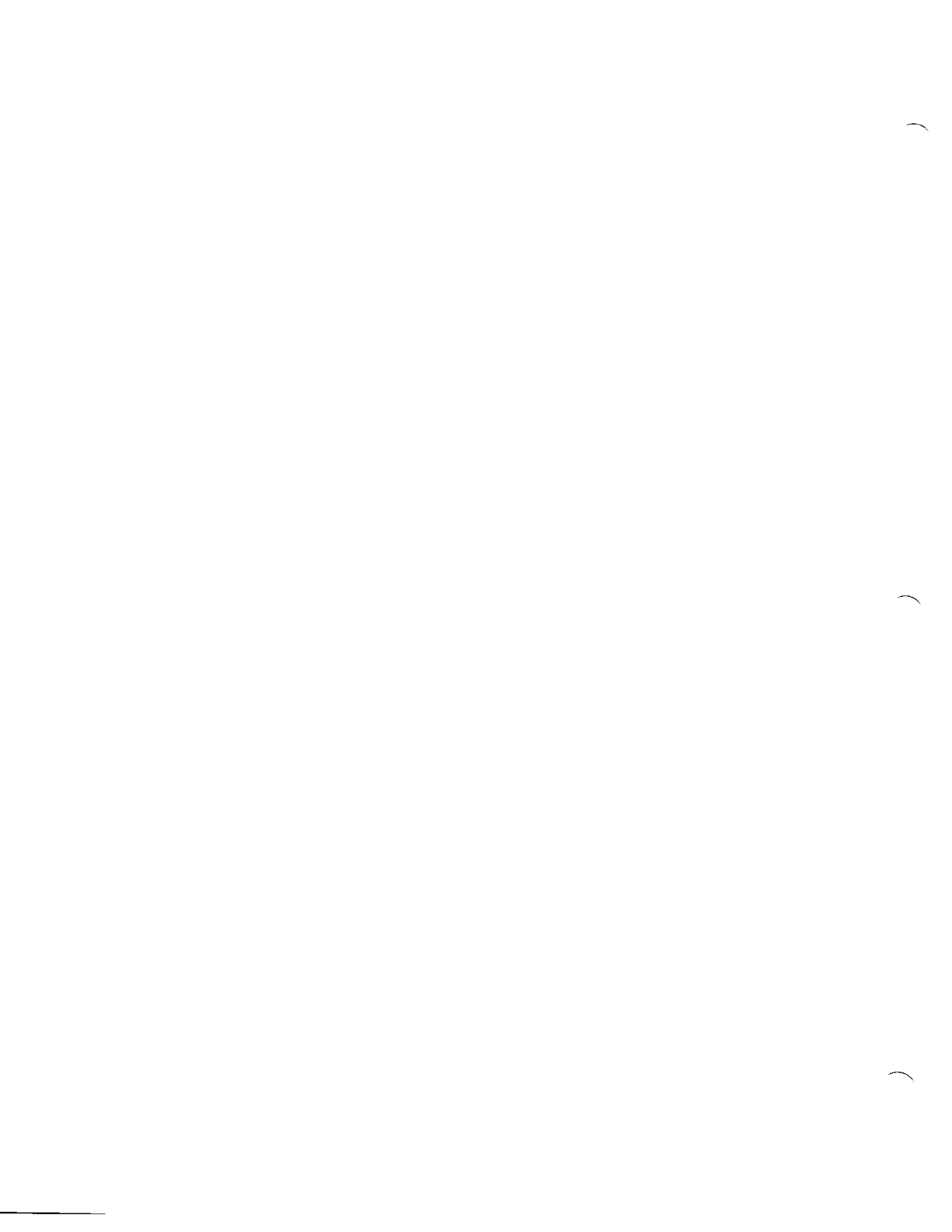
"...Christ is the head of the church..."
(*Ephesians 5:23*)

"...the Head, from which all the body by
joints and bands having nourishment ministered
and knit together, increaseth with the in-
crease of God."
(*Colossians 2:19*)

It is very clear in the scriptures that Christ is the Head of the Church! We must be careful not to change this pattern. God has ordained that He is the ultimate authority and mastermind in His church. Although each of us have been given our individual places and ministries, we can not act separately from the body and survive. Each member is subject to the Head, even Christ. He places each in their particular place. There can be no schism or division in the body. Each member is of equal value to produce a perfect body. The function of the body is through the direction of the Head. There is only ONE HEAD of the TRUE CHURCH: The Lord Jesus Christ, "...he is the head of the body, the church ... For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell." (*Colossians 1:18-19*). The role of Christ as the Head of the Church can only be fully understood in the teaching of the Deity of Christ. How could He be the Head and yet share in a trinity? There is only ONE HEAD and ONE BODY which is the ONE CHURCH. This same application of singular headship can be made in regard to the local church. There is only one head of a congregation - the pastor - who, in turn, is under the direction of the Lord. The pastor is the highest human authority and holds the highest office in a local church. He receives his authority and office from his Head: Christ. To be a member of a body working in harmony with it's natural head (the Pastor) and it's super-natural Head (Christ) is to experience a secure and peaceful feeling which is above all others. There is not a more beautiful example of God's perfect plan than a local assembly working together. *Ephesians 4:15-16* depicts the spiritual maturity and progress that results when a church works together under the ministry as one body under one God. These happy people will, "...grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love."

Local assemblies gather to worship, and to gain an increased vision and burden for the work of the Lord. The district programs also include financial drives. The United Pentecostal Church, International, is made up of several divisions. These include Foreign Missions, Home Missions, Youth, Sunday School, Ladies Auxiliary, Harvestime, Radio, Editorial, Publishing, and, of course, Administration. The Ladies Auxiliary Department has a "Mother's Memorial" offering each year. This offering is used to buy appliances and other needed items for our missionaries. Also, our missionaries receive birthday and Christmas gifts from this worthy cause. Another of our district financial programs is "Sheaves for Christ," which is a project of the Youth Department. Through this means, money is raised to buy needed equipment such as automobiles, airplanes, and printing presses for our foreign missionaries. Many other special projects are aided through Sheaves for Christ. Also, each district, through local assemblies, raises funds for Home Missions to spread the gospel in unreached cities here in American and Canada through Christmas for Christ and monthly offerings. Foreign Missions giving is for the spreading of the gospel around the world and is obtained through Faith Promise and Partners in Missions. This provides a local congregation or individual the opportunity to pledge a monthly offering toward the support of a particular missionary. Each individual church cannot do a tremendous amount in these areas by themselves but when we join with many other such assemblies our efforts become very effective. This is why your local church is involved with district and national programs. Local churches are encouraged to be involved with other assemblies of like precious faith, not only on a district level, but also on a world-wide level. Each year the United Pentecostal Church, International, holds an annual General Conference, convening in various cities. Saints and ministers from all over America and even around the world come to worship together and to share visions and burdens with each other. It is a great time of fellowship and spiritual feasting. There are many other projects by the various divisions that time and space will not permit us to mention. The goal behind each of them is the conquest of unreached territory and the winning of lost souls for the Kingdom of God. The work of God on this earth is no small task. It demands a world-wide cooperative effort.

There is a great secret to successful Christian living. That secret is TOTAL INVOLVEMENT in everything possible within the framework of the local church. Exhaust every possible avenue of doing something for God and working in His kingdom. Pray, worship, study the Bible, give, witness, share, serve, and cooperate. Your new life will continue to be filled with victory, excitement and great joy!



III. GOD'S CHURCH

All too often, when someone mentions the word "church," a "peaked box" comes to mind. In our Twentieth Century, we sometimes think more in terms of a building of bricks than a body of believers. Or, we tend to think of a particular denominational name. But neither buildings or organizations are the church. The church is a living organism--a body of baptized believers, molded and welded together through the Spirit of God--locally and throughout the world.

A. The Local and Universal Church

In order to fully comprehend our place in the plan of God, it is important that we understand the difference between the church (singular) and the churches (plural). According to the scriptures, our Lord only used the term "church" twice. In Matthew 16:18, He said, "I will build my church." This refers to all the redeemed--His mystical, intangible, invisible, general, world-wide body of believers--past, present, and future. This is THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH. The other instance in which Jesus mentioned the word church was in Matthew 18:15-17. Here He referred to a given group of saints. This relates the concept of a present, visible, tangible, body of believers in a certain place. This is THE LOCAL CHURCH. This is a specific manifestation of Christ's body. This is the only church to which you can become a part in a PRACTICAL way. The local church is where there are real people with real needs and the only place where real ministry and growth can take place. Until we realize we are an organ (member) of an actual, visible body we cannot properly relate to Christ or those that make up His church. For someone to think they are a member of the Body of Christ and not belong to a local church in a meaningful way is inferring that they are an organ independent of a body. This is not only logically ridiculous but totally unscriptural. Every believer must be in a proper relationship with a local church that believes and preaches the truth.

B. Your Personal Involvement World-Wide

Through your local church, you can become involved in the work of the universal church. The following is an excerpt taken from Victorious Living for New Christians formerly published by the Home Missions Division of the United Pentecostal Church.

LOCAL CHURCH INVOLVEMENT WITH THE UNITED PENTECOSTAL CHURCH INTERNATIONAL

Your local church is involved in Sectional and District programs as well as with the work of God in your own city. These include such things as Rallies, Camp Meetings and Conferences, where the saints and ministers of many other

The way we have gained membership into Christ's body is through the operation of the Spirit. When we received our salvation experience we automatically became members of the church. Salvation and church membership are synonymous terms as can be noted in Acts 2:47 "...the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." Acts 2:38, the only plan of salvation, is our membership requirement. Here we see Peter's command to enter the Body by obeying THE TRUE PLAN OF SALVATION. This is the only entrance to the body.

Every member of the church is important because each one is a soul redeemed by the Blood of the Lamb. God has placed each member in the body as He has seen fit. Just as the members of our natural bodies are important (directly or indirectly) to each other, so it is in the body of Christ. Whether we realize it or not, we need each other and even the seemingly unnecessary member is vital to us as a whole. The importance of each member of the body is further realized when we consider that each one has a function to perform. Without the contribution of any one member, the whole will suffer. We all have a part to play. No one is more important than another concerning what they do, for God makes us mutually dependent on each other. Although we all do not have the same function, we cooperate together as one body. There is unity in our diversity.

"For the body is not one member, but many. If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. And if they were all one member, where were the body? But now are they many members, yet but one body. And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary: And those members of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness. For our comely parts have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked: That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it. Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular."

I Corinthians 12:14-27)

G. Apostolic Restored

At the dawn of the Twentieth Century, a great revival of truth began that has continued with increasing power to the present day. From the Foreword of the 1945 Discipline of the United Pentecostal Church we quote:

During the last 21 days of the 19th century a band of earnest, hungry-hearted ministers and Christian workers at Bethel Bible College, Topeka, Kansas, called a fast, praying earnestly for a great outpouring of the Holy Spirit, which, to their joyful surprise, came upon them in the early hours of the morning on January 1, 1900. The people were heard speaking in other languages as the Holy Spirit gave utterance, just as it had happened on the day of Pentecost in the year 33 A.D. A great revival immediately broke forth, which soon reached to the state of Texas, and thence west to Los Angeles, where in the year 1906 it centered in an old building on Azusa Street. Ministers and evangelists gathered in Los Angeles from every section of the United States and Canada, and missionaries returned from the foreign fields to learn more about this new experience. Many who came were soon filled with the Holy Ghost. From here it spread throughout the whole earth, penetrating even into the heathen darkness of India, Africa, China and the isles of the seas, thus fulfilling the great commission of our Lord: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature."

Also, from the United Pentecostal Church Manual, written in the late 1940's, we further quote:

With the coming of the Holy Spirit, the Word of the Lord became a new book. Truths which had been hidden for many years were made clear. In the year 1914 came the revelation on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. The pivotal doctrines of the absolute deity of Jesus Christ and baptism in His name became tenets of faith. God marvelously confirmed our message as the gospel was preached in its fulness. The power which was hidden in the name of Jesus began to be revealed. Literally thousands were baptized into the name of Jesus Christ, and multitudes received the baptism of the Holy Spirit while in the water. Great numbers were healed of incurable diseases; demons were cast out as in the days of the apostles. In many cities where this message had gone, the report of the Samaritan revival was duplicated. "But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women." (Acts 8:12)

D. The Dark Ages

(This general period of church history dates from the Fall of Rome in 476 A.D. until the Fall of Constantinople in 1453 A.D.)

The power of the popes increased until they began to claim to be rulers over nations and their rulers. During this time false doctrines were developed including the adoration of images, purgatory and transubstantiation of the communion host because the Bible was not available in the language of the common people. Some popes were exceedingly corrupt. In 1054 A.D., the popes of Rome (western church) and Constantinople (eastern church) excommunicated each other over doctrinal and political issues. During the 11th through 13th centuries, the papacy stood virtually in absolute power over the church and nations of Europe. Celibacy was required for the priesthood and the pope was proclaimed infallible. These conditions continued until the King of France not only ignored the demands of Pope Boniface the VIII, but imprisoned him. From 1305-1377 all popes were chosen under orders of French kings. They became religious figureheads and lost their unquestioned governmental power. The warlike Mohammedans gradually conquered the territory of the Greek Empire and diminished the influence of the eastern church until they took Constantinople in 1453, making it the capital of the Turkish empire. During this span of church history, there was a great awakening of literature, the arts, education and architecture known as the Renaissance which occurred under the direct influence of the church. Toward the end of this period, zealous religious reformers began to appear including the Albigenses and Waldensians, French protestants who suffered severe Roman Catholic persecution. John Wycliffe preached against papal doctrines and translated the Bible into the English language for the first time in centuries. John Huss and Jerome Savonarola boldly preached against the corruption in the Roman church. They were excommunicated and finally martyred. This was only the beginning of a great awakening that has continued until our day.

E. Reformation

(This general period of church history covers a span of time from the fall of Constantinople in 1453 A.D. until the end of the Thirty Years War in 1648 A.D.)

With the Renaissance came a new interest in the scriptures and studies in scriptural languages (Old Testament Hebrew and New Testament Greek). When translated, the Bible was rapidly copied in many languages with the aid of the printing press invented by Gutenberg in 1456. The flame of reformation burst forth in Germany under Martin Luther, a college professor and Catholic Monk. After studying the scriptures, Luther boldly opposed the sale of indulgences (money given to free souls from a supposed purgatory to build the church of St. Peter in Rome), the authority of the pope and priesthood and other Catholic doctrines. After excommunication and temporary imprisonment he translated the

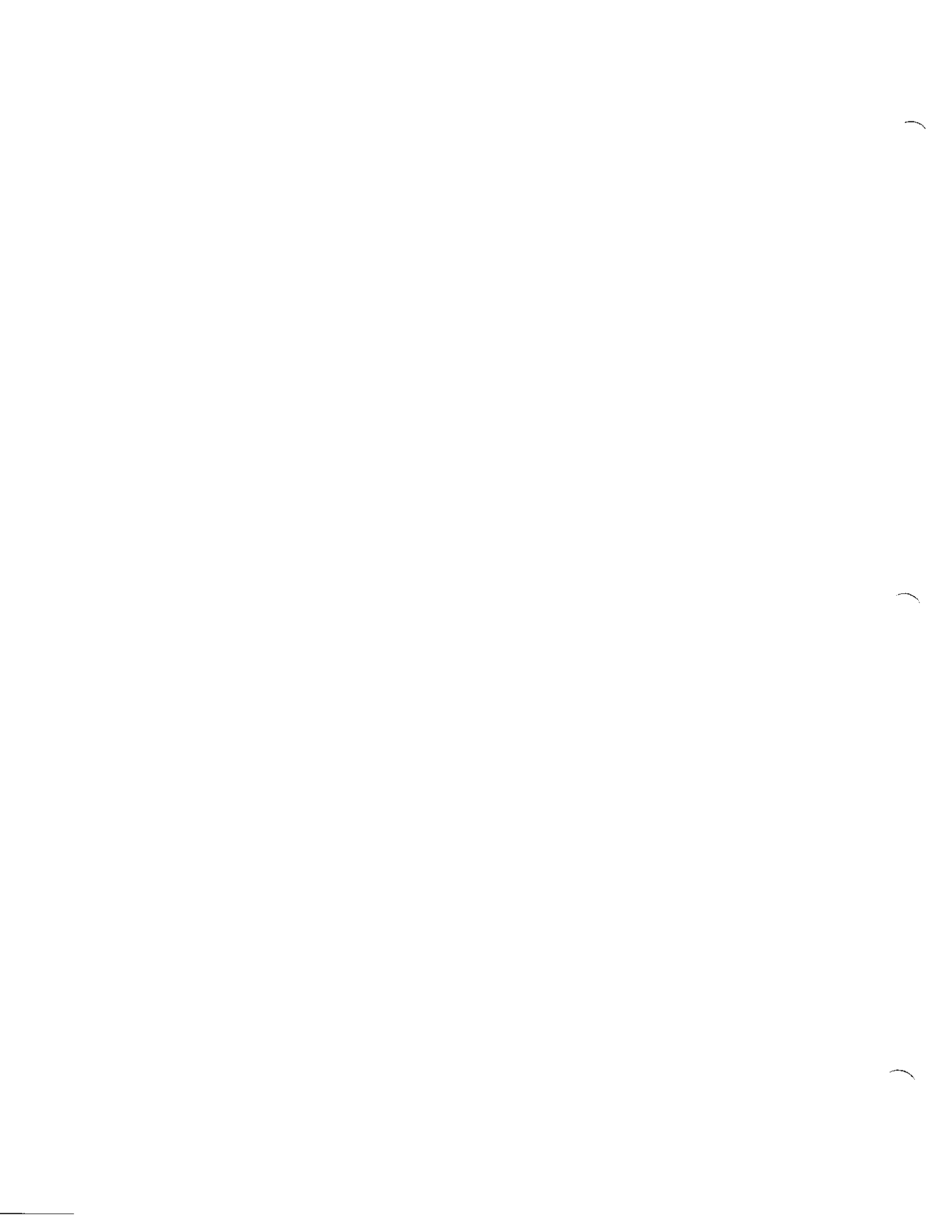
A. Original Apostolic

(This general period of church history covers a span of time from the Ascension of Christ in 33 A.D. until the Death of John the Apostle in 100 A.D.)

On the Day of Pentecost, forty days following the ascension of Jesus Christ, 120 of His followers were baptized with His Spirit in an upper room in Jerusalem. The promised Holy Ghost was poured out upon all flesh for the first time in history on this special day--the Birthday of the Church. Three thousand, one hundred and twenty Jews and proselytes (non-Israelites who had embraced Judaism) made up the church's membership after the first day's count was taken. Early followers of "the way" believed in the Messiahship of Jesus, His resurrection and His return. They preached the plan of salvation as Christ had instructed them (Compare Acts 2:38 and Luke 24:44-49). That is: faith toward God, repentance of sin, baptism in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost with the evidence of speaking supernaturally in other tongues. They experienced great miracles as the apostles and saints spread the good news. Their worship, love, and fellowship was evident to all as they continued daily in the temple and went from house to house. As the church swiftly expanded, the jealous Jews began persecuting the leaders and the members. One of the most zealous persecutors was Saul of Tarsus, a strict Pharisee. Shortly after consenting to the death of the first Christian martyr, Stephen, Saul was miraculously converted on the road to Damascus as he sought out the followers of Christ to destroy them. He became a chosen vessel of God to bring the name of Christ to the Gentiles. His missionary work was based out of Antioch, the place where the disciples were first called Christians. In approximately two decades Saul (also known as Paul) brought the gospel to most of the known world. His powerful ministry and teaching brought upon him much persecution from not only the Jews but the idolatrous heathens. In prison for Christ's sake, he wrote letters to the churches he was responsible for founding. These writings make up almost half of the New Testament books. After Paul was beheaded and Peter was crucified, further persecution of the church was instigated by Nero, the Roman Emperor. From this time (A.D. 68) until the death of John the Apostle (100 A.D.), there was a great slaughter of Christians perpetuated by Domitian who banished John to the Isle of Patmos where the beloved Apostle wrote the book of Revelation. The church at this time was strong, aggressive, and growing. Its influence was far reaching and its doctrine was pure until heretical opinions slowly began to arise.

B. Persecutions

(This general period of church history covers a span of time from the death of the Apostle John in 100 A.D. until the Edict of Constantine in 313 A.D.)



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During the last 21 days of the 19th century a band of earnest, hungry-hearted ministers and Christian workers at Bethel Bible College, Topeka, Kansas, called a fast, praying earnestly for a great outpouring of the Holy Spirit, which, to their joyful surprise, came upon them in the early hours of the morning on January 1, 1900. The people were heard speaking in other languages as the Holy Spirit gave utterance, just as it had happened on the day of Pentecost in the year 33 A.D. A great revival immediately broke forth, which soon reached to the state of Texas, and thence west to Los Angeles, where in the year 1906 it centered in an old building on Azusa Street. Ministers and evangelists gathered in Los Angeles from every section of the United States and Canada, and missionaries returned from the foreign fields to learn more about this new experience. Many who came were soon filled with the Holy Ghost. From here it spread throughout the whole earth, penetrating even into the heathen darkness of India, Africa, China and the isles of the seas, thus fulfilling the great commission of our Lord: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature."

Also, from the United Pentecostal Church Manual, written in the late 1940's, we further quote:

With the coming of the Holy Spirit, the Word of the Lord became a new book. Truths which had been hidden for many years were made clear. In the year 1914 came the revelation on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. The pivotal doctrines of the absolute deity of Jesus Christ and baptism in His name became tenets of faith. God marvelously confirmed our message as the gospel was preached in its fulness. The power which was hidden in the name of Jesus began to be revealed. Literally thousands were baptized into the name of Jesus Christ, and multitudes received the baptism of the Holy Spirit while in the water. Great numbers were healed of incurable diseases; demons were cast out as in the days of the apostles. In many cities where this message had gone, the report of the Samaritan revival was duplicated. "But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women." (Acts 8:12)

D. The Dark Ages

(This general period of church history dates from the Fall of Rome in 476 A.D. until the Fall of Constantinople in 1453 A.D.)

The power of the popes increased until they began to claim to be rulers over nations and their rulers. During this time false doctrines were developed including the adoration of images, purgatory and transubstantiation of the communion host because the Bible was not available in the language of the common people. Some popes were exceedingly corrupt. In 1054 A.D., the popes of Rome (western church) and Constantinople (eastern church) excommunicated each other over doctrinal and political issues. During the 11th through 13th centuries, the papacy stood virtually in absolute power over the church and nations of Europe. Celibacy was required for the priesthood and the pope was proclaimed infallible. These conditions continued until the King of France not only ignored the demands of Pope Boniface the VIII, but imprisoned him. From 1305-1377 all popes were chosen under orders of French kings. They became religious figureheads and lost their unquestioned governmental power. The warlike Mohammedans gradually conquered the territory of the Greek Empire and diminished the influence of the eastern church until they took Constantinople in 1453, making it the capital of the Turkish empire. During this span of church history, there was a great awakening of literature, the arts, education and architecture known as the Renaissance which occurred under the direct influence of the church. Toward the end of this period, zealous religious reformers began to appear including the Albigenses and Waldensians, French protestants who suffered severe Roman Catholic persecution. John Wycliffe preached against papal doctrines and translated the Bible into the English language for the first time in centuries. John Huss and Jerome Savonarola boldly preached against the corruption in the Roman church. They were excommunicated and finally martyred. This was only the beginning of a great awakening that has continued until our day.

E. Reformation

(This general period of church history covers a span of time from the fall of Constantinople in 1453 A.D. until the end of the Thirty Years War in 1648 A.D.)

With the Renaissance came a new interest in the scriptures and studies in scriptural languages (Old Testament Hebrew and New Testament Greek). When translated, the Bible was rapidly copied in many languages with the aid of the printing press invented by Gutenberg in 1456. The flame of reformation burst forth in Germany under Martin Luther, a college professor and Catholic Monk. After studying the scriptures, Luther boldly opposed the sale of indulgences (money given to free souls from a supposed purgatory to build the church of St. Peter in Rome), the authority of the pope and priesthood and other Catholic doctrines. After excommunication and temporary imprisonment he translated the

A. Original Apostolic

(This general period of church history covers a span of time from the Ascension of Christ in 33 A.D. until the Death of John the Apostle in 100 A.D.)

On the Day of Pentecost, forty days following the ascension of Jesus Christ, 120 of His followers were baptized with His Spirit in an upper room in Jerusalem. The promised Holy Ghost was poured out upon all flesh for the first time in history on this special day--the Birthday of the Church. Three thousand, one hundred and twenty Jews and proselytes (non-Israelites who had embraced Judaism) made up the church's membership after the first day's count was taken. Early followers of "the way" believed in the Messiahship of Jesus, His resurrection and His return. They preached the plan of salvation as Christ had instructed them (Compare Acts 2:38 and Luke 24:44-49). That is: faith toward God, repentance of sin, baptism in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost with the evidence of speaking supernaturally in other tongues. They experienced great miracles as the apostles and saints spread the good news. Their worship, love, and fellowship was evident to all as they continued daily in the temple and went from house to house. As the church swiftly expanded, the jealous Jews began persecuting the leaders and the members. One of the most zealous persecutors was Saul of Tarsus, a strict Pharisee. Shortly after consenting to the death of the first Christian martyr, Stephen, Saul was miraculously converted on the road to Damascus as he sought out the followers of Christ to destroy them. He became a chosen vessel of God to bring the name of Christ to the Gentiles. His missionary work was based out of Antioch, the place where the disciples were first called Christians. In approximately two decades Saul (also known as Paul) brought the gospel to most of the known world. His powerful ministry and teaching brought upon him much persecution from not only the Jews but the idolatrous heathens. In prison for Christ's sake, he wrote letters to the churches he was responsible for founding. These writings make up almost half of the New Testament books. After Paul was beheaded and Peter was crucified, further persecution of the church was instigated by Nero, the Roman Emperor. From this time (A.D. 68) until the death of John the Apostle (100 A.D.), there was a great slaughter of Christians perpetuated by Domitian who banished John to the Isle of Patmos where the beloved Apostle wrote the book of Revelation. The church at this time was strong, aggressive, and growing. Its influence was far reaching and its doctrine was pure until heretical opinions slowly began to arise.

B. Persecutions

(This general period of church history covers a span of time from the death of the Apostle John in 100 A.D. until the Edict of Constantine in 313 A.D.)