

12/20/2021

HIS 312 History of Christianity

Final Review

Shealaine Scott

This course has been refreshing enlightening and sometimes challenging to my faith. Out of the two text books I liked Brue L. Shelley's "Church History" in Plain Language 5th Edition. As we started our course in the first lesson, we learned of how the birth of what we called the "Church" really began and how the faith of Jesus Christ, those early believers produced expansion not only in their local communities but globally. It started out with just 120 soon blossomed to 3000 as the Lord was daily adding to them. This grow sparked a lot of attention from the Jewish religious leaders of their day.

Those leaders who did not accept the teachings of Jesus Christ soon started persecuting the Apostles and followers of Jesus for their faith. It was a battle between Christianity and Judaism Martyrdom was introduced as Stephen who preached the truth to his death was actually the first Martyr of Christianity. It's amazing that one of the persecutors at that time was Saul of Tarsus, a Pharisee witness and partook in the killing of Stephen, later became a believer in Jesus Christ. As Christianity grew so did the wrath of the opposers of the faith.

Pretty soon there were roman emperors who felt threaten by the Christianity movement and they began to persecute and martyr Christians. Bishop Polycarp of Smyrna was one also in 155AD. The term "apologist" is one who defends his or her faith. Justin the Martyr was an apologist 150-155. The faith grew because of the spread of this "good news". Word of mouth was one the ways of spreading the gospel. There were early writings of Christian leaders was considered as "Didache", the Apostles' writings, letters from Roman Bishop Clement and Ignatius Bishop of Antioch.

A fascinating fact was, papyrus leaves were glued together to form a "scroll", this occurs about 200AD with those manuscripts' writings. Sheep and calves' skins were used as scrolls. There were writings on the walls of tombs or "arolia" The early church used different symbols to communicate: the fish, dove with branch, the anchor. They met in houses and women participated in service of leadership.

In chapter 3 of Shelly's book, we studied the Apostles' Creed and the meaning of the word "catholic" meaning "universal". I must say that course revealed the catholic doctrine was apart of Christianity almost from the beginning. Personally, I don't agree with the denomination of Catholicism today, due to some of their practices are not biblically based. Their view of Mary the mother of Jesus, some their teachings embrace her on the same level as God the Father, Jesus and the Holy Ghost etc.

Baptism and the Eucharist (communion) was a good study, it was the outward display or visual sign of the inward and "invisible grace". These were two regular practices of Christianity. Women were serving during these events as deacons in the "urban home churches".

We examined several "devotional writings" I appreciate the "Lectio Divina" in short to listen, reflect integrate and receive. This method has been helpful in my personal quiet time. Another devotional writing, I enjoyed was an excerpt from Mother Theresa as she pours out her soul desiring her life to be a beautiful fragrance before God. That's my desire also. Dietrich Bonhoeffer's "Costly Grace" was good also. He admonishes us not to take God's grace for granted. Jesus paid an extremely high price for my salvation; therefore, I don't have the right to use 89"greasy grace" What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live. any longer therein? Roman 6:1-2. Bonhoeffer helped us understand the Grace of God is priceless.

Well moving on to the period of the Reformers 1648-1789. Shelley calls it the "Evangelical Awakening", this movement birthed several great trailblazers for evangelists. John Wesley wanted to share his faith and relationship in Christ and his statues. He really wanted to teach others the methods of right living

such as prayer, fasting, self-discipline etc. John Wesley was one of them who broke away from the Anglican church and its doctrine. He was sent as a missionary to Savannah GA. He was miraculously saved from a rectory fire. He's known as the brand plucked out of the fire. Overall, this has been an incredible study in of Christianity