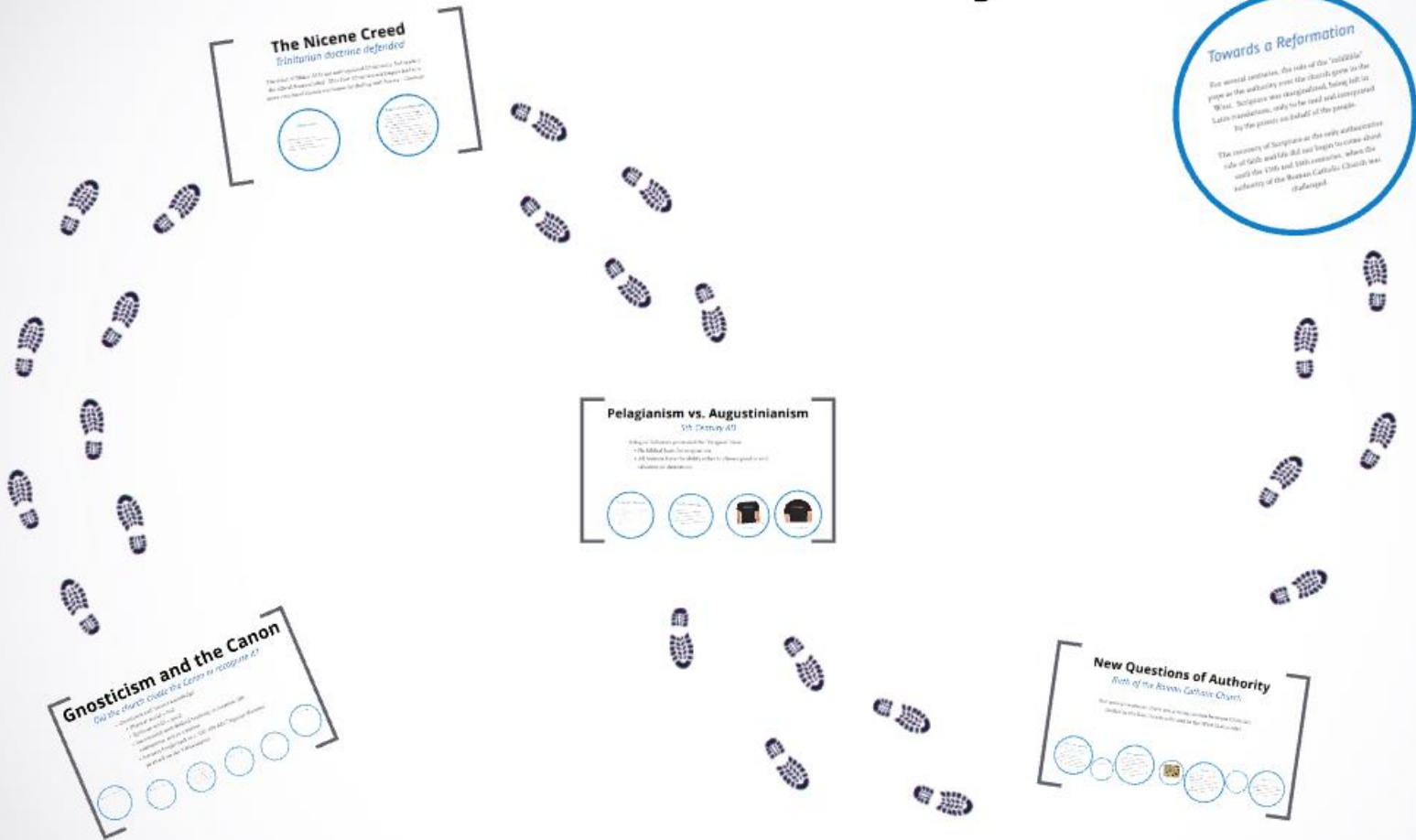


Walkthrough of Ancient to Medieval Church History



Gnosticism and the Canon

Did the church create the Canon or recognize it?

- Gnosticism and “secrete knowledge”
 - Physical world = bad
 - Spiritual world = good
 - Inconsistent with Biblical teaching on creation, fall, redemption, and re-creation
 - Irenaeus fought back in c. 130-200 AD (“Against Heresies”, an attack on the Valentinians)

One Valentinian teacher wrote:

“There exists before everything a pre-unknowable Pre-principle which I call Unity. With this Unity there coexists a Power which I call Unity. This Unity and this Unity, being one, emitted without emitting a Beginning of all things, intelligible ungenerated and invisible, the Beginning which language calls Monad. With this Monad coexists a Power of the same substance, which I call One. These Powers, Unity, Unity, Monad, and One, emitted the rest of the Aeons.”

Marcion and Marcianism

- Mixed Gnosticism with Christianity
- The creator god was evil (i.e. God of the OT)
- The redeemer god was good (i.e. Jesus of the NT)
- Threw out the Old Testament
- Did not recognize most of the New Testament

Gnostic “gospels”

- Writings surfaced during 3rd – 5th century in the names of apostles
- These writings tended to be proverbial in nature (much like the Koran)
- Inconsistent with the messages and stories of the New Testament writings

Formation of the Canon

- Which books belonged in the Bible was not largely debated during the early church.
- The Hebrew Old Testament was received by the church without question.
 - New Testament writings were considered authentic if they were:
 - written by or under the influence of an Apostle
 - consistent with apostolic teaching

Apocrypha

The only books that have been debated within the church were those that belonged to the Greek translation of the Old Testament that did not exist in the original Hebrew version, the Apocrypha, written during the time between the Testaments.

During the early 5th century, there were several doctrinal (“secondary law”)

Irenaeus’ reply:

“There exists a certain total Pre-principle, pre-unknowable, pre-intellectual and pre-provident, which I call God. With this God there coexists a Power which I call Super-unity (super-unity). This God and this Super-unity, being one, emitted without emitting a First visible in all its parts, visible and invisible, which language calls Coexistence. With this Coexistence there is a power of the same substance, which I call Matter. These Powers, God and Super-unity and Coexistence and Matter, emitted the whole multitude of Valentinian divisions Melchior.”

One Valentinian teacher wrote:

“There exists before everything a pre-unintelligible Pre-principle which I call Unicity. With this Unicity there coexists a Power which I call Unity. This Unity and this Unicity, being one, emitted without emitting a Beginning of all things, intelligible unengendered and invisible, the Beginning which language calls Monad. With this Monad coexists a Power of the same substance, which I call One. These Powers, Unicity, Unity, Monad, and One, emitted the rest of the Aeons”

Irenaeus' reply:

There exists a certain royal Pre-principle, pre-unintelligible, pre-insubstantial and pre-prerotund, which I call Gourd. With this Gourd there coexists a Power which I call Supervacuity [super-vacant].

This Gourd and this Supervacuity, being one, emitted without emitting a Fruit visible in all its parts, edible and sweet, which language calls Cucumber. With this Cucumber there is a power of the same substance, which I call Melon. These Powers, Gourd and Supervacuity and Cucumber and Melon, emitted the whole multitude of Valentinus' delirious Melons."

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The Nicene Creed

Trinitarian doctrine defended

The Edict of Milan (313) not only legalized Christianity, but made it the official Roman belief. This Post-Christianized Empire led to a more structured church and venue for dealing with heresy - Councils

Constantine

- The first Christian Emperor
- Determined he was the head of the church together with the bishops
- Called councils to deal with heresies

Arianism (not Aryanism)

Christ was preexistent, but created and of a different substance as the Father (in other words, not God; c.f. Isaiah 9:6, Philippians 2:5-11, Exodus 3:13-14, John 8:58)

- Others overreacted (Appolinarism)
- Arianism originally repudiated at the Council of Nicaea (325 AD) by a young Athanasius
- "Put to rest" at the Council of Constantinople (381 AD) when the "Nicene Creed" was finalized (p. 486 in the Trinity Hymnal)

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I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds; God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God; begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made.

Who, for us men and for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary, and was made man; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate; He suffered and was buried; and the third day He rose again, according to the Scriptures; and ascended into heaven, and sits on the right hand of the Father; and He shall come again, with glory, to judge the quick and the dead; whose kingdom shall have no end.

And I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of Life; who proceeds from the Father and the Son; who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified; who spoke by the prophets.

And I believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. I acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins; and I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.



Pelagianism vs. Augustinianism

5th Century AD

Pelagius' followers promoted the "Pelagian" view:

- No biblical basis for original sin
- All humans have the ability either to choose good or evil, salvation or damnation

The Church's Response

The church rejected this view, largely due to the work of Augustine of Hippo (354-430 AD)

- See John 6:44
- Romans 8:29-30
- Ephesians 1:3-6

Post-Reformation Version

The issue of trying to reconcile God's sovereignty in election with man's responsibility to respond to the Gospel in faith resurfaced during the Reformation and is alive and well today in the debate between Calvinists and Arminians.



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New Questions of Authority

Birth of the Roman Catholic Church

For several centuries, there was a rising tension between Christian leaders in the East (Greek side) and in the West (Latin side).

Hierarchical Leadership

- The "Romanism" of the church after Constantine led to a hierarchical leadership structure
- That form of structure led to the establishment of a pope-like head
- This role took on new political, imperial significance when the Roman emperor no longer had the ability to protect Rome

Center of Leadership

- The two sides begin to split over where, geographically, the leadership should reside
- Rome (West)
 - Constantinople (East)

Differences of Belief

- Iconoclast - The use of icons (images) of apostles, Jesus, or Mary in worship.
- East: Offering veneration to an icon was not seen as idol worship, but aided worshippers.
 - West: Offering veneration to an icon was idol worship and violates the 1st and 2nd Commandments



Byzantine Iconoclasts, 8th Century AD

"filioque"

- "and the Son", a clause added to the Nicene Creed by the Pope.
- The Holy Spirit said to have proceeded from the Father and the Son
 - Meaning, sent by both to accomplish Christ's work through His people
 - Rejected by the East

Authority

- What is the ultimate rule of faith for Christians?
- East: Scripture and Christian tradition
 - West: Scripture and the Pope (believed to be the successor of Peter, Matthew 16:18-19)

1054 Schism

- Pope Leo IX (West) and Michael Cerularius (Patriarch of Constantinople) excommunicated each other in 1054, effectively splitting the church (Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox)

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Byzantine Iconoclasm 9th Century AD

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Authority

What is the infallible rule of faith for God's people?

- East: Scripture and Christian tradition
- West: Scripture and the Pope (believed in a literal succession from Peter: Matthew 16:13-19)

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Towards a Reformation

For several centuries, the role of the “infallible” pope as the authority over the church grew in the West. Scripture was marginalized, being left in Latin translations, only to be read and interpreted by the priests on behalf of the people.

The recovery of Scripture as the only authoritative rule of faith and life did not begin to come about until the 15th and 16th centuries, when the authority of the Roman Catholic Church was challenged.

