

Synapse Technologies, Inc.  
Columbus: Discovery and Beyond  
(VERSION 5)

Article Name: Christianity in the Dark Ages

Article #:

Chapter Name & #: 6, Changing Views of the World ????

SubChapter Name & #:

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Editor: Bob Abel

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Type (intvu/core/found/written): Written

Source: Penguin Atlas of Medieval History

Time: (period covered by content): 362 A.D. to 1478 A.D.

Places: Europe, North Africa, and the Near East

Version: 1

V/T/G/A/An: To discuss whether this is a single video article, a single slide show, or 5 separate articles?

About: A critical perspective on the evolution of Christianity in Europe from the 4th century through the 15th century. Or, when Luther pounded on the doors at Wittenburg, no one was surprised.

Notes: The Penguin Atlas has five (5) maps which graphically depict the spread of Christianity throughout the Middle Ages. By themselves, they're not very exciting and don't present much variety. The total running time of the attached narration is approximately 3:20. Production issues to resolve are: (1) Do we produce this as a single video article with only the five maps as imagery? (2) Do we add additional imagery to balance out the pace and give variety? (3) Should we present this material as one single video article, or treat it as a slide show, or break it down into five separate articles?

Filename = MAPREL3.DOC

## Video/Graphics/Anim.

528 A D (religious map)

## Audio/Text

Things were bad enough with all those different tribes drawing boundary lines on my face --each tribe carving out their territory like cats marking a room. But it was really painful during the first few centuries after the Romans nailed Christ to the cross. Ouch! It seemed that everybody liked to pick on those poor Christians. The lions had a good time. For sure. And all those martyrs certainly made for a brisk trade in relics.

However, no sooner did the Christians finally succeed in getting the pagans to stop feeding them to the lions than they started quarreling among themselves about the nature of God and the Trinity. Besides splitting Christendom right in two --Arians on one side, orthodox Catholics on the other-- all this debating gave a lot of people Excedrin-size headaches.

Of course, in those days, it was a no-no to even think about seceding from the Roman Empire, so many nations groping for a sense of unity found it safer to adopt **dissenting religious views** as a way of challenging the central government.

It was a cute trick while it lasted. Unfortunately, as the architects of Church doctrine gained more power, they were able to declare these subtle, hair-splitting arguments heretical. As punishment, unbelievers were condemned to be Bar-B-Qed at the stake.

:70

Map 737 R

Centuries of dealing with the naughty heretics within and the advance of Islam without proved to be more than the Catholic Church could handle, and Christianity soon split into two: the Western Church, headed by the Pope in Rome; and the Eastern Church, led by the Patriarch of Constantinople.

Although the Pope tried to gain control over the Eastern Church by excommunicating Emperor Leo III for authorizing the destruction of religious images and icons, the scheme misfired and Rome lost territory to its Byzantine cousin.

:30

Map 1028 R

By the eleventh century, both the Eastern and Western Churches had enlarged their domains significantly --if not by the word, then by the sword. Apparently the rule of the day was: If they won't join you, beat them.

Better yet, to establish his independence and increase his base of power, the Pope tried to do a magic trick that could work only among the most illiterate of men. He claimed that the Emperor Constantine, in a will written four hundred years earlier gave the Church absolute temporal power in the West. How convenient! All of a sudden, sovereign kings were tenants on Church land, and the Pope had the right to ratify who became a monarch. Such an obvious forgery could only work in the Dark Ages, when few people could read, and nobody did their homework.

:42

Map 1212 R

The Church continued to stick its nose into provincial affairs until it developed a strong, disciplined, international organization that the Emperor became dependent upon to run the machinery of government. By the thirteenth century, Papal power reached its peak.

Along with the Church's imperial appetites, though, came an increasing need for money. Not only did that make the clergy seem too worldly for many of the faithful, it also sowed the seeds for corruption and protest.

:28

Map 1478 R

After Constantinople fell to the Ottoman Turks in the mid-fifteenth century, the Eastern Church retreated to Russia, where it evolved into the Russian Orthodox Church.

Meanwhile, the Roman Catholic Church continued its love affair with money and power. In fact, the clergy got itself so messed up with crimes of corruption and nepotism that people became fed up --and rightly so.

The age of unquestioning faith in religious teaching was over. There was too much hypocrisy between what the Church taught and how it behaved. People were eager for reform. And, by posting his ninety-five theses on the door of a church, Martin Luther was glad to oblige.

:40

running time =                   Total  
  3:30

For more in-depth information, links could be made to straight-forward textual articles on:

Christianity

dissenting religious views (heresies)

Arianism

Nestorianism

Pelagianism

Manicheism

Catholic faith and doctrine.

Trinity

Martin Luther

Protestant Reformation

Donation of Constantine

Constantinople

iconoclasm

Indulgences

Roman Catholic Church