

Politics and the early
church theology
religion essay



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Church history following the time of the fourth century is an intermingled chain of conflicts following one another. The main principles of conflict were that of the Trinitarian and Arian conflict that lasted for a major part of the 4th century. Also seen during this century are conflicts between Apollinarius of Laodicea which has begun the Christological controversy this showed dominancy in the upcoming centuries as well. Other controversies of this century include the Origenist, the pneumatomachean, the Donatist, the Antiochene schism, as well as many repercussions for the Church. However, the turning points in church history can be assigned to the Council of Nicea, the Council of Chacedon and the Benedict's rule to bring about change in the church.

The most controversial issues were about doctrinal differences in regards to the nature of Trinity. To be more direct in this point, the issue encompassed intratrinitarian relation between " Father' and " Son". It mostly argued over whether the Son came from the being of the Father, later was in the injection of the Person of the Holy Ghost, as well as the Person of Jesus Christ. The doctrines that collided in regards to the Person of Jesus Christ were if he was in two natures or out of two natures, did he have a human soul or a human mind and human soul, it was also assess that Jesus had neither.

The legalization of Christianity came during the time of Constantine in 313 A. D before though the religion was banned during the time of Ancient Rome. The majority of the Christian teachings were spread by St. Paul who founded a majority of churches in Greece and Asia Minor. There was mass execution of the Christians for their monotheistic beliefs. However, the conversion of the Constantine the great was a turning point of early Christianity. In 313 A.
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D. Constantine and Licinius issued the Edict of Milan which legalized Christian worship.

It was during the time of the 325 A. D. that Constantine had ordered for the gathering of the First Council of Nicaea. The main propose of this proposed council was to bring to light the Arian controversy and find a solution to it. This teaching doctrine is attributed to Arius from Christian presbyter from Alexandria, Egypt. The doctrine's main concern was the relationship between God and the Son of God. Through Arianism asserted that Jesus, the Son of God was a subsidiary entity to the God, the supposed Father. His teachings are thought to be in opposition to mainstream Trinitarian doctrines. During the First Council of Nicea the teachings of Arius were condemned. The council than formulated the Nicene Creed of 325 to attempt to describe the relationship between Father and the Son. Other achievements of the council include that calculation into the date of Easter and proliferation of the canon law.

For the first time in early Church history representatives of numerous bishops of the early Church gathered to agree upon a doctrinal statement. This council also saw the significant role that can be played by a ruling authority, at that time the emperor, to call together the gathering under his authority and then using the power of the state to make the councils orders affected and implemented. However, there were many political powers at work to deem away from the council's orders. A period of conflict had followed after Constantine's time with succession of Arian emperors in the Eastern Empire. This included the succession of Constantius the second and Valens. Other polytheistic powers within the Empire sought to restore pagan

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religion through the office of the emperor; examples of this can be seen in Arbogast and Julian the Apostate.

The Council of Chalcedon also had a significant influence on church history and was a turning point during early church history. The Eutychian controversy was played a major in calling for the council. The council was called upon by Emperor Marcian with the approval of Pope Leo the Great. The Council of Chalcedon issued a decree that issued a notion of a single nature to Jesus Christ and insisted on the completeness of both the natures of person and hypostasis. It also issued disciplinary canons that would govern the Church administration and its authority.

The most significant result that came immediately after this council was a major schism. Many bishops in the council were uneasy about the language used in Pope Leo's Tome which asserted the acceptance of two natures that were prominent to Nestorianism. There were many churches that rejected the Chalcedon in order to favor Ephesus since he advocated miaphysitism, as a result those churches broke from the rest of the Church to form separate divisions. The most prominent among the broken churches were than of the Church of Alexandria.