

Trouble In The Kingdom: Church and State in the Fourth Century

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What should be the proper relationship between organized religion and the state? If you would have asked a Greek in the second century BC or a Roman in the first century AD that question, they would undoubtedly have given you similar quizzical stares. This was not a question that occurred in ancient times. In the polytheistic worldview of antiquity, all citizens would call upon their gods to help their city or nation. Their rulers would encourage such private petitions, and public officials would ensure that there were suitably frequent and grandiose public rites of sacrifice and worship to all of the gods who might affect local events.

Occasionally the state was involved in regulating religious activities. Jews living outside Palestine would petition to absent themselves from public pagan ceremonies and to send offerings back to the Temple in Jerusalem. Tales of frenzied women conducting nocturnal bacchanalian rites in the forests led the Senate to outlaw such activities in Italy in 186 BC. Religious sacrilege might lead to civil sanctions, as when Alcibiades was involved in the desecration of the Athenian Herms and thus lost his generalship of the Athenian army in 415 BC. Astrologers, Jews, radical philosophers, devotees of extremist eastern cults -- all these were at various times banished from Rome when they were seen as threats to public order.

However, there was little chance of religion dominating a state. First of all, few ancient religions were centralized and thus they didn't have the opportunity to formulate an agenda or to impose it upon a government, at least one the size of Rome's. Secondly, Graeco-Roman religions usually didn't have professional priesthoods and often not even an identifiable body of devotees. Without the leadership of the former and sufficient political power of the latter, they seldom posed a serious political threat. Finally, few ancient religions had an organized and coherent body of dogma to proclaim and defend. Thus, when tensions with governments arose, the religions were generally malleable enough to accommodate themselves to the government. With religions unable to threaten governments, and with governments who had little need to involve themselves in religion, the church-state question seldom arose.

The coming of Christianity altered all this. Even then, for two and a half centuries the church was small enough to be ignored and/or strong-armed as the government saw fit. But by 300 the situation had changed forever. The fourth century would see Christianity becoming first a recognized religion, then a favored religion, and finally the only sanctioned religion of the Empire. During that period the church would be treated by the state as an ally, and yet come to threaten an emperor with excommunication. In short, the fourth century was a one-act rendition of the sixteen hundred years that have followed, a period during which tensions between church and state have routinely caused social and political upheaval. Thus, the period we will study in the coming minutes provides a cameo of the entire problem.

But, we also wish to ask several other important questions. What kind of theology of church-state relations developed during this period? Was it consciously or unconsciously developed? Did the church and the government clearly see the issues and seek to develop guidelines on those burning questions that have still not been totally resolved in our day?

We have an unusually full picture of the fourth-century due to a wealth of surviving sources. While the only extant secular history of the period, the work of Ammianus Marcellinus, survives only in part, the state's actions are well documented in the Theodosian Code, a body of mainly fourth-century laws which was compiled in 438, and, to a lesser extent, in the Code of Justinian, a compilation of AD 538. Some additional legislation has been preserved in the works of Eusebius of Caesarea, especially his *Church History and Life of Constantine*. These accounts result in a glimpse into fourth-century life that is equaled in its detail only by the

knowledge of life in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt provided by the papyri.¹ Eusebius' imitators and continuators, the fifth-century historians Socrates, Sozomen, Gelasius, and the sixth-century historian Epiphanius, as well as the church father Athanasius whose life spanned most of the century, all provide important information on the period. We should also mention the letters of the Emperor Julian, the anonymous collection of documents called the *Collectio Avellana*, and a number of inscriptions and papyrological documents, which fill in important gaps in our information. When the other church fathers, especially Ambrose, are added to the above, we have the material to reconstruct, often in great detail, the development of church-state relations in its first years of crisis.

However, we must, still be cautious of assuming that we can recapture the whole picture. As extensive as our data is, it is still but a selective part of the picture; mostly from the viewpoint of orthodox Christians. And while we cannot usefully argue from the material that we no longer possess, we should remember that the material that was preserved was not done so randomly or totally by accident; and, therefore, it may of itself distort the picture somewhat.

The picture of fourth century church-state relations we will construct is a mosaic rather than a stained-glass window. It will be assembled from many small pieces of information and only a few larger incidents will make major contributions. Of necessity this will require some patience and attention on the part of the listener, and it may help if I make clear how I will proceed. Following this introduction we will consider in chronological order the five emperors or groups of emperors that span the majority of the century. With each we will point out the emperors' religious leanings, and then follow with a consideration of three main types of events and legislation from that period: 1) those involving Christianity and Christian clergy; 2) laws that involved paganism, Judaism and heretical sects; and 3) events and edicts which show imperial involvement in internal church matters. In this way I hope to demonstrate the progressive pattern of imperial thought and action vis-a-vis the church. This will be followed by a look at how Christians viewed these same developments, and illustrate that situation with a few key historical vignettes. We will then be in a position to sum up our findings.

I. CONSTANTINE -- THE SAINT (308-337)

Between Paul and Luther, no one changed the face of Christianity more than the Emperor Constantine. He had the unique distinction of being deified by his pagan contemporaries and being made a saint by his Christian subjects (he is still called St. Constantine ἰσαποστόλοις [equal to the apostles] in the Greek church). The progress of his own faith is still a matter of heated debate. One historian has recently theorized that the persecutions at the end of the third century were instituted in order to rein in the political support for the young Christian and potential emperor, Constantine.² And indeed, his actions favoring the church started immediately upon his succession to the purple. Yet his coins featured the sun god, Sol Invictus, for another decade, and he continued to allow divination "in the public interest" (CT 16.10.1): If Eusebius quotes him accurately, he saw Christianity as a religion that would guarantee prosperity for himself and his subjects; "Those who faithfully discharge God's holy laws... are rewarded with abundant blessings" (VC 2.24). His use of the *labarum* (the legionary standards with the chi-rho design) as a talisman in battle indicates that a good measure of superstition was mingled with the new wine of his faith (VC 2.4 ff.). Yet, all this aside, his devotion to Christianity cannot be questioned.

¹ I give but one example of a glimpse of fourth-century life provided by the Theodosian Code, a side of life that otherwise would have barely been known to us. A law of March 12, 370, preserved in CT 14.9.1, deals with an aspect of life that resonates with readers yet today. In it the authorities at Rome and Constantinople are told to keep a wary eye on the behavior of the young adults coming to the big city claiming to be students. They are to have their papers checked, to have their course of study recorded, and even their lodgings monitored so that they might "avoid a disgraceful and scandalous reputation and bad associations Nor shall the students attend shows too frequently nor commonly take part in unseemly carousals" If they do, they should be "publicly flogged, immediately put on board a boat, expelled from the city, and returned home." Who would have guessed?

² T. D. Barnes in a lecture at the University of Michigan a few years ago, and already hinted at in his *Constantine and Eusebius*.

In 303, on the Roman festival of the *Terminalia*, Emperors Galerius and Diocletian inaugurated the last major attempt to terminate Christianity by instituting the most savage and universal of all persecutions. In 311, Galerius admitted defeat with an edict that said “Christians may exist again and may arrange their own meetings, as long as they do nothing contrary to public order” (Eus. HE 8.17.3; Lact. de mort. 24). While Maximinus II (Daia) continued the old policy of persecution for two more years, Constantine had ended the persecution in his domains already upon his accession in 306 (Lact. de mort. 24.9), and by early 313 he was ordering property returned to the church of North Africa (Eus. HE 10.5.15). On June 13, 313 an edict of Licinius, to which Constantine’s name was appended, was issued allowing the Christians freedom of worship “in order that whatever divinity exists in its celestial abode, it can be placated and made propitious towards us” (Eus. HE 10.5.2-14, Lact. de mort. 48).

While there is still some disagreement about which emperor declared Christianity legal in which area and at what time, it was Constantine who became the first clear champion of Christianity. A number of acts issued in 313-314 grant favors to the church in North Africa, the bread basket of Rome, an area the new emperor viewed as critical in establishing his power base. The clergy there were exempted from public service, and the church was given 3,000 *fołlij* of gold (Eus. HE 10.6-7), while the Donatists there were given the opportunity to present their grievances in several hearings ordered by the emperor (op. cit. 10.5.18-24), and eventually in front of the emperor himself (Optatus, adv. Don. 210-211).

During the following six years Constantine enacted sweeping legislation favoring the church at large: clergy were exempted from public office or serving as tax collectors (CT 16.2.11-2), as well as being exempt from tradesmen’s and other commercial taxes and from the provision of public transport (CT 16.22.10); citizens who remained celibate or had no children were no longer punished (clearly a concession to the growing ascetic tendency among Christians, CT 8.16.1); when involved in private legal disputes, Christians could choose to be judged by bishops rather than secular courts (CT 1.27.1); the church was allowed to inherit legacies (CT 16.2.4); Sunday, the “venerable day of the sun,” was made an official day of rest (CJ 3.12.2); manumissions performed in churches were considered official (CJ 1.13.1); Christians were exempted from taking part in sacrifices, lustrations, and other traditional public rites (CT 16.2.5).

In 324, after the defeat of Licinius who had briefly renewed the persecution, Constantine directed his governors to assist in restoring confiscated estates and property and in restoring and enlarging church buildings (Eus. VC 2.24-46). He himself donated the Lateran palace in Rome to the church and paid for the best materials to build the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem (Eus. VC 3.30-32), as well as building the first basilica on the Vatican hill, and giving enormous amounts of his own wealth and land to build, outfit and maintain churches (LP Silvester).

However, it should be noted that the new favors granted Christians did not necessarily mean that the edict of 313 granting freedom of assembly and worship “to the Christians and to all others” was taking root. Indeed these favors soon led to the infringement of the religious freedom of others. Already in 315, a law forbade Christian conversion to Judaism (CT 16.8.1). In 321, the army was commanded to pray each Sunday to “the only God ...as king... [and] as ally” (Eus. VC 4.19). Soon after, Constantine prohibited private assembly of various Christian splinter groups -- the Novatians, Valentinians, Gnostics, Marcionites, Samosatans, and Montanists (Eus. VC 3.64-5).

The emperor’s actions must be seen, therefore, not merely as the fruit of his new faith, nor as a reflection of an inner commitment to the ideal of religious freedom, but rather as a pragmatic plan to strengthen his own hold on the empire and to strengthen the empire against the ever-increasing pressures from without. The God of the Christians was the most powerful God and hence needed to be honored by all. As he says in a letter in which he tries to patch up the differences between the bishop of Alexandria and an upstart theologian named Arius, his goal is to restore “the mental disposition of all peoples into a single structure of a settled state on the question of the deity, and secondly to restore and to unite the body of the whole world.” (Eus. VC 2.64-72). Thus, it was only a matter of time before Constantine would find this goal leading him to interfere in internal church matters. It was he who called the bishops to assemble at Nicaea for the famous council of 325. He enforced the council’s decisions by exiling Arius and Eusebius of Nicomedia and by sending letters commanding obedience to the

council's decision on the matter of the date of Easter. Later he recalled those he exiled, ordering them to be readmitted to their sees (Socr. HE 1.25, Gelasius HE 3.15.1-5), and he pressured the church of Antioch not to appoint Eusebius of Caesarea as their bishop (Eus. VC 3.60-62). Still later he sent out rescripts condemning Arius and his followers (Gelasius HE 3.19) and ordering their books to be burned (Socr. HE 1.9), and, afterwards, he threatened to depose and exile Athanasius (Athanas. Apol. adv. Ar. 59). It can also be seen that his social and economic policy at times interfered with and outweighed his religious policy. Several enactments prohibited wealthy citizens (*curiales*) from entering the clergy, since they were needed to "sustain the necessary expenses of this world" (CT 16.2.6).³

Constantine undoubtedly viewed himself as a divine agent, charged with re-establishing the empire on a solid footing and protecting and furthering the church. Upon his famous arch in Rome, he refers to himself as *fundator quietis*, "establisher of peace" (ILS 694). Once, when addressing a group of bishops, he told them, "You are bishops whose jurisdiction is inside the church; I also am a bishop, ordained by God, to oversee whatever is outside the church" (*ἐπισκοποι τῆς ἐκκλησίας*, Eus. VC 4.24). In those heady days of new-found freedom, few Christians could have imagined that having a Christian on the throne could become a danger to them also. And yet if the supreme earthly ruler could support their claims, and reject those of the heretics and pagans, his successor might well turn the tables. The church was now out in the open, and that not only gave it room to grow but also made it a much more visible target for its enemies -- and its friends.

II. CONSTANTIUS II -- THE TYRANT (337-361)

When, upon Constantine's death, rule of the empire was split among his three sons (Constans, Constantine II and Constantius II), there was no noticeable change in policy. The laws of the succeeding dozen years show a continued favoring of Christianity: Jews were prohibited from purchasing Christians as slaves (CT 16.9.2); young and poor sons of clergy were exempted from curial duties (CT 16.2.11); and clergy exemptions from taxation and special levies were confirmed and expanded (CT 16.2.8 and 9). The only truly novel legislation was a law of 341 forbidding pagan sacrifice and an even broader act of 346 closing all pagan temples to worship and sacrifice, except for those outside city walls which served as centers of civic amusement (CT 16.10.2-4). This, together with the legislation concerning Jews purchasing slaves, indicates a continued drift towards limiting the religious freedom of pagans and other non-Christians. At the same time, the imperial interference in church matters also becomes more steady, as evidenced in Athanasius' recall, his second expulsion, and his second recall, all carried out by royal command. Upon his second return (AD 346), Emperor Constantius wrote to the people of Alexandria announcing Athanasius' return, threatening government action against any further unrest in the city, and ordering his resumption of episcopal duties and the restoration of all his previous privileges (Athanas. Apol. adv. Ar. 54-56).

The situation did not appear to change dramatically in 350 when, shortly after Constans was killed by a usurper, Constantius II became sole ruler (Constantine II had been eliminated already in 340). During the decade when he ruled the entire empire, Constantius continued to pass legislation favoring the church: some property owned by clergy was exempted from taxation (CT 16.2.10); capital punishment was ordered for those who violated nuns and widows in the church (CT 9.25.1); clergy were to be tried by their own peers (CT 16.2.12); all property owned by the church was made tax exempt (CT 11.1.1); and monks were exempted from state obligations (CT 16.2.16). Legislation against paganism and Judaism also continued to become more restrictive: Christians converting to paganism would lose their property (CT 16.8.7); nocturnal sacrifices (which had been reinstated by the usurper Magnentius) were outlawed again (CT 16.10.5); pagan worship and the worship of graven images were made capital offenses (CT 16.10.6), as well as consulting soothsayers (*haruspex*), prophets (*hariolus*), and, most importantly, mathematicians (CT 9.16.4); freemen who converted to

³ It should be noted that Christian decurions were not singled out for harsh treatment. Already for a century, emperors had been trying to shore up the sagging economy by requiring the wealthy to undertake more and more local economic responsibilities, and a plethora of laws sought to make it difficult for them to dodge such responsibilities. This and succeeding laws merely extended those efforts to wealthy Christians.

Judaism lost their property (CT 16.8.7); torture was decreed for diviners or magicians discovered in the imperial service (CT 9.16.6).

However, when it comes to restriction of non-orthodox Christian sects, a major shift can be seen, for after achieving sole rule, Constantius became convinced that the neo-Arian party represented the true church. Most ancient writers tie his conversion to the battle of Mursa in 351 when the local bishop Valens is said to have predicted Constantius' victory over the usurper Magnentius. Valens, an ardent Arian, then became Constantius' father confessor and spiritual adviser. The effect was seen very quickly. By 355 Constantius had cowed most of the bishops in the West into signing an Arian creed, and then proceeded to exile the recalcitrant few who refused, including the bishops of Vercelli, Milan, and Rome itself. He is said to have told them, "Whatever I will, let that be considered a canon [i. e., church law] Either you obey or you will be exiled" (Athan., Hist. Ar. 33). He then proceeded to appoint his own candidates to fill the vacancies. By early 356, he had driven Athanasius into hiding as well, and ordered the Christians of Alexandria to denounce him (Athan., Apol. ad. Const. 30). In 359 he ordered the ecumenical council which he had assembled at Ariminum to come up with an acceptably Arian creed, and told them they had to remain there until they succeeded (Athan. de synod. SS). The Nicene doctrine of the trinity, which we know as the orthodox doctrine, seemed on the brink of extinction.

As orthodox Christians we are appalled at the developments under Constantius. Athanasius, eventually exiled five times, became a patron saint to us, while Constantius has been vilified. The same black-and-white reading is found in most surviving fourth-century sources. Constantine had the venerable and orthodox Hosius of Cordova as his spiritual adviser; Constantius had the wily Arian Valens as his. The fact is that most orthodox Christians view Constantine as hero and Constantius as devil because the father was on our side and the son was not! Both oppressed Christian sects; both restricted the rights of pagans; both exiled our friend Athanasius. Both were baptized shortly before their deaths by Arian bishops! Their policies were similar, although Constantius' was more severe. The writing had been on the wall in Constantine's time, only now it was turned against the orthodox church. As for the relationship between church and state, Constantius had merely advanced a few big steps in the direction Constantine had already been heading.

III. JULIAN -- THE APOSTATE (361-363)

The 21 months of Julian's reign have gone down in Christian history as paganism's last hurrah, as a brief throwback to unenlightened pre-Christian times, and as one last period of Christian martyrdom in late antiquity. The name "apostate" has remained with him across the centuries. And while it is an accurate appellation, since he was baptized at a young age and did openly and permanently abandon all Christian faith, it is usually given him for his reputation as being anti-Christian. The pagans of his day saw him as a breath of fresh air. An impartial observer early in his reign might have seen him as a champion of religious freedom. The many recent books and studies on Julian have failed to reach consensus on his policies and motivations.

Within weeks after Constantius' death, Julian decreed that the pagan temples be reopened and sacrifices resumed (Amm. Marc. Hist. 22.5.2), and he held public sacrifices to the gods with his army (Jul. Ep. 8). He also proclaimed religious toleration, including amnesty for "all who had been banished in any way whatever by the blessed Constantius on account of the Galileans' madness" (Jul. Ep. 1 S). His reference to the "Galileans' madness" makes it perfectly clear that he was not religiously neutral. Christian writers interpreted this as an attempt to encourage rivalries within the church and hence undermine it (Soz. HE 5.5). We do know that he passed specific legislation restoring some churches to Donatists in North Africa (Aug. cont. lift. Pet. 2.97.224), to Novatians in Cyzicus (Socr. HE 3.11), and that he criticized Arians who were fighting with Valentinians in Edessa (Jul. Ep. 40). As far as non-Christians were concerned, Julian sought to reclaim former pagan temple property for the municipalities (CT 10.3.1), promised freedom of worship to Jews (Jul. Ep. 51) and actually began implementing a plan to rebuild their temple in Jerusalem, probably in part to thwart Christian prophecy.

However; he should not be claimed as an advocate of religious freedom. He outlawed private schools and instituted teacher certification (CT 13.3.5) -- clear attempts at reducing the influence of Christian teachers

on the young (cf. Jul. Ep. 36). Several laws also forced decurions who had become clergy to be “recalled” from the ministry to public life, and those that harbored such men to be punished (CT 12.1.50 and 13.1.4, Jul. Ep. 39). He also strong-armed the church when necessary, as his interference in Alexandria illustrates. When George, one of the interim Arian bishops, was killed by an angry mob in Alexandria about the time of Julian’s accession, the emperor wrote the city a letter to express his displeasure in “the mildest of medicines -- exhortation and words.” Yet he promised the next time they would suffer his full wrath (Jul. Ep. 21). When Athanasius had been reinstated as bishop there, Julian wrote the church that although his legislation allowed for Athanasius’ return to the city, it did not mean he should become bishop again, and so he commanded Athanasius to leave the city the day he received Julian’s letter (Jul. Ep. 24). Later he threatened the prefect with a stiff fine if Athanasius was not out of Alexandria by December, and he rejected the people’s plea to allow Athanasius to stay (Jul. Ep. 46-47). It might be argued that Julian’s involvement in the Alexandrian church was not so much a matter of church interference as it was a consistent following of the imperial principal that public order always came before religious freedom, a follow-up on his earlier threat. Our sources do not indicate there was unrest in Alexandria during Julian’s reign because of Athanasius’ presence, but there may well have been. Here is one place that the sources, almost entirely pro-Athanasian, might well lead us astray.

There are also the accusations of persecution against Christians which must be addressed. Socrates tells how Christians were not appointed to office at Julian’s court or made governors and that he “induced many Christians to sacrifice” (HE 3.13). It was undoubtedly true that Julian did favor pagans in his appointments, much as Constantius had favored Christians. And there were probably Christians who backslid into pagan practices in order to obtain such offices. These, however, are rather mild accusations. The only Christian martyrs Socrates lists are three men in Phrygia who were executed by the governor for vandalizing a restored pagan temple (HE 3.15), an act which again might be seen as jeopardizing public order if it went unpunished. Sozomen, telling of three Christians who were lynched by a mob in Gaza, blames Julian for not punishing the act, yet notes that the governor was removed from office and held accountable (HE 5.9). The same historian tells of virgins being violated and killed in Syria and adds a few more martyr stories from Phrygia (HE 5.10-11). Yet, in the end Sozomen has to admit that Julian “shed less blood than preceding persecutors of the Church,” though, he says, he made up for it in other respects (HE 5.5). It is also true that he was allowing more violence as his reign progressed.

Julian clearly wished to re-establish a pagan state, and his policies were directed to that end, even if his long-range plans are difficult to discern due to the brevity of his reign. Christianity had no place in his vision of the empire, and if the Persian campaign in which he died had succeeded, his anti-Christian policies would undoubtedly have intensified upon his return. His short-term record on religious rights is no worse than those of Constantine and Constantius: in general, pagans, Jews and all brands of Christians had a good deal of freedom of worship during most of Julian’s reign. The condemnations on the surface of Christian texts of the period were seeking to read his heart and his plans. However, one thing is clear. The brief reversion to a pagan emperor did not seriously threaten the church’s existence, and Julian’s attempts to revive paganism seemed already to be fizzling by the time of his death. The fact was that any late fourth-century ruler who wished to keep the purple and garner enough loyalty to keep Rome’s enemies at bay would have to allow a good measure of freedom of worship, at least to Christianity which was now becoming the predominant religion of the empire.

IV. VALENTINIAN I AND VALENS

The political and military stability of the empire was gradually deteriorating during the fourth century. Julian died while trying to keep the Persians in the East at bay. Gothic incursions along the Danube and German unrest along the Rhine became ever more common. Just as with the Turks at the time of the Reformation, so in the fourth century also, the “barbarians at the gates” caused the rulers to put an ever greater value on religious peace and unity at home. This can be seen in the brief half-year reign of Julian’s successor, Jovian. He made a quick peace with Persia, giving up the five provinces east of the Tigris. He then reinstated Christianity as the empire’s religion, while seeking an end to discord by encouraging toleration towards pagans, an attitude for

which the pagan orator Themistius eulogized him (Or. 5.67 and 7). Yet one of his few legal enactments, issued posthumously, made it clear that this did not indicate a lesser commitment to Christianity. In it, he declared it a capital offense even to propose marriage to nuns and widows who had dedicated themselves to the church (CT 9.25.2). If he had lived longer, Jovian would probably have continued the practice of his predecessors by interfering in church matters whenever he deemed it necessary. While he did recall Athanasius and refuse the petitions of some Arians who wished to expel the bishop yet again, the exchange with the suppliants makes it clear that he based his non-interference upon the fact that, “when I had investigated thoroughly, I discovered that he [Athanasius] thinks rightly, is orthodox, and teaches rightly” (Athan, Ep. 56). An orthodox emperor was again on the throne, and the orthodox would again have the emperor’s support.

After Jovian’s death, the army proclaimed the experienced general Valentinian as emperor. A month later, he appointed his brother Valens as Augustus of the East, while he retained the West for himself. They were both committed Christians who had been retained in the military by Julian despite their refusal to take part in pagan sacrifices (Soc. HE 4.1) During their decade or so of rule, Valentinian showed himself a supporter of Nicene Christianity; but Valens would soon be baptized by the bishop of Constantinople, an Arian, and as time progressed he fell in line more and more with the substantial Arian party in the eastern empire. The legislation of the brothers continued the policies established by the Constantinian family. First of all, paganism was to be punished: participants in nocturnal sacrifices, prayers, and magic were to be executed (CT 9.16.7) as well as those teaching and practicing astrology (CT 9.16.8). The traditional practice of the public reading of entrails (*haruspicina*) was still to be allowed, though it must have been difficult since animal sacrifice was forbidden (CT 9.16.9). And all the religious laws of Julian were nullified (a law in which we have the earliest known use of the Latin term *paganus* to refer to the traditional Graeco-Roman religion, CT 16.2.18).

Favors towards Christians, and clergy in particular, continued to be added to the books as well: no Christian could be sentenced to the arena (CT 9.40.8); Christians could not be forced to be caretakers of pagan temples (CT 16.1.1); Christians could not be arraigned by tax-collectors on Sunday (CT 8.8.1); women devoted to the church were made tax exempt (CT 13.10.6); dying actors who were received into the church by baptism could not be forced back to the stage if they recovered (CT 15.7.1); bishops were given authority to judge all ecclesiastical cases except those involving criminal acts (CT 16.2.23); and the mid-level clergy -- priests, deacons, subdeacons, exorcists, lectors and porters -- were exempted from public service (CT 16.2.24).

Perhaps because of the two emperors’ differing religious views, only a few new laws against heretical sects were added to the old ones, including one that stated that no sects could meet within the 20th milestone from Rome (Col. Av. 8-9), another that prohibited Manichaeans and declared their property forfeit (CT 16.5.3), and a third which ordered the removal of bishops (such as the Donatists) who rebaptized their adherents (CT 16.6.1). The anti-Donatist laws were increased in the West when Gratian, the son of Valentinian, who had been elevated as a third Augustus already in 367, took over the West totally upon his father’s death in 375: churches were to be confiscated (CT 16.5.4) and rebaptizing was again forbidden (CT 16.6.2).

However, as we have consistently seen with earlier emperors, fiscal policy and public order were put above favors to the church: clergy who engaged in trades were liable to tax (CT 13.1.5);⁴ even wealthy plebians were now barred from the clergy (CT 16.2.17); decurions who entered the clergy must have a relative take over their civic duties or else donate their property to their municipality (CT 12.1.59); the food supply of Rome had to remain stable, and therefore legislation was passed to keep bakers from leaving their occupation, including a prohibition against their becoming clergy (CT 14.3.11); a specific bishop was defrocked and fined heavily for making an improper court appeal (CT 11.36.20); authorities were to be on the lookout for “idlers” trying to escape their civic duties by pretending to be monks (CT 12.1.63); widows and wards, especially at Rome, could not give bequests to spiritual advisors, a law later expanded to include all seeking of bequests (CT 16.2.20,22).

There was also a series of laws which gave evidence of the Christianity of the rulers. Easter, which, the emperors said, “we celebrate in the depths of our hearts,” was made the occasion for an annual release of all

⁴ 80 years later, the compilers of the Theodosian Code changed the meaning of this law entirely in their explanation, saying it meant that merchants must be charitable to Christian beggars.

prisoners, except those being held for treason, sorcery, adultery, rape or murder, an enactment repeated in the next twenty years four times with minor changes (CT 9.38.3, 4, 6, 7, 8). Also, infanticide was made a capital offense (CT 9.14.1).

The brothers began by trying to stay out of church affairs as much as possible. Shortly after his accession, Valentinian had told a group of bishops who wished him to call a council, “It is not right for me to interfere with such matters; the priests ...should convene themselves wherever they wish” (Soz. HE 6.7). However, when there was a dispute over the election of a new bishop for Rome, several imperial pronouncements confirmed the election of Damasus and announced the exile from Rome of the rival claimant Ursinus and his followers (Col. Au S, 6, 11, 12). However, by the mid-370s Valens was openly supporting the Arians to such an extent that Valentinian, in the name of all 3 emperors, issued an edict to the churches of Asia and Phrygia commanding them to accept the consubstantiality of the trinity and not persecute the Nicene Christians in their midst (Cas. HE 7.9.1-11).

V. GRATIAN, VALENTINIAN II, THEODOSIUS I, ARCADIUS AND HONORIUS

Valentinian died in 376, and Valens died two years later. By 379 the empire was ruled in the West by Gratian and his half-brother Valentinian II, and in the East by Theodosius I. Especially after 378, when he came under the influence of Ambrose of Milan, this more aggressive anti-Arian and anti-heretic policy was continued by Gratian, the first emperor to renounce the title *pontifex maximus* (Zos. HN 4.36.5). Heretics were now to be kept 100 miles from Rome (Col. Av. 13); all heresies were declared forbidden “by both divine and imperial law” (CT 16.5.5., apparently off-setting some recent law of toleration).⁵ However; it was Theodosius who became the real leader in religious policy.⁶ He was baptized at the very beginning of his reign, and he was the force behind the famous edict *Cunctos populos* which made catholic Christianity (churches in communion with Rome) the only recognized religion of the empire. Followers of any other religion “will first be struck by divine vengeance, and afterwards by the retribution of our punishment” (CT 16.1.2). An edict of the following day declared violations of divine law to be sacrilege (CT 9.35.4). The following year all heretics were proscribed and banished, and the Nicene faith was pronounced the only norm (CT 16.5.6).⁷ Arians, Eunomians and Aetians were prohibited from building churches (CT 16.5.8), and all churches of the sects were to be turned over to the Nicene party (CT 16.1.3). Heretics were forbidden from meeting, clergy were to be deported (CT 16.5.10), and officials were to be punished for not carrying out such legislation (CT 16.5.12). The Apollinarians were added to those banished from Constantinople (CT 16.5.13). The only interludes were a brief respite for Arians in 386 due to the influence of the queen mother, Justina (CT 16.4.1), and an equally brief revocation of laws against Eunomians in 394, due to the influence of the court eunuch Eutropius. Otherwise, catholic Christianity remained the only norm of faith from henceforth.

Arcadius became Augustus of the East after the death of Gratian in 383, and Honorius was elevated in the West in 393 shortly after the death of Valentinian II. When Theodosius himself died in 395, no replacement was made, and the empire remained divided under two rulers for the next half century. Several dozen laws involving the church and heretic sects were passed during the final two decades of the century, but they were just variations on the themes already being played out -- refinements of the favors granted orthodox Christians. We mention only the more noteworthy. Higher clergy could no longer be tortured in courts of law (CT 11.39.10), public spectacles and games were outlawed on Sunday (CT 15.5.2), and holidays were reduced drastically but still included Sundays and the week before and after Easter (CT 2.8.19).⁸ Circus races were

⁵ According to Sozomen HE 7.1, Gratian had initially disapproved of the persecution of heretics and had enacted some laws of religious toleration.

⁶ Meyerndorf says that Theodosius might have the best claim to be called the first Christian emperor, since he was the first ruler to be a baptized member of the church for almost his entire reign.

⁷ This law includes the description of Jesus as “God of God, Light of Light”, soon to be added to the official Constantinopolitan version of the Nicene Creed).

⁸ Christmas and Epiphany were added as official holidays in AD 400 (CT 2.8.24).

outlawed on Sunday lest they “divert men from the sacred mysteries of the Christian law,” though exceptions were to be granted for imperial birthdays (CT 2.8.20). Monks were again granted entrance to cities and towns after having been forbidden to do so two years earlier (CT 16.3.1 overturned by 16.3.2). No public or private legal actions could take place during the two-week Easter celebration (CT 2.8.21). Another law forbade the moving, selling or trafficking in martyrs’ relics (CT 9.17.7). And, finally, no discussion or criticism of imperial religious policy was to be allowed (CT 16.4.2).

Numerous statutes also repeat the condemnations and penalties levied against heretics, and a few additional measures are taken: officials would be punished for not enforcing the laws against heretics (CT 16.5.12), when heretics were not expelled from cities they were to be ghettoized, nobles who apostasized would lose their rank and privileges (CT 16.7.5), and heretics were banned from imperial government service (CT 16.5.29). When the oft-repeated laws requiring the expulsion of heretics failed to rid the cities of them, new methods of enforcement were concocted, including the fining of those caught participating in heretical meetings and those who rented them space (CT 16.5.21). Finally, the list of heretical sects was replaced with a more generic wording in a law of Sept. 395: “Whoever shall have been discovered to deviate even by a slight token from the Catholic religion’s opinion and path” are punishable by all the laws passed against heretics (CT 16.5.28).

Although paganism weakened more quickly than heresy did, numerous additional laws forbade all sacrifices, pagan rites and visits to temples, although at least one temple was allowed to remain open as an art museum (CT 16.10.8). The taking of auspices was totally forbidden (CT 8.5.46). Even the private worship of the household gods, the *lares*, *penates* and *genii*, were specifically forbidden and heavily fined (CT 16.10.12); Fines were again levied against officials in order to encourage them to enforce the anti-pagan legislation (CT 16.10.10). However, the repeating of laws against paganism well into the 390s indicates that even with the imperial and social pressure mounting, devotees remained.

Judaism remained a legal but restricted religion, to be practiced only by those born as Jews. Intermarriage of Jews and Christians was punished as adultery (CT 3.7.2). In 404 Jews were banned from serving in the imperial service (CT 16.8.16), and twenty years later they were forbidden from building new synagogues (CT 16.8.25). However, several laws remind the Christian minority that Jews are not fair game and they condemn those who “under the name of the Christian religion venture upon all illicit acts and try to destroy and despoil synagogues” (CT 16.8.9), although even this protection was limited to the Jews who showed respect for Christianity (CT 16.8.21). It would be another century and a half before Justinian would force 70,000 Jews in Asia Minor to convert and before similar acts would be perpetrated on a large scale in the West in the name of Christianity.

Imperial legislation of this final period of the century did start to more regularly exhibit features that might be traced to the Christian moral values of the emperors. No torture, and later no type of corporeal punishment, was to be allowed in criminal trials during Lent (CT 9.35.4-5). After his overly hasty execution of 7,000 Thessalonians, Theodosius instituted a thirty-day waiting period between a death sentence and the execution (CT 9.40.13). A woman who remarried had to leave the property from her first marriage to her children by that marriage “by the law of religion ...in consideration of justice” (CT 3.8.2). Children whose parents died without making wills were to be given their parents property, rather than being left penniless by the traditional laws favoring their grandparents and relatives (CT 5.1.3, 8.17.2). Putting people in private prisons was made a treasonable offense (CT 9.11.1). Some pornographic pictures were prohibited from display in public places (CT 15.7.12).⁹ Divorce laws were made more favorable to women (CT 3.16.2). However, some laws also put political concerns above those of individual rights and may have done so in the name of Christianity. For instance, a law of 370 forbade the marriage of citizens with barbarians, probably for religious as well as political reasons (CT 3.14.1). And in this category we would place the myriad laws already mentioned that provided for discrimination and civil punishment of heretics and adherents of pagan religions.

⁹ The law specifically mentions indecent pictures of actors and sports stars (charioteers), confirming the saying about nothing new under the sun!

In the foregoing we have traced how the emperors viewed their role in relationship to the church and other religions and how that role became standardized: the emperor was to be God's agent to further the interests of the church and its unity. The only checks on such favored status came when the empire's financial interests or the maintenance of public order forced some type of intervention against the church or a limitation of privileges extended towards the clergy. By the end of the fourth century, the catholic church was viewed by the emperors as the one and only orthodox church and therefore the only permitted variety of Christianity. Paganism, other religions, and heretical brands of Christianity were all to be suppressed. While active in such external legislation against heretics and pagans, the emperors generally tried to stay out of internal church affairs and let the bishops handle matters. A few laws, however, indicate that at times imperial zeal overstepped even this boundary. For example, the law of May 11, 391 against those who profaned the sacrament by being rebaptized not only provided for such people to lose their civic rights of testifying in court and of receiving or giving inheritances, but it also stipulated that "the shame of their conduct shall not be obliterated by penance" for in such a case "there is no aid through any remedy of penitence which is usually available for other crimes" (CT 16.7.4). Here, as with the laws against heretics, the keys Christ had committed to the church were being wielded by the secular kingdom.

VI. THE CHRISTIANS' VIEW OF RELIGION AND THE STATE

Early in the century, most Christians, at least the orthodox ones, would have viewed Constantine much as Eusebius did (and as Constantine viewed himself), as *kurios* (Lord) of the church, the "agent of Christ," the institutor of a new improved *pax Romana*. He had delivered the church from its persecutors and ended the martyrdoms, as well as reviving the empire's economic prosperity to some extent. Eusebius, having himself lived through the persecutions, is to be pardoned if he saw only the good in the emperor and did not, at least publicly or in his extant works, take note of perilous trends in imperial action and legislation. He could see only the man "who alone of all that ever wielded Roman power was the friend of God, the Sovereign of all, and appeared to all mankind so clear an example of a godly life" (VC 1.3). Undoubtedly, his view was shared by many contemporaries. Though we have no surviving testimony to guide us, it is probable that most Donatists, Novatians, Gnostics, and similar non-orthodox groups viewed Constantine with slightly different lenses, especially if Constantine did go so far as to outlaw their assemblies in the edict which Eusebius records (VC 3.64-5). It is hard to imagine that Constantine himself did not think that his many favors and gifts to the church had purchased him the right to expect not only loyalty but also some right to give input on church matters. The fact that the church had no single visible head made the church councils the place to exert such influence. Constantine did just that, not only calling councils; such as those at Arles and Nicaea, but also being present personally (although he was still unbaptized) or through an appointed representative. Nor was it accidental that the emperor's spiritual advisor, Hosius of Cordova, chaired the council at Nicaea. However, we have no complaints that have survived. The image of the first Christian emperor, was too perfect for his contemporaries to see such meddling as more than cosmetic flaws.

The weakness of such imperial meddling, both in terms of stability and justice, was soon made apparent by the case of Athanasius. The repetitious cycle Athanasius endured -- condemnation, exile, rehabilitation and restoration -- showed that his own fitness theologically or morally was not at the root of the problem. However, this, too cannot be blamed solely on the emperors. The competing factions of Christians misused Athanasius for their own ends, and in doing so lobbied the emperors, at times unscrupulously, to further those ends. Since the emperors saw themselves as combination church-state leaders, they easily fell into this destructive game. The results came out most clearly when Constantius turned openly pro-Arian in the 350s. He then began to take the offensive and go far beyond what had happened previously.

The story of Bishop Liberius of Rome illustrates the extent to which the situation had come by the middle of the decade. By 354, Liberius was one of the few western bishops who had still not been intimidated into signing an Arian creed. Constantius, residing in Milan, sent a eunuch to bribe Liberius into acceding. When this failed, Liberius was kidnapped and taken to Milan where he was brow-beaten without result (Ath. hist. Ar.

356). In 355; Constantius exiled him to Thrace and arranged to have the more compliant Felix elevated in Liberius' place. Two years later, in late April of 357, Constantius was to make his one and only trip to Rome, a grand entrance in celebration of the twentieth anniversary of his accession. However, Constantius seems to have been very nervous about his reception. The Christian populace had never accepted Felix and were still angry about the exiling of Liberius. The imperial public relations campaign began when he appointed the Christian Orfitus as city prefect a couple months before his visit. Then, to further appease the crowds and to show his Christian devotion towards the city of Peter and Paul, Constantine brought with him as a present to the city the relics of Andrew and Luke which had recently been discovered (Jer. Chron. 285.2). Finally, during his visit he removed the ancient pagan Altar of Victory from the Senate House, powerfully demonstrating his anti-pagan beliefs. Despite all this, we are told that the populace loudly demanded Liberius' return. By now, the aged Liberius had expressed his willingness to sign the Arian creed, so Constantius lost nothing by giving in to the Roman requests and allowing Liberius' return. However, he stipulated that Liberius and Felix should jointly rule the diocese. Theodoret records that when this was announced during festive chariot races in the circus, the crowd began chanting ominously, "One God, One Christ, One Bishop!" (HE 2.14). And despite the emperor's backing, when Liberius did return, Felix was driven to the outskirts of the city and ruled from there until his death.

While Constantine had been willing to physically back the expulsion of Donatist and Arian bishops who had been excommunicated, it is hard to imagine him kidnapping and exiling bishops who were peacefully occupying their sees. Constantius' worries about his image are also a long way from the eulogies universally accorded his father. And yet, we find no record of a developing Christian theology against imperial involvement, and for a clear separation of church and state. True, Athanasius does compare Constantius to "that Pharaoh of old, the tyrant of Egypt, who frequently gave promises and so obtained an end to the plagues, and yet always changed, until he at last perished along with his associates" (hist. Ar. 30): And Liberius is said to have told the emperor, "Don't fight against the one who gave you this empire, nor show impiety rather than thankfulness towards him" (hist. Ar. 39). Yet in essence, both Athanasius and Liberius were chiding Constantius for having chosen the wrong theological side in the battle, not for getting involved.

It is the aged Hosius, bishop of Cordova and former imperial chaplain of Constantine, that gave the one substantial extant expression of church-state theology from the mid-century. When pressured by Constantius to sign an Arian creed, Hosius wrote:

Stop using force; stop writing letters, stop sending officials Remember you are a mortal man Do not intrude into ecclesiastical matters, nor give us commands concerning them, but learn them from us. God has put into your hands the kingdom, and to us he has entrusted the affairs of his church; and just as anyone trying to steal the empire from you would be going against God's ordinance, so you should be afraid that in taking upon yourself the governance of the church, you become guilty of a greater offense. As it is written "Give to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." Therefore it is neither permitted for us to exercise earthly authority, nor for you, your majesty, to burn incense. These things I write to you out of concern for your salvation (hist. Ar. 44).

This expression of the most basic tenet of church-state theory was, we must stress, highly unusual. And we do not find another clear expression from a church father until St. Ambrose in the last years of the century describes his policies towards the emperor. When the royal family pressured him to give use of a basilica in Milan to the Arian bishop Auxentius, he preached a sermon defying the imperial pressure:

If he [Emperor Theodosius] seeks tribute, we do not deny it. The properties of the church remit tribute. If the emperor desires these properties, he has the power to appropriate them; none of us will interfere And we say to those who incite the emperor against us, "We render to Caesar what is Caesar's; we do not refuse to pay it. But the church is God's, therefore, in no way ought

it to be awarded to Caesar, for the rights of Caesar do not extend over the church of God” (adv. 4ux. 33,35).

While the oratory and content are noble, I, for one, would question whether Ambrose would ever have willingly handed over to the emperor any of the vast land holdings of the Milanese church.

That Ambrose was unclear about what Caesar’s God-given realm encompassed is made clear from an incident of AD 388. When a bishop led some monks in burning a synagogue to the ground, Theodosius ordered them to rebuild it at the church’s expense. Ambrose intervened, threatening the withholding of communion from the emperor until he revoked this sentence (Ep. 41). In a letter to the Emperor he writes:

Will a place of worship be provided for unbelieving Jews out of the treasures of the church?
 ...People should not be punished so severely for the burning of a building Is it you [O Emperor] who will give the Jews this triumph over the church of God? ... What will Christ say to you after this? (Ep. 40.10, 14, 20, 21)

Not only did Ambrose argue for clemency because the accused were Christians, he convinced the emperor that he should not even carry out a complete investigation of the incident. Such interference with the secular duties of the state were bound to bear evil fruit in the future. It also reflects Ambrose’s opinion, one shared by most other Christians of his day, that the state should favor orthodox Christianity and suppress the sects and pagans. However, Ambrose did see limits. When a group of western bishops convinced the usurper Maximus to execute the Spanish heretic Priscillian, Ambrose was horrified, and refused to commune with the bishops who were responsible (Amb. Ep. 24.12).

One final struggle in which Ambrose was intimately involved illustrates the tensions with paganism that still existed and how church-state questions could carry on for decades. From the very beginning of the Empire, the Altar of Victory in the Senate precinct at Rome had been used for the incense offerings and libations for the well-being of the state and for swearing oaths to the imperial rulers. Earlier we mentioned how Constantius II had tried to win favor with the local Christians by having this symbol of pagan belief removed during his visit to Rome in 357. The altar, however, was soon replaced, probably by Julian, and once again Christian senators would have had to watch pagan sacrifices being conducted (Amb. Ep. 17.16). Gratian had the altar removed again in 382. Q. Aurelius Symmachus, a powerful pagan senator who would be *consul ordinarius* in 391, led a deputation of pagan senators to Gratian in an effort to have the altar restored. The Christian senators protested that Symmachus’ embassy was falsely claiming to represent the whole senate (Amb. Ep.17.10). Largely through the influence of Ambrose, their motion was rejected. But when Gratian died the following year, and a famine swept the empire, Symmachus brought yet another petition, this time in writing and to the boy emperor Valentinian II (Sym. Rel. 3). Ambrose then wrote two letters to Valentinian countering Symmachus’ arguments and winning the day (Amb. Ep. 17-18). While further attempts in 389 and 391 failed, the usurper Eugenius, who received key support from some pagan Roman senators, once again briefly restored the altar in 393. It was removed again the following year when Eugenius was defeated and Theodosius regained control in Rome. Symmachus may have made yet another attempt, but the victory of Christianity was by then almost total, and the Altar of Victory would never again be put to use.

What makes this struggle so interesting is the fact that we can still read first hand the arguments of both sides from the pens of Ambrose and Symmachus. Symmachus pointed to the altar as an important part of imperial tradition and claimed that famines had resulted from its removal. And with invaders threatening, the emperor should try to keep all the gods on Rome’s side: “Who is such a good friend of the barbarians that he does not want the Altar of Victory back” (Sym. Rel. 3.3). If it were not returned there would be no place for the pagan senators to swear their allegiance to the emperor (3.4). And this, he said, was not primarily an anti-Christian request, because “all the different gods we worship should be thought of as one Man cannot come to so profound a mystery by only one road” (3.10). “May your Clemency have the support of the unseen

guardians of all religions ...” (3.19). Symmachus’ petition for a reprieve for paganism, because of its polytheistic base, was not the cry for complete religious freedom that it might at first appear to be.

Ambrose, on the other hand, pointed to the impracticality of Christian senators swearing oaths on a pagan altar, and he again threatens the emperor with religious sanctions: “You may come to church but you will not find your bishop there, or you will find him obstructive.” (Amb. Ep. 17.13). At one point, while reproducing what he thinks the emperor’s father, Valentinian I, would have said in this situation, Ambrose clearly states the problem arising from a religiously pluralistic society -- “that pagans should offer sacrifice in that assembly shared by pagans and Christians alike..., and Christians be forced to take part in the sacrifice against their will” (Amb. Ep. 17.16a). But this again is no call for religious equality but merely a call for the continued suppression of paganism.

CONCLUSION

So, how would a Christian in AD 400 respond to the question, “What should be the proper relationship between organized religion and the state?” Even after all the events and tensions we’ve recounted, this was still not a question that even the average Christian intellectual or leader lost sleep over. Most would have agreed that the emperor and the imperial government were God’s agents for the good of the world, that is the *oikoumenh*, the inhabited world over which the empire ruled, and that he also ruled for the good of the church. This meant that he was justified in calling church councils and pressuring them to come to right conclusions, in exiling the enemies of the orthodox church, and the like. He also felt within his rights to pass official legislation as detailed and varied as the numerous limitations on decurions becoming clergy and under what conditions dying actresses were to be received into the church. Legislation on the church makes up 8-10% of the total bulk of the Theodosian Code!¹⁰

The emperor’s role as protector of the church also gave him the right to outlaw paganism, restrict Judaism, and forcibly dissuade heretics from propagating their teachings. Except for Julian’s brief show of religious freedom, clearly a short-term tactical move, we know of no serious thought being given to accepting religious pluralism. As a result, forms of legal coercion, if not forcible conversion, were accepted as the order of the day.

If the emperor occasionally overstepped the bounds of propriety in his interference in the church, the bishops would need to remind him of his limits, and that he was just the bishop of the external kingdom of God. This would normally be done by the imperial chaplains or the bishop in the town where the emperor was residing. Beyond this, however, there was little discussion of any further church involvement in the state. Despite the continuance of slavery, gladiatorial contests, great economic inequities, and what today would be called severe violations of human rights, we have little evidence of the church trying to craft a social agenda or to pressure the government for some moral legislation or change in policy.¹¹ As we have seen, the growing influence of Christian morality was undoubtedly responsible for the introduction of some more humane laws -- lessening some tortures, outlawing some branding of humans, and more humane economic treatment for some women and women.¹² However, there is little evidence that the church was lobbying for these particular changes. And when imperial policies included the wholesale slaughter of various barbarian groups, we hear of no Christians raising their voices in outrage. Most of the Goths after all were Arians, and so the fewer the better.

Often, Christians have rather naively looked at the early church as a “golden age,” a period which, if we emulated it in faith, word and deed, could help renew the present evil age. If we look to the fourth-century

¹⁰ Book 16, which deals solely with formal religious matters, takes up 37 pages, almost 8% of the total in the Pharr translation. This is surpassed only by Book 9 on crimes (43 pp.), Book 11 on taxes and appeals (50 pp.), and Book 12 on decurions and tax collectors (42 pp.).

¹¹ It might be asked why I have omitted the struggles between John Chrysostom and the emperor at the very end of the century. I have judged that those conflicts were more of a pastor-parishioner nature, than a church-state matter. It just happened that John’s parishioner was the emperor.

¹² Another example is Prudentius’ plea to end gladiatorial contests (contra orat. Symm. 2.1117-1132).

church for guidance in the matter of church-state relations, we will find little. If, however, we look there to see the roots of our present dilemma, and seek to learn from them, our journey may not have been in vain. It has been said by one eminent historian, that if there is one thing we learn from history, it is that nobody ever learns anything from history.¹³ While this certainly is, to a large extent, empirically true, we can always try to be the exception that proves the rule.

Glen L. Thompson

April 15, 1997

¹³ A. L. Rowse, *Bosworth Field and the War of the Roses* (London, 1966), p. 48.

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Ambr. adu Aux. = Ambrose, Against Auxentius*

Ep. = Epistles*

Amm. Marc. Hist. = Ammianus Marcellinus, History*

Athan. Apol. adv. Ar. = Athanasius, Apology against the Arians (or Second Apology)*

Apol. ad Const. = Apology to Constantius II*

de synod. = Concerning the Councils*

Ep. = Epistles*

hist. Ar. = History of the Arians*

Aug. contra litt: Pet. = Augustine, Against the letters of Petilianus*

Cas. HE = Cassiodorus/Epiphanius, Ecclesiastical History

Col. Au =Avellana Collection (document numbers are given from the CSEL edition)

CJ= Code of Justinian

CT= Theodotian Code (trans. by C. Pharr, Greenwood Press, 1952)

Eus. HE = Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History*

VC = Life of Constantine*

Gelasius HE = Gelasius, Ecclesiastical History

ILS=Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae, ed. H. Dessau (Aries reprint, 1979)

Jer., Chron.= Jerome, Chronicle (with numbers of the Olympiad and year)

Jul. Ep. = Julian, Epistles (numbers are those of the Loeb edition)**

LP =Liber Pontificalis (trans. by L. Loomis, *The Book of the Popes*, Columbia U. Press, 1916).

Lact. de Mort. = Lactantius, Concerning the Death of the Persecuted*

Optatus, adv. Don. = Optatus of Milevis, Against the Donatists

Prudentius, contra orat. Symm. = Contra orationem Symmachi*

Socr. HE= Socrates, Ecclesiastical History*

Soz. HE = Sozomen, Ecclesiastical History*

Sym. Rel. = Symmachus, Relationes (= Epistles, Book 10)*

Themistius Or. = Themistius, Orations

Theod. HE= Theodoret, Ecclesiastical History*

Zos. HN = Zosimus, New History

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Chronological List of the Most Important Emperors and Churchmen Mentioned

Emperors	Churchmen
Constantine 25 June, 306 -- declared Augustus, controls NW corner of empire 312 -- defeats Maxentius, controls West 324 -- defeats Licinius, sole emperor 337 -- death of Constantine	Eusebius, bp. of Caesarea c.313-c.340 Hosius -- bp. of Cordova c.295-357
Constantine II -- emp. of West 337-340	Athanasius, bp. of Alexandria 328-373

Constans -- emp. of West 337-350
 Constantius II -- emp. of East 337-350
 sole emperor 350-360

Liberius, bp. of Rome 352-366

Julian the Apostate -- emperor 360-363

Jovian -- emperor 363-364

Valentinian I -- emp. of West 364-375

Damasus, bp. of Rome 366-384

Valens -- emp. of East 364-378

Gratian -- Aug. from 367,
 emp. in West 375-383

Valentinian II -- Aug. from 375
 emp. in West 383-392

Ambrose, bp. of Milan 374-397

Theodosius I -- emp. in East 379-395

Arcadius -- Aug. from 383,
 emp. in East 395-408

Honorius -- Aug. from 393,
 emp. in West 395-423

Theodosius II -- Aug: from 402,
 emp in East 408-450,
 ordered compilation of the
 Theodosian Code