

Letter to Thyatira – History of the Papacy

The Papacy

- Pope means ‘papa’ or ‘father’
- Initially it applied to all western bishops
 - About 500AD it began to be restricted to the Bishop of Rome
 - For 500 years the Bishops of Rome were not popes
- The Roman Catholic tradition that Peter was the first pope is fiction, without any historical, or biblical, basis whatsoever
 - There is no evidence that Peter was ever a Bishop of Rome
- Peter has his own foreboding successors (1 Peter 5: 3)
- Peter’s reference to Babylon (1 Peter 5: 13) has been interpreted by some as a reference to Rome - but Babylon is where the Babylonian Talmud was compiled

The History of the Papacy

4th Century Patriarchs

- Five primary centres:
 - Rome
 - Constantinople
 - Antioch
 - Jerusalem
 - Alexandria
- In 395AD, after the division of the empire, Antioch, Jerusalem and Alexandria acknowledged the leadership of Constantinople
 - Subsequently the struggle between Constantinople and Rome began – a struggle for control of the church and for worldly power

The Struggle for Supremacy

- Siricius (395-398), Bishop of Rome, in his lust for worldly power, claimed universal jurisdiction over the church
- Unfortunately for him, in his day the empire divided (395AD) into two separate empires, East and West
- The Eastern empire outlasted the Western empire by 1000 years
- The East was beset with controversies
- The West, under increasingly weak emperors, was breaking up before the barbarians
- These ‘jawbone’ attempts continued until Leo I (440-461)

Leo I

- In 445 Leo I obtained from Emperor Valentinian III imperial recognition for his claim as Primate of All Bishops
- In 452 he persuaded Attila the Hun to spare the city of Rome
- In 455 he induced Genseric the Vandal to have mercy on the city
- Leo I, his reputation being made:
 - He declared himself Lord of the Whole Church
 - Advocated exclusive universal papacy
 - Proclaimed resistance to his authority as a sure path to hell
 - Advocated the death penalty for heresy

The Fall of Rome

- Simplicius (468-483) was the Roman 'Pope' when the Western Empire came to an end in 476
- Free of civil authority, the fragmented kingdoms of the barbarians let ample opportunity for individual advantageous alliances, and the Pope became the most commanding figure in the West
- Gregory I (590-60) is regarded as the first Pope
 - He laboured unceasingly over the purification of the church
 - He deposed neglectful or unworthy bishops
 - He opposed the sale of offices ('simony'), etc

Charlemagne

- Zacharias (741-752), as Pope, was instrumental in making Pepin, King of the Franks
- Stephen II (752-757) requested Pepin to lead his army to Italy and conquer the Lombards who had pillaged Italy
 - Pepin succeeded and gave a large part of Italy to the Pope; the beginning of the Papal States, a temporal dominion which continued for 1100 years until King Victor Immanuel returned these lands to the Kingdom of Italy in 1870
- Pepin's son, Charlemagne, was one of the great rulers of all time
- Charlemagne reigned 46 years with many wars and conquests of vast magnitude
- His realm included what is now Germany, France, Switzerland, Austria, Hungary, Belgium and parts of Spain and Italy – the so-called Holy Roman Empire
- He helped the Pope, and the Pope helped him. He was one of the greatest influences in bringing the papacy to a position of world power

The Treaty of Verdun (843)

- After the death of Charlemagne, this treaty divided his empire into what became the foundations of Germany, France and Italy
- A ceaseless struggle between the Popes and the German and French kings began
- The Holy Roman Empire lasted 1000 years until Napoleon brought it to an end in 1806
 - The Holy Roman Empire (neither Holy nor Roman) is the echo of ambitions subsequently (e.g. Hitler's Third Reich)

The Isidorian Decretals

- Nicholas I (858-867) was the first Pope to wear a crown
- About this time (857) a book appeared, "The Isidorian Decretals" which purported to be letters and decrees of Bishops and Council of the 2nd and 3rd centuries
 - They were designed to exalt the power of the Pope, stamping the Papacy with the authority of antiquity, ante-dating the Pope's temporal power by five centuries
 - After a couple of centuries they were proven to be forgeries

The Great Cleavage

- Until 869 all Ecumenical Councils had been held in or near Constantinople, and in the Greek language (not Latin)
- Nicholas I undertook to interfere in the affairs of the Eastern Church
 - He excommunicated Photius, Patriarch of Constantinople, who in turn excommunicated him
- The claims of the Roman church became unbearable and the East finally separated itself

- The breach between the Western Roman Catholic Church and the Eastern Orthodox Church became wider through the centuries
 - The brutal treatment of Constantinople by the armies of Pope Innocent II during the crusades and the creation of the dogma of Papal Infallibility in 1870 deepened the chasm even more

The Rule of the Harlots (904-963)

- Under Sergius III there were a series of Popes put in place by Marozia (his mistress) and her mother Theodora (herself mistress to two ecclesiastics who she manoeuvred into the papal throne) and her sisters – they were paramours and/or bastard sons – and the papacy was turned into a den of robbers
 - Sergius III (904-911)
 - Anastasius III (911-913)
 - Lando (913-914)
 - John X (914-928)
 - Leo VI (928-929)
 - Stephen VII (929-931)
 - John XI (931-936)
 - Leo VII (936-939)
 - Stephen VIII (939-942)
 - Martin III (942-946)
 - Agapetus II (946-955)
 - John XII (955-963)
- John XII was the grandson of Marozia, and he was guilty of almost every crime you can imagine: he violated virgins and widows, lived with his father's mistress, made the Papal palace a brothel and was killed in the act of adultery by the woman's enraged husband

The Descent Continues

- Benedict VIII (1012-1024) bought the office by bribery
- John XIX (1024-1033) bought the office by bribery
- Benedict IX (1022-1045) appointed as a 12 year old boy
 - office bought by a powerful family
 - committed murders and adulteries in broad daylight
 - robbed pilgrims
 - driven out of Rome
- Benedict IX (1045-1046) } A time of three rival Popes
- Gregory VI (1045-1046) } Rome swarmed with hired assassins
- Sylvester III (1045-1046) } Virtue of pilgrims violated
- Clement II (1046-1047) Appointed by Emperor Henry XIII of Germany because "no Roman clergyman could be found who was not tainted by simony or fornication"

The Golden Age of Papal Power (1049-1294)

- Hildebrand leads the papacy into reform - he controlled five successive administrations prior to his own
 - Leo IX (1049-1055)
 - Victor II (1055-1057)
 - Stephen IX (1057-1058)
 - Nicolas II (1059-1061)
 - Alexander II (1061-1073)
 - Gregory VII (1073-1085) (Hildebrand)

Innocent III (1198-1216)

- Most powerful of all the Pope
- Claimed to be ‘Vicar of Christ’ / ‘Vicar of God’
- He said all things on earth and in heaven and hell are subject to the ‘Vicar of Christ’
 - ‘Supreme Sovereign over the Church and the World’
 - More blood was shed under his direction, and that of his immediate successors, than at any other period in history (except for the time of the Reformation)
- All the monarchs in Europe obeyed his will, including the Byzantine Empire
- He ordered two crusades
- He decreed transubstantiation
- He confirmed auricular confession
- He declared papal infallibility
- He condemned Magna Carta
- He forbade the reading of the Bible in the vernacular
- He instituted the Inquisition (‘The Holy Office’)

The Inquisition

- Called “The Holy Office”, the Inquisition was instituted by Pope Innocent III and was perfected by Pope Gregory IX
 - Everyone was required to inform against heretics
 - Anyone suspect was liable to torture, without knowing the name of his accuser
 - The proceedings were secret
 - The Inquisitor pronounced sentence and the victim was turned over to civil authorities to be imprisoned for life or to be burned
 - The victim’s property was confiscated and divided between the church and the state
- The Inquisition claimed vast multitudes of victims in Spain, Italy, Germany and the Netherlands and did its most deadly work against the Albigenses
 - The Albigenses, or Carthari, in southern France, northern Spain and northern Italy:
 - Preached against the immoralities of the priesthood
 - Preached against worship of saints and images
 - Completely rejected the clergy and their claims
 - Opposed the claims of the Church of Rome
 - Made great use of the scriptures and lived self-denying lives with a great zeal for moral purity
- By 1167 the Albigenses were a majority of the population in southern France and were very numerous in northern Italy
- In 1208 Pope Innocent III ordered a bloody war of extermination which utterly wiped out town after town – the inhabitants murdered without discrimination - until all the Albigenses were wiped out
- The Waldenses, a similar but not identical group to the Albigenses, in the same region, emphasising Bible reading and rejecting clerical usurpation and profligacy, were similarly wiped out
 - In the 30 years between 1540 and 1570, no fewer than 900,00 Protestants were put to death by the Popes war for the extermination of the Waldenses

Boniface VIII (1294-1303)

- In his famous Bul, '*Unam Sanctam*', he said: "We declare affirm, define, and pronounce that it is altogether necessary for salvation that every creature be subject to the Roman Pontiff"
- He was so corrupt that Dante, who visited Rome during his pontificate, called the Vatican 'a sewer of corruption' and, in his '*Inferno*', assigned Boniface VIII along with Nicolas III and Clement V to the lowest part of hell

French Control of the Papacy

- The Papacy had been victorious in its 200 year struggle with the German Empire, but met their match in Philip The Fair, King of France, with whom the history of modern France begins
- After the death of Pope Benedict XI the Papal palace was removed from Rome to Avignon, on the southern border of France, and for 70 years the Papacy was the mere tool of the French Court (1305-1377)
- For the next 40 years there were two sets of Popes, one at Rome and one at Avignon, each claiming to be 'Vicar of Christ', hurling anathemas ad curses at each other

Renaissance Popes (1410-1503)

- A series of Popes renowned for sexual immorality, fathering of illegitimate children, murders, corruption, abuse of power, fraudulent dealings, selling of church offices, nepotism and sponsoring of inquisitions:
 - John XXIII (1410-1415)
 - Pius II (1458-1464)
 - Paul II (1464-1471)
 - Sixtus IV (1471-1484)
 - Innocent VIII (1484-1492)
 - Alexander VI (1492-1503)
 - Pius III (1503)

Martin Luther (1483-1546)

- Born to a coal miner and decides to become a lawyer
- In 1504 an experience in a violent storm changes his course to pursue a doctorate of theology
- He was disillusioned by visit to Rome and burdened by his own sin he takes Habakkuk 2: 4 as his life text
- On 31 October 1517 Luther nails his 95 theses to the door at Wittenburg College
- On 10 December 1520 a Papal Bul was issued excommunicating Luther and instructing him to 'retract within 60 days or death'. Luther burned it publicly...and the Reformation was born

The Centuries of Wars

- Diet of Worms 1521: Charles V, Emperor of the 'Holy Roman Empire' (Germany, Spain, Netherlands and Austria) summoned Luther to appear – if he would not recant he faced death:
 - Luther says "Here I stand, I can do nought else, so help me God"
 - Because of the support of German princes and others Luther was not put to death
- The centuries of wars began:
 - War on the German Protestants (1566-1609)
 - War on the Protestants of the Netherlands (1566-1609)

- Huguenot wars in France (1572-1598)
- Philip of Spain's attempt against England (1588)
- Thirty Years War (1618-1648)

Reformation Popes (1410-1503)

- A further series of corrupt and immoral Popes:
 - Julius II (1503-1511)
 - Leo X (1513-1521)
 - Adrian IV (1522-1523)
 - Clement VII (1523-1534)
 - Paul III (1534-1549)

The Jesuits

- An order founded by Ignatius of Loyola on the principle of absolute and unconditional obedience to the Pope, having as its object the recovery of territory lost to Protestants and Muslims and the conquest of the entire heathen world for the Roman Catholic Church
- Their supreme aim was the destruction of heresy – that is; thinking anything different than that which the Pope said to think
- To accomplish this; anything was justifiable – deception, immorality, vice, even murder
- In France they were responsible for the St Bartholomew Massacre
 - Catherine de Medici, mother of the King (Charles IX), an ardent Romanist and willing tool of the Pope, gave the order and on the night of 24th August 1572 a massacre of 70,000 Huguenots took place
 - There was great rejoicing in Rome: the Pope and his College of Cardinals went in solemn procession to the Church of San Marco and ordered the Te Deum to be sung in thanksgiving
 - Rome struck a medal in commemoration of the massacre
 - Sent a Cardinal to Paris to bear the King and Queen-Mother the congratulations of the Pope
- They were also responsible for persecution of the Huguenots, revocation of the Toleration Edict and for facilitating the French Revolution

And so to our current day

Evangelicals and Catholics Together

- On 29th March 1994 a joint declaration was signed called “Evangelicals and Catholics Together: The Christian Mission in the Third Millennium” – hailed by some as the most significant event in 500 years of church history
- The compromise of the gospel lies at the heart of the agreement:
 - But the gospel hasn't changed
- On 21st May 1995 a surprising announcement – the Pope asked forgiveness of all wrongs and crimes committed and permitted by the Roman Catholic Church throughout their history

Bibliography

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- Dave Hunt & Chuck Missler, *The Kingdom Of Blood*, Koinonia House, 1996