

TH 605 - 5-3-1 – Gonzalez, Ch 2

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Questions:

1. Which Roman emperor converted to Christianity so that the persecuted church became the tolerated church?
2. During the persecution, the heroic expression of faith was martyrdom. But in the time after, what was seen as the alternate heroic expression of faith?
3. What did the Donatists do to defend their cause?
4. What did Athanasius of Alexandria contribute during the Council of Nicaea?
5. At what council did Arianism definitively get condemned?

Answers:

1. Emperor Constantine
2. Asceticism – they devoted themselves to a life of renunciation and contemplation.
3. The Donatist, the “Circumcellion,” became a militant group that did not hesitate to defend its cause by employing arms.
4. Probably his most significant contribution was in managing to create an understanding among those who held the Nicene formula (“*homoousios*,” of the same substance) and those who preferred a different formula (“*homoiousios*,” of a similar substance) to reject Arianism, which Nicaea had condemned.
5. The Second Ecumenical Council (Constantinople, 381).

Terms:

1. Cenobitic: from the Greek roots meaning “life in common.”
2. Arianism: a heretical doctrine that the Word who became incarnate in Jesus, although pre-existing before the rest of creation, was not “God of very God” but was the first of all creatures.
3. First Ecumenical Council: Constantine called a meeting of all Christian bishops in Nicaea, condemned Arianism, and issued the Nicene Creed.

Summary:

The Christian empire began with the conversion of Emperor Constantine, who changed the status of the persecuted church to the tolerated church and eventually to the official religion. It brought about members of the aristocracy to join the church, and Christian worship became more formal in part to imitate the usage of the court. Some responded with monastic living and created a new form of monasticism that formed communities to share resources and teachings. Some of the most outstanding leaders were produced who helped to battle the heresy of Arianism and solidify the trinitarian doctrine.