

Christianity: Part 2

Interpreting the Bible

1. As literal interpretation and as moral tales.
2. The Bible is an inspired word by God, but expressed in human language and according to human understanding.

Arius and the Formation of Nicene Creed

- **Arius (around 300 C.E.)** was a **Bishop of Egypt** who held the view that Jesus was a human being.
- Thought he was a great and an ideal human being, but nonetheless he was not son of God. The title "Son of God" was a courtesy title.
- This created a great confusion among the Christian communities.
- Therefore, the council was called at **Nicea** around **325 C.E.** in which more than 300 Bishops were present. They formulated the Nicene Creed (which reads as on... page 375 or 376; 2nd paragraph).
- Essence – Ousia – Substance

Development of the Eastern Orthodox Church

- Eastern Orthodox Church developed in Greece, Bulgaria, Ukraine, Romania and Russia.
 - This happened when Constantinople (Byzantine) was made new capitol of the Roman Empire by Constantine.
 - Eventually the Empire split into two divisions, East and West.
 - Thus we find many doctrinal differences and differences in practice between the two Church traditions.
 - Latin speaking Western church began to develop independently on its own.
 - Greek speaking Eastern Church continued on its own course.
- 1. The Eastern Church has always held to a decentralized consensus based model.**
 - o Decisions regarding doctrines and practices made by local community members in consultation with patriarchs and bishops.
 - o In the Western Church, centralized authority is vested in the Pope (The Western Church includes at this point that Christians in the West as yet we had no Catholics and Protestants).
 - 2. The Eastern Church holds that Jesus had two separate natures, not united in single person.**
 - o Thereby they emphasize the divinity of Jesus.
 - o The Western Church held that divine and human were united in a single person.

- Thus, they emphasize more on human aspect of Jesus.
3. **The Eastern Church emphasizes on Monasticism.**
 - They have great monastic centers.
 4. **The Eastern Church allows only icons in the worship, whereas the Western Church allows statues.**
 5. **The Eastern Church allows the marriages of bishops and ministers.**
 - In the Western Church ministers are not allowed to marry.
 6. **In the Western Church it is held that Father and Son generated the Holy Spirit.**
 - In Eastern Church, one holds that Father generated the Holy Spirit.
 - According to the Eastern Church, the Latin world **filioque**, “from the son”, was added for no reason.
 7. **In the Eastern Church, when one is baptized his whole body is sunk into water.**
 - In the Western Church, it is done by sprinkling the holy water on the forehead.
 8. **In the Sacrament of Eucharist (Lord’s Supper), the Eastern Church uses both wine and bread (symbolizing blood and body of Christ)**
 - In the Western Church bread alone was used for many hundreds of years (today it’s changing).

The Protestant Reformation

- *To protest / bring the evidence*
- Western Church establishment had become rich from bequest of the rich and collection from local parish churches.
- Endowments of land and money were a natural form of piety in the hope that rich people and aristocrats would benefit in after-life.
- The indulgences became widespread.
- Instances of sex offence committed in the Church became a common place.
- Saint veneration became wide spread.
- All these factors contributed to the formation of Reformation which began with **Martin Luther**

Martin Luther (1483 – 1546)

- Martin Luther presented his objections in the form of **95 Theses**; he nailed them to the door of the church he was born in.
- The main contentions of which are:
 1. **Live by Faith, “sola fides”, and live by Scripture, “sola scriptura”.**
 - No authority of pope is required. Everyone is a minister and relate to God directly.

The Essentials of Christian World View

1. God the Father:

- This universe is the expression of the power and love of God.
- It embodies also the Judaic concept of God as being all knowing, powerful and one.

2. Jesus Christ:

- He is ideal human being as well as manifestation of divinity.
- He is word (logos, substance) that expresses the divine nature and origin of Jesus.
- Logos = logic
- Jesus's words are logic

3. We humans are sinners and born in sin.

- For our sins Jesus was crucified.

4. Holy Spirit:

- We as humans understand Godhead or Godhood as Holy Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
- They are three ways of understanding (the same) God.

5. Life after Death:

- Heaven is the reward of the good, which is being in the presence of God.
- Being in his presence and beatitude is the greatest enjoyment we can ever have.