

Church History

Timeline By Century

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2nd Century

The Lord has not returned as soon as expected, so organization is needed to continue the ministry, resist persecution, oppose heretical teachings, and spread the word. Thus the office and role of the bishop becomes stronger.

- While persecution continues intermittently from without, heresies pose major dangers from within and must be answered. Heresies include:

GNOSTICISM -- A kind of New Age movement that claimed special knowledge.

MARCIONISM -- An attempt to reduce the Scriptures--both the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures -- to a few select books

MONTANISM -- A charismatic movement that got carried away with new revelations, prophecies, and judgmental attitudes toward other Christians.

- Apologists, or explainers of the faith, emerge to combat heresy and answer the church's opponents. Key apologists include Irenaeus and Justin Martyr.

- The churches are not legal and have no public forum or church buildings. Local persecution can break out at any time. A profound

public witness emerges as Christians are put to death because they will not deny the faith at any cost. Examples: Martyrdom of 84-year-old bishop Polycarp (AD 155) and a whole group mercilessly tortured at Lyons in AD 177.

- The strongest centers of the Church are Asia Minor and North Africa. Rome is also a center of prestige.
- The church continues its amazing spread reaching all classes, particularly the lower. Callistus--a former slave--actually becomes bishop of Rome and makes claims for special importance of the Roman bishop.