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Th 601 History of Christian Thought I

Research Proposal

Topic: Heresy? Says who?

Research Question:

Heresy in its simplest definition is an adherence to a religious opinion contrary to church dogma or a deviation from a dominant theory opinion or practice. Often those who are placed in such a category are referred to as having been “accused of heresy” or “considered a heretic.” Both of those phrases are passive not definitive or conclusive. This is true because all of what is believed, whether it be widely believed or only remotely believed and accepted is an opinion of thought from a un-exhaustive study from limited minds. Therefore, who or what carries the authority to determine what is heresy or who is a heretic?

Thesis Statement:

In Christendom there is but one authority that can determine whether a doctrine is heresy or not. That onus lies within the Holy Writ of God’s Word properly interpreted.

Within my research I will explore and detail various heresies from the early church and also from the modern church. I will show how they were derived and from whom. Then, I will share why such a thought was considered heretical. I will also discuss how some of these heresies have affected how Christians view God and the world around them. Lastly, I will seek to prove why the Word of God should be the measuring device to determine what things are heresy and what things are not.

Proposed Research Outline:

I. The essence of heresy

A. Definition of heresy

B. Origin of heresy

II. History of the various heresies against Christian thought

A. Judaizing Christianity

B. Gnosticism

C. Marcion

D. Montanism

E. Monarchianism

1. Dynamic Monarchianism

2. Modalistic Monarchianism

F. Cerinthus

G. Ebionism

III. God's Word is the determining factor to deem a doctrine as heretical

A. Proof the Bible is the authority

B. The importance of protecting Christian thought against heresy

Suggested Bibliography:

- "Heresy." merriam-webster.com. Accessed September 8, 2017. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/heresy>.
- Gonzalez Jr., Justo. "Finding the Truth." christianhistoryinstitute.org. (accessed 1984). <https://www.christianhistoryinstitute.org/magazine/article/finding-the-truth/>.
- Wilson, Marvin R. "Our Father Abraham: Jewish Roots of the Christian Faith." books.google.com. <https://books.google.com/booksid=RPyAG2cduiAC&pg=PA109&dq=marcionism&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKewiq3MGh55bWAhXozFQKHT2nCwoQ6AEIjAA#v=onepage&q=monarchism&f=false>.

- The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Montanism>. (November 27, 2007)