

CHRISTIANITY: A SURVEY OF DEVELOPMENT IN THE SECOND MILLENNIUM

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Introduction

The history of the Christian religion in the second millennium is very complex. A journey through the ten centuries reveals the ups and downs and the change in attitudes of the Christian world. When the second millennium began Christianity was mostly a European religion and a religion of the Eastern part of the former Roman Empire, Persia and Armenia. Except in the South West Coast of India, the Malabar Coast, and in China, Christianity was not known to the rest of Asia. By the end of the millennium, Christianity emerged as the largest religion in the world making her presence in the whole known world.

1. Medieval Period (1046-1303)

1.1. Sacerdotium-imperium

About the turn of the second millennium the Christian world entered upon a period of splendor, which lasted for 150 years. During this period, the superior power of *sacerdotium* over *imperium* was recognized. Based on the principles of the 'City of God' of St. Augustine, the church dominated the public and private life of individuals. The period also witnessed the emancipation of the church from the clutches of feudalism.

The characteristic feature of church order in the first half of the eleventh century was privatization of churches. Next we see a programme of Chistianization. "The design was the formation of Christendom, not in the sense of the initial conversion of its constituent kingdoms, but of the conscious elaboration of a programme which was to bring mankind under the law of Christ"¹ Churchmen became men of kings and not of God. The popes of the 11th to 13th centuries desired to form a European

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¹McManners John (Ed.), *The Oxford Illustrated History of Christianity*, Oxford, 1992, p.199

Confederation under the presidency of the Pope. Triumphalism was the besetting temptation of the medieval church as secularism is that of the modern.

During the medieval period there was the collaboration of religion and state, but clear distinction of competence was lacking. Till the 10th century, there was in theory the distinction of two societies, although in practice the state dominated the Church. From the 11th century Church started dominating the state.

We have a legalized Church in the beginning of the second millennium. With Pope Gregory VII a new era opened in the history of the Church, a new phase in the history of the Church, known as Gregorian Reformation. This was also the beginning of papal ascendancy. And with Gregorian Reformation papacy was freed from the clutches of Feudalism and Roman nobles. Gregory VII through his 27 teachings asserted the supreme power. His efforts were to obtain full freedom to the church. In February 1076 Gregory excommunicated Henry IV, the King of Germany, since the latter encroached the power of the Pope by appointing new bishops. But later the priest in Gregory VII held the upper hand and on January 28, 1077 Henry IV was absolved from his excommunication. It is interesting to note the event in Sutri in 1046, where Henry III, the predecessor of Henry IV deposed three popes and appointed a new Pope, a German Pope. Later history shows that the relation between Henry IV and Gregory VII was not cordial and Gregory died in exile, with these words: "I have loved justice and hated iniquity. Therefore, I die in exile!"² He stood for pure Church and this ideal dominated the following centuries. Gregory was one of the greatest of the Medieval Popes. He was an uncompromising Pope. With Paschal II, we have the purification of the Church from contamination of every kind. The conflict between German ruler Frederick Barbarossa (1152-1190) and Pope Adrian IV (1154-1159) and Pope Alexander III(1159-1181) have given us some fascinating stories in an age where there was conflict between *imperium* and *sacerdotium*. With Pope Innocent III we have the realization of the dream of Gregory VII and the climax of papal ascendancy. He acted as head of the Christian world. The fourth Lateran Council (1215) was the concrete expression of

²Cfr. Psalm, 45:8

this power which was not merely a religious one, the Pope received tribute and homage from every feudal state.

But this dream did not last long with the emergence of national, lay states: The slap at Anagni to Pope Boiface VIII on September 7, 1303, one year after the publication of *Unam Sanctam* (1302) was not only the sign of the failure of the Bonifatian politics, but also the end of the papal theocracy, and the beginning of a new epoch- separation of religion from various aspects of human activity. It was also the end of the medieval period.

Gregory VII, Innocent III, etc. failed to understand the autonomy and sovereignty of the state. Christ was seen as priest and king. To substantiate it, Pope was depicted as Vicar of Christ, Christ has both temporal and spiritual powers. The material and spiritual swords both belong to the Church, but must be operated for the advantage of the Church.

Positively, medieval church was also educator: centres of learning were administered by churches and abbeys; recopying of ancient codices, preserving old manuscripts were done by monks. With the beginning of universities- Paris, Bologna, Oxford, Rome etc. the monopoly of learning shifted from the hands of monks. However, till the French Revolution these Universities kept their character typically ecclesiastical.

1.2. Russian Church: Vladimir, Prince of Kiev, embraced the Christian Faith in 988. The Russian Church acknowledged the Patriarch of Constantinople as her overseer. After the fall of Constantinople in 1453 Moscow assumed the title 'The Third Rome'. "At its first entrance in Russia, Christianity penetrated deeper into the life of the people than it did in any other country, without, however, bringing about a corresponding thorough moral transformation."³

1.3. Eastern Schism: The Eastern Schism took place on July 16, 1054. Papal legates sent by Pope Leo IX comprised of Humbert of Silva Candida, Frederick of Lorraine and Peter the Archbishop of Amalfi. The mission of the delegates was to open conversation that would lead to unity. Michael Cerularius, the Patriarch of Constantinople, ignored the delegates

³Schaff Philip, *History of the Christian Church Vol. IV*, Michigan, 1989 (Reprint), p.141.

and questioned their credentials. The papal delegates assembled at the Church of Hagia Sophia, made a public protest against the behaviour of Michael Cerularius and laid upon the altar a sentence of excommunication against him; Michael Cerularius and his party in turn excommunicated the papal delegates. The schism thus formally initiated had not been healed to this day. However efforts are in progress and the climate is improved for a fruitful dialogue between the Eastern and Western Churches.

1.4. Crusades: Crusades were great military campaigns undertaken by western Christians for the conquest of Palestine. They were wars against infidels and were made possible by the formation in the West of a special military class, the Knighthood, whose exploits the Church directed in favour of religion. There were five crusades including that of Children's crusade during the 12th and 13th centuries. Positively, crusades created a sense of comradeship and of unity in Europe. They also enhanced the position of the Pope as the spiritual and even as semi-temporal leader of the Christian West. Negatively, they provoked a definite breach between the Greek East and the Latin West. They sharpened the antagonism between the Islam and Christians.

1.5. Spiritual Renewal: The 10th century religious reform was closely associated with the Abbey of Cluny in central France, founded around 909. Cluny's main abbots were Odo, Odilo, and Hugh the great. Another attempt to revive the primitive Benedictine life was that of the Cistercian, or 'white monks' the motherhouse was Citeaux in Burgundy founded in 1098 by Robert of Molesme. The Premonstratensians, founded by Norbert in northern France, around 1120, and the Gilbertines, founded by Gilbert of Sempringham in Lincolnshire (1083-1189) were deeply influenced by the Cistercian ideal.

Another important feature of the medieval period was the foundation of new mendicant orders, Franciscans and Dominicans. In an age of splendor, prosperity and papal supremacy Sts. Francis and Clare through their lives showed to the world the value of poverty. St. Dominic through his teachings attracted many to Christ. A spiritual revival within the Catholic Church was effected with *Devotio Moderna*, which stressed both personal devotion and social involvement. It began in northern Europe in the 14th century. Geert Groote (1340-1384) and Thomas a Kempis (1380-1471) wielded great influence in the spiritual life of the Christians,

especially the latter with his famous work 'Imitation of Christ'. Other new spiritual initiatives were the Brethren of the Common Life and the Brigittines.

There were also military orders with the sole aim of defending the Holy Land against the attacks of the Muslims. They actively involved in the crusades. The Knights of Templar founded about 1118 and suppressed in the Council of Vienna, (1311-1312) the Hospitallers (late eleventh century) and the Teutonic Knights (late twelfth century) wielded great political and economic powers for many centuries.

Notable literary contribution of this period is that of Dante Aligheri, (1265-1321), the Italian poet, creator of one of the world's great classics, *The Divine Comedy*. The book has three parts; The Inferno, The Purgatory and The Paradise. It is a Christian allegory about the soul's vision of sin, its cleansing from guilt and its rising in newness of life.

1.6. Scholasticism

With scholasticism we have the revival of Greek philosophy applied to Christian theology and philosophy. It was a new trend in European learning. St. Bonaventure, St. Albert the Great (1200-1280), St. Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) were the great champions of scholasticism.

2. Late Medieval Period (1303-1517)

2.1. Avignon Papacy

From 1305 to 1377 popes were having their residence not in Rome, but in France, precisely in Avignon. The Avignon papacy marked a new trend in the history of Christianity. This period is marked with national consciousness, democratic spirit, national states, subjectivism and nominalism in the intellectual field and *Devotio Moderna* in the realm of mystical life. Avignon papacy was the result of nationalistic France. The stage shifted from Germany to France and then to Italy with Renaissance and Humanism. In the religious sphere, there was the flourishing of mysticism and advance of popular piety. During this period we have popular mystics like Catherine of Siena (1347-1380), Brigit of Sweden (+1372) and Gerard Groote (+1384). In 1309 Clement V made Avignon his permanent residence. Avignon popes introduced better fiscal policy in the

Roman Curia they were also responsible for the well-organized Roman Curia. Missionaries were sent to India, Central Asia and China, thus patronizing foreign missions.

2.2. Conciliarism-Western Schism

The dominant idea during this time was conciliarism: it was believed that the council is superior to the Pope. The council can judge the Pope, suspend him, and depose him for the good of the Church. This found its fuller expression with Western Schism. Western Schism (1378-1417) originated in the context of the election of Pope Clement VII. Cardinals who elected Urban VI had a second thought and they went to Anagni and elected a new Pope Clement VII. Thus we have two lines of Popes each claiming legality. No solution was found, and therefore, a council, not ecumenical, was held at Pisa and resulted in the election of a new pope. Thus we have three lines of Popes. Once again the German intervention became inevitable and the German king Sigismund convoked a council at Constance (1414-1418). The dominant feature of this Council was Conciliarism. Two popes were deposed. One Pope resigned and a new Pope was elected -Martin V. The council enunciated the doctrine of the supremacy of the council over the Pope. The council of Constance was formed along national lines and national democratic ideas sought to penetrate into the inner organization of the church. Martin V was the last medieval Pope and his successor Eugene IV (1431-1447) brought with him the Renaissance Culture to Rome. With the theory of conciliarism, lay people were given more importance.

The Council of Basel, Ferrara, Florence and Rome (1431-1445) was also dominated by conciliarist ideas. An agreement of reunion was reached between the Eastern Christians under the leadership of Patriarch Joseph II on July 6, 1439 at Florence. But the Eastern Christians did not accept this reunion and eventually in 1453 Constantinople fell into the hands of the Ottoman Turks.

2.3. Renaissance and Humanism

During the fourteenth century there arose in the west a mighty intellectual movement, characterized by a spirit of secularism so strong as to constitute a definite break with the thought and feelings

of the high middle ages. During the fifteenth century this movement gradually pervaded the greater part of the educated and influential classes of Europe. At first it was described as a "rebirth" of classical antiquity. In as far as it related to and affected higher studies, the concept of education, science and literature, it was called Humanism: and in view of the changes it effected in art culture, politics and philosophy, it was known as the Renaissance".⁴

It was a period of transition. Originated in Italy, Humanism spread to other European countries, it affected religious faith. In general, Humanism was a Christian movement: however, people were not prepared for it and they were scandalized. On the question of Humanism leading to Protestant Reformation, there is no clear idea. The Hierarchy identified itself with the new culture.

2.4. Church Reform and Protestant Reformation

During the 13th and 14th centuries all were aware of religious reform. The religiosity was more of externals. Commercialized religious practices, multiplication of religious rituals, pilgrimages, astrology, soothsaying, witchcraft, role of demons, all played their roles. Decline in moral life, love for luxury, immorality, corruption, and decline of moral life of the clergy of all levels also contributed to the general decline of the inner life of the Church.

All were aware of the great evils and abuses of religious; all were convinced of the need for a reform. All the Synods and Councils of that time were deeply concerned about reform. However, no one was ready for sacrifices, no one had the courage to execute reforms. Renaissance popes Sixtus IV -1471 to Leo X 1521 lacked the will to undertake the reforms and failed in assuming leadership. Misguided zeal led to heresies. John Wyclif and Jan Hus provide good examples.

The result of all this was a restlessness from 14th century. Council of Constance predicted that if reforms were postponed, laity would rise against the clergy, and there would be rebellion and desecration of sanctuary. In the 15th century there were new prophecies. One Dominican Savonarola Girolamo's(1452-1498)apocalyptic preaching, prediction of

⁴Bihlmeyer Karl, *Church History, Vol. II*, Westminster, 1967, pp. 473-474

the punishment of God and condemnation of Papal and curia luxuries, got for him prison and trial for heresy. He was executed.

At the beginning of 16th century there was outbreak of a violent disturbance. Secularization of higher education, universities, printing press, new discoveries, political machinations etc., put Europe in a state of confusion. The printing technology and the printing of Bible in 1456 in Mainz by Johann Gutenberg (1400-1468) revolutionized the area of knowledge. Sincere quest for a new religiosity could have averted the disaster. But the clergy were not in position to give leadership. In Germany the central Government was weak. There was antagonism between classes, clergy and lay, prelates and lower clergy, peasants were dissatisfied. Idea of Roman primacy became obscure. Excessive wealth of the German Church and nationalized monarchies in France, Spain and England worsened the situation.

3. Modern Period (1517-1869)

3.1. Protestant Reformation

Protestant Reformation of the 16th century, was not the work of one man, Martin Luther, with the publication of 95 theses on October 31, 1517. It was a historical necessity. No one wanted to have a division in the Church. Reformation was the result of the failure to reform the Church during the 14th and 15th centuries. The psychological factor in the reform was the desire for a new religiosity, free from scholasticism and assuring internal peace and individual salvation. New stress on direct and immediate knowledge of the Word of God without human intermediaries, translation of Bible into local languages, direct assurance and direct pardon from God were other factors which disturbed the ordinary faithful. The greater maturity of lay person, dissolution of the medieval order and the failure to replace it with a new one also played their part in the Reformation.

a) Martin Luther and other reformers (1483-1546): On October 31, 1517, Martin Luther posted his 95 theses on the door of the church in Wittenberg. Luther questioned the indulgence business and he was excommunicated on January 3, 1521. Luther and his followers are called

Protestants because in 1529, at the Diet of Speyer, some of the German princes protested.

The main Protestant teachings are: scripture alone, total depravity and guilt inherited from Adam, rejection of Transubstantiation, denial of purgatory, distinction between visible and invisible Church, denial of the infallibility of the Pope etc.

Philip Melancton was the successor of Luther (1497-1560) Ulrich Zwinli (1484-1531) was a Swiss reformer. He held that Christ was spiritually present at the Eucharist and that the secular ruler had a right to act in Church matters. John Calvin (1509-1564) born in France, became a reformer in Geneva. Calvin regarded Baptism and Communion as sacraments. He organized the reformed Church on the basis of different ministries. Immediately reform ideas spread to central Europe and Scandinavian countries.

b) Anglican Church

In England anti-clerical, anti-papal elements were very strong. In 1534 Henry VIII proclaimed himself head of the English Church. Henry died as a Catholic, but cut off from Pope. Under King Edward VI (1547-1553) the reformation was positively and effectively introduced. With the help of the Cardinal Pole, Queen Mary (1553-1558) attempted to restore Catholicism and authority of the Pope to Britain. Her successor Queen Elizabeth (1558-1603) restored and permanently established Protestantism in England.

The main protestant denominational groups are: Lutherans (1517), Reformed Church (1520), Anabaptists (1525), Anglicans (1534), Presbyterians (1560) Baptists (1612) and Methodists (1787).⁵

3.2. Catholic Reformation

a) Council of Trent

The Catholic response to the Protestant reformation was the Council of Trent. The aim of the Council was to define the Catholic dogmas and to

⁵Walton C. Robert, *Chronological and Background Charts of Church History*, Academie Books, Michigan, 1985, Chart, 41.

reform the Church. The council lasted from 1545 to 1563 in three periods. Catholic reformation means reform attempts carried out inside the Church. Counter reformation is the attempt made by the Catholic Church to defend her dogmas and doctrine against the Protestant attacks. The council decrees were effectively implemented by the successive Popes.

b) Mystical Theology: Theresa of Avila (1515-1582), John of the Cross (1542-1591)

Theresa and John of the Cross represent the Catholic Reformation. Emphasis was on emotion and religious passion. The scholastic emphasis on reason had failed to satisfy the deep-felt need of men and women for a personal experience of God. Mystical theology of the post-reformation period was enriched by the writings of these two Carmelite mystics.

c) Missionary Expansion

The 16th century witnessed a new flowering of Catholic mission. The losses in Europe were compensated by new conversions in Asia and the Americas. New discoveries gave new impetus to the mission work. Catholic rulers of Spain and Portugal took the mission seriously. There was reawakening of the real spirit of old orders, Franciscans and Dominicans, and new missionary potential for young foundations like Jesuits, and Capucins. The missionary enterprise of Portuguese and Spain were carried out under the Padroado missionary system. The foundation of Propaganda Congregation in 1622 gave new vitality to the mission. Again Pope Urban VIII founded the Urban College for the training of the future missionaries. A seminary for foreign missions was founded at Paris in 1663.

Paul III issued a Bull in 1537 under which he forbade slavery in the New World under pain of excommunication. The missionary adaptation of Robert de Nobili in India, later known as *Malabar rite* and Matteo Ricci in China, known as *Chinese Rite* and the *Reductions* followed by Jesuits in Paraguay are worth mentioning. Bishop Bartolome de Las Casas of Seville fought for the rights of the Red Indians. Peter Claver, a Spanish Jesuit, worked among the slaves and received the name 'Apostle of the Negro'.

Till the 19th century no significant mission work was done in Africa. The mission in India, China and Japan did not produce many results,

though Francis Xavier was in Japan. Philippines was the only Asian country where mission work was a great success. Augustinians, Jesuits, Franciscans and Dominicans with the slogan 'To Baptize and to Civilize' worked hard and by 1600 two million Filipinos were Catholics. In 1595 the Archdiocese of Manila with three Suffragan Sees were established.

With new foundations in the 19th century the Catholic Church had revival of the mission. However there was a setback to the mission in France because of the French Revolution.

A new missionary feeling developed in England towards the end of the 17th century and in 1698 the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (SPCK) was founded. In 1701 the Society for the Propagation of Gospel (S.P.G.) was founded. By the end of the 18th century Baptist Missionary Society (BMS) was inaugurated. After 1795 London Missionary Society (LMS) was founded. In 1799 a group of missionaries founded a new missionary society, known as Church Missionary Society (CMS). In the second half of the 19th century there was a reawakening of missionary zeal among the Lutherans and Calvinists and this led to the formation of Basel mission. All these missionary agencies promoted foreign mission both financially and with mission personnel. Thus 19th century was springtime of mission work as far as Protestant missions are concerned.

d) Church Nationalism: A group of people in the beginning from the 17th century held the relatively independent authority of the bishops in their respective dioceses. They refused to consider pope as universal bishop. They argued the superiority of the general council over the Pope and maintained that the council could be convened even without the pope. In France it was known as Gallicanism. In Germany the main exponent was John Nicholas Non Hontheim or Justinus Febronius and was known as Febronianism. During the reign of Maria Theresa (1740-1780) and her son Joseph II (1780-1790) in Austria this national Church feeling was very much in the air and were known as Theresianism and Josephism respectively. The ultimate aim was the reassertion of the omnipotence of the state.

e) Illuminism and Enlightenment

Illuminism and *Enlightenment* were two other intellectual movements which affected the Church adversely in the 17th and 18th centuries. Illuminism attributes an absolute value to the rational knowledge and for which reason is the only criterion of truth. Faith in the reason and faith in the human nature are the essential characteristics of illuminism. Illuminists deny every dogma and revelation. Enlightenment means man's self-illumination in the light of autonomous reason. Natural sciences have a dominant role.

f) Controversies

Two major controversies of this period are *quietism* and *Jansenism*. Quietism was an introverted mystical reaction to dogmatism and scholasticism. Jansenism was based on a certain doctrine of justification that proposed rigorous views on human nature and the role of grace in man's salvation. The aim was to purify the Church from scholastic philosophy and theology, and favoured scripture and the commentaries of the early Fathers. They stressed the predestination and passivity of man before grace.

4. Contemporary Period (1869-2000)

4.1. Church and Social problems:

With the publication of '*Rerum Novarum*' by Pope Leo XIII in 1891, Catholic Church publicly announced her interest in social problems. The publication of further documents on social problems till today shows the involvement of the Church in social problems. Some of the documents are worth mentioning: *Mater et Magistra* (1961) *Pacem in Terris* (1963) both by Pope John XXIII, *Populorum Progressio* (1967) by pope Paul VI and *Centesimus Annus* (1991) by Pope John Paul II. A critical analysis of the documents shows a steady progress in the social awareness and social commitment of the Church. The Christian missionaries all over the world today are involved in the upliftment of the whole human being. And they take the Gospel passage very seriously: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me

because he has anointed me to preach the good news to the poor.....to set at liberty those who are oppressed.”⁶

New ways of living the Church are very well lived by mother Theresa of Calcutta. Her commitment to the upliftment of the poor and her radical living of the Gospel were really a boost to the Gospel values. Her charism is continued by Sisters of Charity and Brothers of Charity. So many young people are attracted towards the Taize Community of Frere Roger. It is a new experiment in the field of ecumenism. Oscar A Romero, Archbishop of El Salvador, champion of social justice, who denounced the abuses of an established order, was shot through the heart as he celebrated mass in March 1980.

4.2. The Two Vatican Councils

The Vatican Council I should be understood in the context of European liberalism and Italian unification. Pope Pious IX (1846-1878) the longest reigning Pope in history, became archconservative in the context of European liberalism and Italian unification. Although the Council of Trent had the idea of defining the infallibility of the Pope, the programme was dropped because of fear of criticism. In 1868 the Pope announced the convocation of a Council. There were rumours that the main agenda of the council was the definition of the infallibility of the Pope. Germans opposed this move. However, the Council assembled on December 8, 1869 in St. Peter's with a total number of 698 including cardinals. Pope went ahead with the idea of definition and with a dogmatic constitution on July 18, 1870, defined the infallibility of Pope in matters of faith and morals. With the occupation of Rome by the Italian Unification Party the Council was prorogued indefinitely on October 20, 1870. With the council we have the Papal centralization at its climax in the modern period.

The Second Vatican Council was an attempt to enter into dialogue with the whole world, dialogue with the near and the far away. It was not to condemn, but to have an open eye. The main agenda was aggiornamento-updating and renewal. It was an attempt to establish collaboration between the Bishops and the Pope and was convoked by

⁶Luke 4,18

John XXIII and continued and concluded by Paul VI. New relations with the separated brethren and dialogue with the modern world were stressed upon. The Council with 4 Constitutions, 9 Decrees and 3 Declarations opened the Catholic Church to the path of renewal. Vatican II was the first-official self-actualization as a world Church. Before that world Church was only in potential –process, began with the 16th century missionary expansion. The Council was really a World Council which precipitated a crisis –the crisis for growth.

The two world wars and the communist regime which followed changed the whole growth of the Church. The attitude of Pope Pius XII towards the Jews during the Second World War came under severe criticism. Although original documents speak in favour of pope in his attempt to save the Jews, many are still critical about the Pope. This worsens the relationship between the Catholics and Jews. Many Christians lost their lives during the second World War in the hands of the Nazis. The names of Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906-1945) and Maxmilian Colbe (1894-1941) are worth mentioning.

4.3. Church Universal

The Latin American Church is dominantly Catholic although charismatic and Pentecostal movements are very strong. The politico-economic situation of the area is most volatile. The Basic Ecclesial Community is regarded as a Latin American Phenomenon. There are thousands of lay community leaders or 'delegates of the word'. There exists lot of tension between radical groups and orthodox groups. Roman authorities have already warned the liberation theologians.

In Africa Christianity finds deep roots. The Church fought against apartheid. The main concern of the African and Asian Church is to emerge as the Churches of the soil, that is to achieve Africanization and Asianization of the Church.

The Asian Christians are a minority; still they make up 10 percent of the world total. This minority consciousness is 'acting as a drag upon the Church in most parts of Asia'. Too much dependence on western resources makes the 'Third world churches' more inward looking. Religious pluralism will certainly be a significant factor of life in the present century

and a new type of relationship is slowly emerging. Instead of seeing one another as rivals they may see themselves as fellow witness to the reality of God.⁷

Except in China, Christianity is growing and gaining roots in many former-communist countries.

Conclusion

After the Second Vatican Council two phenomena came in to the open: a strong religious crisis with strong secularization and loss of certain traditional values. On the other hand, there were also new religious fundamentalism and religious conservatism. Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre was an archconservative and Pope John Paul II excommunicated him from the Catholic Church in 1988.

With the beginning of World Council of Churches in 1948 a new horizon in ecumenism was opened. Taize community in northern France plays an important role in the ecumenical movement. The Second Vatican Council also stresses the need for dialogue with the non-catholic brethren.

With Michael Gorbachev we have both *glasnost* (openness) and *perestroika* (restructuring) and with the fall of Berlin Wall in November 1989 the whole Eastern Europe enjoys religious freedom.

The Church of England in 1992 voted in favour of women ordination and ordained women to priesthood.

New Movements, New Churches

Pentecostalism, originated in the United States, is flourishing in Africa, Latin American countries and Asia. Also there are new-Pentecostal movements. Another development in the Church is the indigenous, independent churches. The reason for this is the desire to be free of foreign domination. Independent Churches reflect the concern most pressing to local people. "They are a response to Christianity in African terms, 'a place

⁷Cfr. McManners John (Ed.), *The Oxford Illustrated History of Christianity*, pp.642-659

to feel at home'; and also a witness to the fact that there is here no 'abiding city'.⁸

The missionary consciousness of the Church is a permanent possession of the Church. Two thousand years of the history of the Church is a history of fluctuations. There are times of advance and times of retreat for Christian faith. In 500 A.D, 22% of mankind were believers in Jesus Christ. However in 1900 one third of humanity were Christians. Optimism for rapid completion of the task of global evangelization was very high. There was an enormous growth in Christian population. From 558 million in 1900 to 2000 millions by A.D 2000. At the beginning of the Third millennium, Christians of all kind number 2 billion, which is 33% of the world's population. During the 20th century, Christianity has become, in fact, the most extensive and universal religion in history. There are today Christians and organized Christian Churches in every inhabited country on earth. The Church is therefore now, for the first time in history ecumenical in the literal meaning of the word; its boundaries are coextensive with the *Oikumene*, the whole inhabited world.⁹

In a world of terrorism and tension a true Christian is one who shares hope in the goodness of humanity, the earth and tomorrow. He is the one who proclaims that Emmanuel means, "God is still with us".

The Great Jubilee celebration in the Christian world, especially in the Catholic Church, inaugurated by Pope John Paul II on Christmas night 1999 and concluded on January 6, 2001, was an occasion for the whole Christian world to take stock of her position in the world. This was also an occasion to make an examination of conscience, and ask pardon for the mistakes committed by the Christian Church. And on March 12, 2000 Pope John Paul II asked pardon for the mistakes committed by the Church throughout the two millennia. Thus the Pope has shown to the world that the Church is the salt of the earth. The Church marches towards the heavenly Jerusalem with the prayer: 'come Lord Jesus'¹⁰ (*Maranatha*).

⁸Dowley Tim (Ed.) *The History of Christianity*, Oxford, 1990, p.653

⁹Cfr. Barret, David B, et al (Eds.), *World Christian Encyclopedia*, Oxford, 2001, p.1

¹⁰Rev. 22, 20