

*A recent book by Robert F. Rea of Lincoln Christian University, Why Church History Matters, can help us out here. Rea, a professor of church history, begins the book by describing how, long ago, as a "conservative Protestant from a free-church, Bible-only tradition" he found his horizons broadened when his doctoral examiners at a Roman.*

Important theological debates also surrounded the various Ecumenical Councils – Nicaea in , Constantinople in , Ephesus in and Chalcedon in Papacy and primacy[ edit ] Main article: Historical development of the doctrine of Papal Primacy The theology of the Bishop of Rome having a monarchical papacy developed over time. As a bishopric, its origin is consistent with the development of an episcopal structure in the 1st century. As long as the Papal See also happened to be the capital of the Western Empire, prestige of the Bishop of Rome could be taken for granted without the need of sophisticated theological argumentation beyond these points; after its shift to Milan and then Ravenna, however, more detailed arguments were developed based on Matthew Just what exactly was entailed in this primacy, and its being exercised, would become a matter of controversy at certain later times. Christian heresy Urgent concerns with the uniformity of belief and practice have characterized Christianity from the outset. The New Testament itself speaks of the importance of maintaining orthodox doctrine and refuting heresies, showing the antiquity of the concern. Some scholars, drawing upon distinctions between Jewish Christians , Gentile Christians, and other groups such as Gnostics , see Early Christianity as fragmented and with contemporaneous competing orthodoxies. The process of establishing orthodox Christianity was set in motion by a succession of different interpretations of the teachings of Christ being taught after the crucifixion. Though Christ himself is noted to have spoken out against false prophets and false christs within the gospels themselves Mark The epistles of John and Jude also warn of false teachers and prophets , as does the writer of the Book of Revelation and 1 Jn. One of the roles of bishops, and the purpose of many Christian writings, was to refute heresies. Orthodox Christianity, on the other hand, held that both the material and spiritual worlds were created by God and were therefore both good, and that this was represented in the unified divine and human natures of Christ. This was therefore an early argument supported by apostolic succession. Irenaeus first established the doctrine of four gospels and no more, with the synoptic gospels interpreted in the light of John. Gnosticism is predicated on the existence of such hidden knowledge, but brief references to private teachings of Jesus have also survived in the canonic Scripture as did warning by the Christ that there would be false prophets or false teachers. In the middle of the 2nd century, three groups of Christians adhered to a range of doctrines that divided the Christian communities of Rome: The letters of Ignatius of Antioch and Polycarp of Smyrna to various churches warned against false teachers, and the Epistle of Barnabas , accepted by many Christians as part of Scripture in the 2nd century, warned about mixing Judaism with Christianity , as did other writers, leading to decisions reached in the first ecumenical council , which was convoked by the Emperor Constantine at Nicaea in , in response to further disruptive polemical controversy within the Christian community, in that case Arian disputes over the nature of the Trinity. During those first three centuries, Christianity was effectively outlawed by requirements to venerate the Roman emperor and Roman gods. Consequently, when the Church labelled its enemies as heretics and cast them out of its congregations or severed ties with dissident churches, it remained without the power to persecute them. However, those called "heretics" were also called a number of other things e. Before AD, the "heretical" nature of some beliefs was a matter of much debate within the churches. After AD, some opinion was formulated as dogma through the canons promulgated by the councils. Medieval Christian theology[ edit ] Byzantine theology[ edit ] While the Western Roman Empire declined and fell, the Eastern Roman Empire, centred on Constantinople, remained standing until , and was the home of a wide range of theological activity that was seen as standing in strong continuity with the theology of the Patristic period; indeed the division between Patristic and Byzantine theology would not be recognised by many Orthodox theologians and historians.

*If church history does not get your blood pumping, you had better check your spiritual pulse. The sixteenth century alone provides a treasure of soul-stirring narratives. Think of Martin Luther's bold and daring stand for the gospel against the destructive errors of Rome.*

I want my kids to find indestructible joy in Christ. Constantly work to introduce them to Jesus. Make the good news plain in everything you do. It helps them make sense out of life. Teach a Gospel-centered worldview with specific applications that will help them interpret life. Research has proven that kids tend to be more receptive to the Gospel than any other age group. I want my children to have every opportunity to believe in Jesus. Present the good news in age-appropriate ways all throughout childhood. I have different booklets that I give to different age groups to better target their comprehension level. It helps avoid some negative outcomes of sin. When children understand the great price that Jesus paid for their salvation, they are more likely to stay on the way of the righteous. It can help counter balance worldly influences. Everyone knows the harmful influences present in our society. Kids need positive influences to tip the scale. The 2nd greatest commandment is to love your neighbor. Provide real life experiences for them to love other people. Some examples are mission trips, prayer partners, and ministry projects. It is something fun to do. Do you know who invented fun? Do you know why? For his own glory. While entertainment and fun seeking can become an idol, we should not think God is against fun. As a leader, you should be having fun too. Let the children know that you love ministering to them. It helps kids want to come to church. There is nothing wrong with having a program that appeals to the interests of children, especially when it brings more children to hear the Gospel. Make a list of the needs, interests and motivations of kids. It helps them make new friends. Some of the best ones children will ever make is in the church. Allow time for group activities and relationship building in your programs. It helps discover and intervene in abusive home situations. This is something we rarely address. But the church is often one of the few safe places on Earth for abused children. Pay attention to what kids are saying about their home life. Try to get to know every family. If you suspect abuse, you are legally and morally obligated to report it. It helps children get to know their pastors. Draft pastors and staff ministers to serve VBS or other ministry programs. It gives kids meaningful keepsakes. Those VBS and Sunday school crafts often become prized possessions. The Bible verses on their keepsakes will remind them of what they have learned for years to come. It gives children special memories. Think back to when you were a child in Sunday school. Can you remember a special teacher or event? It allows them to make friends with adult volunteers in safe context. In our culture child safety is a constant concern, and rightly so. But there is still great value in kids finding adult mentors in the church. The church was never meant to be the exclusive faith teacher of children. Be intentional about helping parents fulfill their calling. Involving them in the ministry, providing resources and offer parents training in family discipleship. It helps nudge some parents into more faithful attendance. Look for families on the fringe and work to get their kids more active in our programs. It brings unchurched families in contact with the Gospel. In our culture, reaching children is one of the most effective ways to make contact with unchurched families. Be intentional about family outreach and follow-up. Make a plan, share it with your pastor and stick to it. It helps new families get connected with the church. Even when a new family comes into the church, they still need help to get plugged in. It helps identify families that may benefit from biblical counseling. Often in working with kids, we discover deeper problems at home that need biblical counseling. Work closely with our pastors or counseling ministry to refer families for help. It helps dads get involved in the church. For various reasons, fathers have a difficult time getting connected with the church family. Explore programs like Upward Basketball as a tool to for outreach and father assimilation. It provides families with meaningful shared experiences. This is true especially when the whole family can participate in events like VBS or summer camp. Be aware of the potential for families to build traditions through our programs. It helps answers those hard question. Almost every week a child will come to me with a religious question that has stumped their parents. Even while answering the question, reinforce parental teaching authority. Help parents to find resources that will answer future hard questions. In every

period of church history, this has been a struggle. Work with your pastor to develop a comprehensive plan for Christian education. It helps bring in new families to the church. It is becoming more difficult to identify and reach somthings who are prospects for evangelism. It allows the church body to us their talents and spiritual gifts. Releasing the ministry potential of lay people is often a key for church growth. Train them, encourage them and watch God work through them. It helps train future church leaders. We should expect kids who grow up in our ministries to become leaders in the church and in the world. Involve kids in ministry opportunities. Include children in other church ministries as often as possible. It provides accidental learning for ministry volunteers. Sometimes our grown-ups learn as much as the kids. Encourage the adults to make learning one reason they serve in the ministry. It raises community awareness of the church through special events. When our church launched Upward Soccer , it was the talk of the town. Understanding our events can create positive buzz for the church as a whole. It helps big church go smoothly. Quality childcare is essential to allow parents to participate fully in the church worship service. While our ministry is much more than childcare, this is a clear benefit to the church. Provide excellent care to help parents get the most out of church. It helps build a strong youth ministry. We should expect children who grew up in our ministry to become leaders in the student ministry. Work closely with the Youth Ministry toward common goals and a comprehensive discipleship plan. Having children present helps the pastor to keep the Gospel simple. Your preacher will benefit from preaching to kids. It forces them to rethink their vocabulary and provide adequate explanation of spiritual concepts. Provide regular occasions when children are present for the sermon.

### Chapter 3 : Does Church History Matter? | Calvary OPC

*History matters because it's the story of how God has worked among his people in his world. To find out more about why church history matters, watch the first nine minutes of this video. 30 Days through Church History: Day 1.*

Now it is important that we take up the equally valid matter of the place of the church, i. You will recognize instantly that this whole matter of the place of the church in the world today is a very confused issue. On one hand we are being told that the job of the church is to forget doctrinal preaching and desire for individual salvation and involve itself in the problems of human suffering and injustice. The church, they say, belongs in the vanguard of the struggle for social justice and the reason Christianity is shunned by the world is because Christians will not dirty their hands or risk their reputations. We are being told that Christians can only show their faith as Christians if they are willing to carry a placard in Alabama, risk jail in some picket line, join the fight for land reform, or the abolition of laws against homosexuality and adultery. We are told that the church should be speaking to all the issues of life today and should be concerned about problems of metropolitan government, mass transportation, suburban segregation, equal representation in legislatures, and other problems that confront our modern world. On the other side there is an equally vocal group which says the job of the church is to thunder against evil from the pulpit, to denounce Communism, and anti-Americanism, and, thus preserve, if possible, the blessings of bourgeois materialism for Christians to enjoy to the full. They say we must attack with scorching language anyone who dares to raise questions about the Bible, or threaten the special privileges of Christians in modern society. The theme of this group seems to be, "Come weal or come woe, the status is quo. In the midst of this kind of confusion the letter to the Ephesians calls us back to reality. In this letter we have a declaration of the intention of God in forming the church, and a clarifying of its purpose and its ministry -- not only in the 1st century but in the 20th as well. As always, when we come to the Scriptures we are returning to the fundamental issue of any matter, to basic, essential, underlying truth from which we can work our way out again to the application of these things in every area of life. It is so necessary that we get our direction from the revelation of God in Scripture. I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all lowliness and meekness, with patience, forbearing one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. This whole passage is a greatly condensed summary of the reason why the church exists and a statement of what its function should be. But before we consider this more closely, we must see how the apostle describes himself in presenting this whole matter: He calls himself "a prisoner for the Lord," or a prisoner of the Lord. Remember that this letter to the Ephesians was written from the city of Rome where Paul was awaiting trial before the emperor on charges of inciting riots, with the implication even of treason against the emperor himself. These charges had been preferred against him by the Jews in Jerusalem at the time of the seizure of Paul in that dramatic encounter he had with the Jewish leaders in the city of Jerusalem. After languishing for two years as a prisoner in Caesarea, he had been sent at last on a very perilous sea voyage which ended in shipwreck, but, at last, he arrived at Rome. There he lived in a home, chained to a Roman guard day and night. He was the personal prisoner of Nero, but he never refers to himself as the prisoner of Caesar. He saw beyond the chains, and the guard, and the imperial processes of justice, to the controlling hand of Jesus Christ behind all things. He did not fret about being in prison, being chained, being limited. Read his letter to the Philippians, written in this prison relationship, and you will find it is filled with joy and triumph and the assurance that all is well, for the apostle looked behind the visible things to the invisible things. Because that is where ultimate answers lie, that is where truth is found, there is the explanation behind all visible things. So he does not say, I am the prisoner of Caesar. To say "the prisoner of Caesar" would be a superficial explanation, and Paul is never superficial. Behind Caesar is Christ. The Lord Jesus himself reflected this same attitude when he stood before Pilate. Pilate said to him, "Do you not know that I have the power to crucify you? This has a direct bearing upon the issue Paul is discussing in this passage, the purpose of the church. The whole explanation for the confusion about the church that exists so widely today is that Christians have been looking at the things that are seen instead of the things that are unseen. Here is our human race, with suffering

and need obvious everywhere. Hate and bigotry abounds in our world. Injustice prevails and misery exists everywhere you turn. And over here is a group of people, the church, who talk about love, compassion, sympathy and help. The obvious answer to human need is to let this group of people that are so concerned in this area get to work and do something about it. Let them meet the need, directly and positively. It sounds so logical, so consistent, so practical. But that is because we are so superficial. We only see the things that are visible. In our shallow concern for externals we treat symptoms and not causes, and, therefore, we apply superficial remedies that work only for the moment -- if they work at all -- and then the situation is as bad again. Well, what is the answer of the apostle to this? What does he say the church should do in the face of the desperate demands of human need? His answer is, "lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called. He means, "Obey your orders! Follow the divine strategy, not the obvious shallow counsel of men. The church is not expected to devise its own strategy or to set its own goal. The church is not an independent organization existing by means of its own strength, as human organizations do. One can never understand this body that exists in human society unless you view it as more than an organization. Think of the figures the apostle uses for the church in this very letter: The church, he says, is an army under the command of a king, and an army that will not obey its leader is useless as a fighting force. The church is a body under the control of the head, and what a tragedy it is when the human body refuses to respond to the direction of the head. The church, he says, is a temple for the exclusive habitation and use of a Person who dwells within, who has the right to do with that habitation as he wills. So this is the word of the apostle to us: Obey the directions of the Head. We are not left in doubt as to what that calling is. It is here in the first three chapters of this letter and scattered in many other places in the New Testament. The first three chapters of this letter are devoted to the task of describing what Christians have in Christ, as compared with their former condition in darkness and defeat in the kingdom of Satan, and to what end and purpose this is all designed. This is always the structure of a Pauline letter. He begins with telling people the truth the truth is nothing but what we call doctrine ; but is that which forms underlying foundations. How foolish it is to start with anything but truth. There are those today who tell us that we should start with anything but truth. There are those today who tell us that we should start with some kind of dream, an idea, whether it be true or not; and, building on that illusion, we are to work out practical solutions to our problems. The apostle never does this, he starts with the truth, the truth as it is, things as they really are. He calls us back to reality. That is the glory of Christianity: It is a setting forth of things as they actually exist. In these first three chapters you have a marvelous statement of reality. Read these chapters through. It simply exhausts human language to set forth the great realities that the Christian and the church, as a body of Christians, possess in Jesus Christ. In these three chapters there are several very clear statements of the purpose of the church, not merely its purpose in eternity, some day, but its purpose in time, right now. If we want to know what that purpose is let us observe these statements. Let me quickly run through these first three chapters and point out some of these statements. The church was planned long before the world was made], that we should be holy and blameless before him. We are to be a moral example to the world, reflecting the character of Jesus Christ. Just recently I read of two American men who were riding on a train in Britain. As you know, the English trains have compartments where six or seven people can be seated. In the compartment with these two men was a very distinguished looking gentlemen. The two Americans were quietly discussing this gentleman among themselves. In a very low tone one of them said, "I would wager money that he is the Archbishop of Canterbury. What the blank difference does it make to you? We are designed to do so, to be "holy and blameless before him. We who first hoped in Christ, we Christians, have been destined and appointed here is our calling to live for the praise of his glory. The first job of the church is not the welfare of men, important as that may be, and as it definitely enters into the picture. But that is not the first thing. The first thing is that we may live to the praise and the glory of God. As the New English Bible puts it, we "should cause his glory to be praised," Ephesians 1: It is the story of what God is and does. The problem with this world is that it does not know God. It has no knowledge of him. In all its seeking and wanderings, its endeavors to discover truth, it does not know God. But the glory of God is to reveal the himself, to show what he is like, and the story of what God is and does is the glory of God. You have that in Second Corinthians where the apostle is commenting on this very fact. He says, For it is the God who said,

"Let light shine out of darkness" who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ. In this same chapter, the fourth verse confirms this, In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the likeness of God. So then you are no longer strangers and sojourners, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom you also are built into it for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit. He lives in his people.

**Chapter 4 : 3 Reasons the Resurrection Matters by Brian G. Hedges**

*Does Church History Matter? Home Now, the question is then raised as to why this kind of church history is even important anymore. After all, the past is the past.*

We must always be on guard against such things. That Jesus was created and is therefore not eternal is a heresy, and that belief has led to further theological errors. This false view of who Christ is stems from a heresy called Arianism, which is attributed to Arius, and deals with Christology the study of just exactly who Jesus is. This Arian concept that Jesus did not always exist, but was created by and therefore distinct from and lesser than God the Father, came from an incorrect and incomplete understanding of John. Because of this heretical teaching, Arius was deemed a heretic by the First Council of Nicaea in 325. His primary opponent in the debate at this Church Council was Athanasius. Up until the Reformation, Athanasius is probably the man to whom we chiefly owe the preservation of Biblical faith. He believed that whether Adam sinned or not, he was still mortal and would one day die, regardless of whether he sinned or not. Pelagius taught that Adam only hurt himself when he fell, and all of his descendants were not affected by his sin. He also went so far as to say that everyone is born in the same condition as Adam was before the Fall -- that people are born without sin, and with the same moral abilities as Adam was when he was first made by God. Since his conclusion was that man is born without sin, Pelagius deduced that man need not sin. His reasoning was that since God commands men not to sin, they are capable of not sinning. But this is an errant view of Scripture. Because of this, Pelagianism is a heretical teaching, as it has an incorrect view of the nature of man. In the Pelagian view, man does not require the grace of God to enable him to will to do good, for his nature is neutral and is able by himself to choose between good and evil. But by our very nature we are sinners. We were indeed affected by the Fall, contrary to what Pelagius taught. Augustine believed in the doctrine of Original Sin, and taught much the opposite of what Pelagius taught. He taught that Adam was not created neutral, but godly and in fellowship with God. Adam had true free will prior to his Fall. Augustine also taught that another result of the Fall was that now everyone would die a physical death. Romans 5: Before the Fall, man could not die because sin and its consequences were not in the world. So Adam brought not only spiritual death, but also physical death upon himself. That is why Scripture says that even the best we do is as filthy rags. Isaiah: No man would come to Christ for salvation by his own will, for to do so would be against his nature. Faith is not naturally within anyone -- it must be gifted to a person by God. Ephesians 2: A person must be made spiritually alive by the working of God if he is to see the truth -- there is no other way. Without this work of God, no one would be saved, for no one would ever seek after God by his own natural will, as that would be completely against human nature. Romans 3: In opposition to Pelagius, Augustine went on further to say that the sin of Adam did not only directly affect himself, but all of mankind. This is seen in Psalm. Although Reformed theology came out of the Reformation, and in particular through the theological teaching of John Calvin, its roots go back to Augustine. The legacy of Pelagius is quite different. The Council of Carthage, in 418, took action concerning the errors of Caelestius, a disciple of Pelagius, and denounced the Pelagian doctrines on human nature, original sin, grace, and perfectibility. It also fully approved the views of Augustine. The Church also spoke out against Pelagius at the Council of Carthage, where he was condemned as a heretic and Pelagianism condemned as heresy. Semi-Pelagianism is a lesser form of Pelagianism. While Semi-Pelagianism denies the Biblical doctrines of predestination and election, it does not deny original sin and its effects upon the will of the human heart, mind, and body. This cooperation is not by human effort as in keeping the law, but rather in the ability of an unregenerated person to make a free will choice, to choose God without God first changing his heart. Semi-Pelagianism teaches that man can make the first move toward God by seeking God out of his own free will which goes against John 6: Semi-Pelagianism was condemned at the Council of Orange in 529. God is not motivated to save sinners based on anything he sees in them, including faith -- as it is God who gives faith to those who are saved. Salvation begins and ends with God. It does not begin or end with man, it is all of God. Hebrews: Erasmus wrote his work for the Catholic Church, who had seen the teachings of Luther gaining inroads with the people and wanted to defeat him. In answer to this, Luther responded in with *The Bondage of*

the Will. At issue was whether human beings, after the Fall, are free to choose good or evil. The debate between Luther and Erasmus is one of the earliest of the Reformation over the issue of free will and predestination. He likewise contended that grace simply helped humans come to a knowledge of God and supported them as they used their free will to choose between good and evil -- choices which could lead to saving faith in Christ. As such, there is no true or completely free will for unregenerate man, because any will we have is overwhelmed by the influence of sin. Luther concluded that unredeemed human beings are dominated by, and a slave to, sin. When God regenerates a person, He changes the entire person, including the will, which is then liberated to choose God. No one can find or achieve salvation or redemption through his own choices. It is only when God draws us to Him and changes us regeneration that we are able to freely choose Him of our own new volition. We are new creatures with new hearts, and are able to choose God. These five theological points were formulated to answer the Remonstrants in a document known as the Canon of Dort, which declared: Calvinists believe that human beings repent and believe because God regenerates them, which frees their will from its bondage to sin John 8: Arminians believe people are affected by sin, but still have the ability to choose to be saved. Calvinists believe in total depravity. It is the teaching that a person is completely touched by sin in all areas: It does not mean that people are as evil as they can possibly be. However, it does mean that since all of a person is tainted by sin, the sinner is a slave of sin and cannot choose by his own natural will to be saved Isaiah Arminians believe God looks into the future and sees who will believe in Him and then chooses those whom He foresees will have faith. Calvinists believe in unconditional election, where God from eternity past chooses from His own good pleasure who will be saved Ephesians 1: Is there unrighteousness with God? Arminians believe in unlimited atonement, which means that Christ died for all people, and those who trust in Christ will be saved. Calvinists believe in limited atonement, or what is better described as particular redemption. Calvinists believe in irresistible grace, that those who are His will come to faith John 6: Arminians teach that believers can lose their salvation. Calvinists believe in the perseverance or preservation of the saints John Historically, whenever a Church Council was called, it was convened to address a new teaching to decide if that new teaching was heresy or not. The Synod or Court of Dort convened in to discuss the Arminian challenge. The question at hand: How does Fallen Man come to salvation? The Arminians and Calvinists disagreed on the extent of the Fall. The Arminians said man was just wounded by it. The Calvinists believed that the Fall corrupted all of man -- in his heart, mind, and body -- and that men in their natural state will not seek after God. The initiative for salvation, therefore, must come from God, not man -- as a dead man can do nothing for himself. That is the clear testimony of Scripture. Unfortunately, however, what was once deemed as heresy Arminianism is now the prevalent view in the Church today. Heresy and false teachings have infiltrated the Church to such an extent that in many places it has become virtually dead. Examples of this are found in the many churches and entire denominations that are now ordaining gay and lesbian ministers, and in places where homosexual marriage is not only being promoted, but performed and given the blessing of individuals, churches, and denominations. It is the influx of a liberal, man-centered theology that is at the heart of this decay. In the past, however, as seen in various historic Councils, the Church has come together as official bodies and has denounced these heresies and false teachings. In doing so, these stands have only strengthened the Church. As he spouts this from his pulpit, his flock take it all in approvingly. Yet when calls were made for him to be removed from his post, a specially convened assembly decided his views were too widely shared within the denomination for him to be singled out and dismissed. A study by the Free University of Amsterdam bore this out, finding that one in six pastors in the PKN and six other smaller denominations were either agnostic or atheist. Whereas the Council of Dort once stood up against such things, now the Dutch Church is unable to do anything about it. How things have changed. But the testimony of the Church is that it has stood up against heresy and false teachings. So when these errors have elsewhere tried to ease their way into mainstream Christian thought, the Church has responded in different ways, and that gives us hope. For example, though the Church did not come together as an organized body to refute the universalistic teachings of Rob Bell, a wide variety of denominations, churches, para-church organizations, and, above all, individual Christians stood up against his error. As Jesus admonishes us in Matthew 7: Let us stand firm against them. The two are also completely unrelated. Before

the Fall, Man was posse peccare, posse non peccare able to sin, able not to sin. After the Fall, natural Man was non posse non peccare not able not to sin. A person in glory is non posse peccare unable to sin. When Adam and Eve partook of the Tree, they disobeyed God and as a result died spiritually.

**Chapter 5 : CATHOLIC ENCYCLOPEDIA: The Sacrament of Penance**

*All people are living histories - which is why History matters Penelope J. Corfield. Historians are often asked: what is the use or relevance of studying History (the capital letter signalling the academic field of study)?*

It is called a "sacrament" not simply a function or ceremony, because it is an outward sign instituted by Christ to impart grace to the soul. As an outward sign it comprises the actions of the penitent in presenting himself to the priest and accusing himself of his sins, and the actions of the priest in pronouncing absolution and imposing satisfaction. This whole procedure is usually called, from one of its parts, "confession", and it is said to take place in the "tribunal of penance", because it is a judicial process in which the penitent is at once the accuser, the person accused, and the witness, while the priest pronounces judgment and sentence. The grace conferred is deliverance from the guilt of sin and, in the case of mortal sin, from its eternal punishment; hence also reconciliation with God, justification. By way of further explanation it is needful to correct certain erroneous views regarding this sacrament which not only misrepresent the actual practice of the Church but also lead to a false interpretation of theological statement and historical evidence. From what has been said it should be clear: Man indeed is free to obey or disobey, but once he has sinned, he must seek pardon not on conditions of his own choosing but on those which God has determined, and these for the Christian are embodied in the Sacrament of Penance. No Catholic believes that a priest, simply as an individual man, however pious or learned, has power to forgive sins. This power belongs to God alone; but He can and does exercise it through the ministration of men. Since He has seen fit to exercise it by means of this sacrament, it cannot be said that the Church or the priest interferes between the soul and God; on the contrary, penance is the removal of the one obstacle that keeps the soul away from God. Without sincere sorrow and purpose of amendment, confession avails nothing, the pronouncement of absolution is of no effect, and the guilt of the sinner is greater than before. While this sacrament as a dispensation of Divine mercy facilitates the pardoning of sin, it by no means renders sin less hateful or its consequences less dreadful to the Christian mind; much less does it imply permission to commit sin in the future. In paying ordinary debts, as e. Strangely enough, the opposite charge is often heard, viz. But this view, in the first place, overlooks the fact that Christ, though merciful, is also just and exacting. Both these accusations, of too great leniency and too great severity, proceed as a rule from those who have no experience with the sacrament and only the vaguest ideas of what the Church teaches or of the power to forgive sins which the Church received from Christ. Teaching of the Church The Council of Trent declares: As a means of regaining grace and justice, penance was at all times necessary for those who had defiled their souls with any mortal sin. Before the coming of Christ, penance was not a sacrament, nor is it since His coming a sacrament for those who are not baptized. But the Lord then principally instituted the Sacrament of Penance, when, being raised from the dead, he breathed upon His disciples saying: By which action so signal and words so clear the consent of all the Fathers has ever understood that the power of forgiving and retaining sins was communicated to the Apostles and to their lawful successors, for the reconciling of the faithful who have fallen after Baptism. Why doth this man speak thus? Who can forgive sins but God only? Thy sins are forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, take up thy bed and walk? But that you may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, he saith to the sick of the palsy, I say to thee: Arise, take up thy bed, and go into thy house" Mark 2: Christ wrought a miracle to show that He had power to forgive sins and that this power could be exerted not only in heaven but also on earth. This power, moreover, He transmitted to Peter and the other Apostles. To Peter He says: And whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth, it shall be bound also in heaven: Later He says to all the Apostles: As to the meaning of these texts, it should be noted: In healing the palsied man Christ declared that "the Son of man has power on earth to forgive sins"; here He promises that what these men, the Apostles, bind or loose on earth, God in heaven will likewise bind or loose. But as the Council of Trent declares, Christ principally instituted the Sacrament of Penance after His Resurrection, a miracle greater than that of healing the sick. When he had said this, he breathed on them; and he said to them: Receive ye the Holy Ghost. While the sense of these words is quite obvious, the following points are to be considered: He prefaces this grant of power by

declaring that the mission of the Apostles is similar to that which He had received from the Father and which He had fulfilled: Now it is beyond doubt that He came into the world to destroy sin and that on various occasions He explicitly forgave sin Matthew 9: Christ not only declared that sins were forgiven, but really and actually forgave them; hence, the Apostles are empowered not merely to announce to the sinner that his sins are forgiven but to grant him forgiveness—"whose sins you shall forgive". If their power were limited to the declaration " God pardons you", they would need a special revelation in each case to make the declaration valid. The exercise of this power in either form forgiving or retaining is not restricted: Christ simply says "whose sins ". It is therefore clear from the words of Christ that the Apostles had power to forgive sins. Christ foresaw that even those who received faith and baptism , whether during the lifetime of the Apostles or later, would fall into sin and therefore would need forgiveness in order to be saved. He must, then, have intended that the power to forgive should be transmitted from the Apostles to their successors and be used as long as there would be sinners in the Church , and that means to the end of time. It is true that in baptism also sins are forgiven, but this does not warrant the view that the power to forgive is simply the power to baptize. In the first place, as appears from the texts cited above, the power to forgive is also the power to retain; its exercise involves a judicial action. But no such action is implied in the commission to baptize Matthew Furthermore, baptism , because it is a new birth, cannot be repeated, whereas the power to forgive sins penance is to be used as often as the sinner may need it. Hence the condemnation, by the same Council, of any one "who, confounding the sacraments , should say that baptism itself is the Sacrament of Penance, as though these two sacraments were not distinct and as though penance were not rightly called the second plank after shipwreck" Sess. These pronouncements were directed against the Protestant teaching which held that penance was merely a sort of repeated baptism ; and as baptism effected no real forgiveness of sin but only an external covering over of sin through faith alone, the same, it was alleged, must be the case with penance. This, then, as a sacrament is superfluous; absolution is only a declaration that sin is forgiven through faith , and satisfaction is needless because Christ has satisfied once for all men. This was the first sweeping and radical denial of the Sacrament of Penance. Some of the earlier sects had claimed that only priests in the state of grace could validly absolve , but they had not denied the existence of the power to forgive. During all the preceding centuries, Catholic belief in this power had been so clear and strong that in order to set it aside Protestantism was obliged to strike at the very constitution of the Church and reject the whole content of Tradition. Belief and practice of the early Church Among the modernistic propositions condemned by Pius X in the Decree "Lamentabili sane" 3 July, are the following: Moreover, even after penance came to be recognized as an institution of the Church , it was not called by the name of sacrament , because it was regarded as an odious sacrament. It is therefore Catholic doctrine that the Church from the earliest times believed in the power to forgive sins as granted by Christ to the Apostles. Such a belief in fact was clearly inculcated by the words with which Christ granted the power, and it would have been inexplicable to the early Christians if any one who professed faith in Christ had questioned the existence of that power in the Church. But if, contrariwise, we suppose that no such belief existed from the beginning, we encounter a still greater difficulty: But no such record is found; even those who sought to limit the power itself presupposed its existence , and their very attempt at limitation put them in opposition to the prevalent Catholic belief. Turning now to evidence of a positive sort, we have to note that the statements of any Father or orthodox ecclesiastical writer regarding penance present not merely his own personal view, but the commonly accepted belief ; and furthermore that the belief which they record was no novelty at the time , but was the traditional doctrine handed down by the regular teaching of the Church and embodied in her practice. In other words, each witness speaks for a past that reaches back to the beginning, even when he does not expressly appeal to tradition. Greater wrong could not be done than what they do in seeking to rescind His commands and fling back the office He bestowed. The Church obeys Him in both respects, by binding sin and by loosing it; for the Lord willed that for both the power should be equal" On Penance I. Again he teaches that this power was to be a function of the priesthood. The power to forgive extends to all sins: Against the same heretics St. Pacian, Bishop of Barcelona d. In the East during the same period we have the testimony of St. Cyril of Alexandria d. Wherefore, he concludes, "it were manifest folly to condemn so great a power without which we can neither obtain heaven nor come to the

fulfillment of the promises. Not only when they the priests regenerate us baptism , but also after our new birth, they can forgive us our sins " On the Priesthood III. These extracts show that the Fathers recognized in penance a power and a utility quite distinct from that of baptism. Repeatedly they compare in figurative language the two means of obtaining pardon; or regarding baptism as spiritual birth, they describe penance as the remedy for the ills of the soul contracted after that birth. But a more important fact is that both in the West and in the East, the Fathers constantly appeal to the words of Christ and given them the same interpretation that was given eleven centuries later by the Council of Trent. In this respect they simply echoed the teachings of the earlier Fathers who had defended Catholic doctrine against the heretics of the third and second centuries. Cyprian in his "De lapsis" A. The heretic Novatian , on the contrary, asserted that "it is unlawful to admit apostates to the communion of the Church ; their forgiveness must be left with God who alone can grant it" Socrates , Church History V. The distinction between sins that could be forgiven and others that could not, originated in the latter half of the second century as the doctrine of the Montanists , and especially of Tertullian. While still a Catholic , Tertullian wrote A. For these, however, he allows only one forgiveness: In the vestibule He has stationed a second repentance for opening to such as knock; but now once for all, because now for the second time; but never more, because the last time it had been in vain. However, if any do incur the debt of a second repentance, his spirit is not to be forthwith cut down and undermined by despair. Let it be irksome to sin again, but let it not be irksome to repent again; let it be irksome to imperil oneself again, but let no one be ashamed to be set free again. Repeated sickness must have repeated medicine" On Penance 7. Tertullian does not deny that the Church can forgive sins ; he warns sinners against relapse, yet exhorts them to repent in case they should fall. His attitude at the time was not surprising, since in the early days the sins above mentioned were severely dealt with; this was done for disciplinary reasons, not because the Church lacked power to forgive. In the minds , however, of some people the idea was developing that not only the exercise of the power but the power itself was limited. Against this false notion Pope Callistus published his "peremptory edict" in which he declares: In this work he rejects without scruple what he had taught as a Catholic: In place of it he sets up the distinction between lighter sins which the bishop could forgive and more grievous sins which God alone could forgive. Though in an earlier treatise, "Scorpiace" chapter 10 , he had said that "the Lord left here to Peter and through him to the Church the keys of heaven" he now denies that the power granted to Peter had been transmitted to the Church , i. Yet he claims this power for the "spirituals" pneumatici , although these, for prudential reasons, do not make use of it. To the arguments of the "Psychici", as he termed the Catholics , he replies: This I, even more than you, acknowledge and adjudge. I who in the new prophets have the Paraclete saying: Thus Tertullian , by the accusation which he makes against the pope and by the restriction which he places upon the exercise of the power of forgiving sin , bears witness to the existence of that power in the Church which he had abandoned.

**Chapter 6 : Church History: Why Does Church History Even Matter? - Timothy Paul Jones**

*Why the Enslaved Adopted the Religion of Their Masters and Transformed It. Dante Stewart Early Church and a look behind at her own history. If the church does this, she is less likely to.*

July 11, The Filioque Clause One of the things which has historically been a point of polemic and conflict between the Orthodox East and the Roman Catholic West is the use of the Filioque clause in the Creed. Lesson from Church History These declarations of Nicea and Constantinople came together in the final version of the Creed, the one we recite today at Divine Liturgy. Much later, Christians in the far west modern Spain to be precise were hard at it, slugging away dogmatically and combatting the Arians there who still maintained that Christ was not homoousios with the Father. From the days of Augustine these western Christians believed that the Spirit proceeded from the Father and the Son. Everyone believed that, they felt at least everyone in their western neighbourhood, so why not confess it in the Creed? That would stress in a big way the divinity of the Son and His equality with the Father. So when they recited the Creed, they sang that the Spirit proceeded from the Father and the Son. If asked they doubtless would have said that this was the original version of the Creed. And when they later met some Christians from the East who recited the Creed without the Filioque, they accused them indignantly of omitting this important clause. The reaction of those eastern Christians can be imagined. Since then, the East and the West have parted company, fighting over the use of the Filioque in the Creed among other things. It should be acknowledged that many thoughtful people in the world can make neither head nor tail out of this quarrel. It is, they feel, just one more example of the ridiculous and petty quarrelsome nature of the Christians, fighting tooth and nail over a single word. In particular, why are the Orthodox so stubborn over such trifles? At the end of the day, what does it matter? A few things may be said in response. First is the question of historical accuracy and honesty. Say, for example, that someone tinkered not with the Creed, but with the American national anthem. One could change The Star Spangled Banner into The Maple Leaf Forever if one wanted to, but honesty should compel all involved to acknowledge that this was a change from the original. In the same way, surely it is reasonable for the Orthodox East to insist that if Christians say that they are reciting the Creed from the fourth century then that Creed should be recited in its original form, simply as a matter of historical honesty. Of course Orthodox go on to further insist that the Filioque addition is doctrinally erroneous, the venerable opinions of St. Augustine and other western teachers notwithstanding. But even apart from matters of historical honesty and doctrinal truth, there are other considerations which even secular people should be able to understand. These considerations are two in number. First is the question of authority. When the western church after the Council of Trent that was the anti-Reformation council of the sixteenth century, as you recall wanted to appeal to authority, the first and strongest appeal was to the Pope in Rome. That is, a Roman Catholic reflexively appealed to the central authority in Rome to determine the truth in matters of controversy. But the eastern church has always appealed not to a single living institution. This is important, because it sets the tone for all our theology and for how we think and live today. For us, wisdom and the way forward into the future come from following in the trajectory of the past, not because we are bound by the limitations of those living long ago, but because we are freed by them from the tyranny of the present, a present with its blind spots and its slavery to fad and fashion. For us, Tradition is not a strait-jacket, but a set of wings. It means that we do not have to keep on trying to re-invent the wheel, only to get the shape wrong because current fashion favours octagons over circles. The second reason that the question of the inclusion or non-inclusion of the Filioque is important has to do with community. That is, to change the original wording of the Creed to include the Filioque would necessitate a new consensus of all the existing Orthodox churches. Take the example once again of the American national anthem. What matters with us is community and consensus, and no major changes in things like the Creed can be made without the whole community first agreeing to it. We march together as one. This means, given human timidity and the reluctance to move out of comfort zones, that change in Orthodoxy usually proceeds at a somewhat glacial pace. But given the catastrophic nature of changes which have occurred in churches outside her canonical borders, this may be a good thing. The

Orthodox reluctance to monkey with its Creed, that confession which has served as the doctrinal bedrock and the basis of unity, is entirely understandable. We think that the Creed as it stands to be historically original, doctrinally true, a witness to the patristic basis of our faith, and a safeguard of our conciliar unity. Not surprisingly therefore we will leave it as it is.

### Chapter 7 : The Filioque Clause - Orthodox Church in America

*by Alex Carmichael 1/24/ A Brief Apologetic for Understanding Church History. It is important to know and to learn from church history, as there will always be old heresies cropping up, appearing as new teachings.*

Under the program, those who came into the U. These individuals are then allowed to work legally for two years, subject to renewal. More than , immigrants who were brought to the U. In , 65 percent of DACA recipients were in college or graduate school. This would mean, at a minimum, that universities could refrain from offering information to Immigration and Customs Enforcement ICE. I am a literary scholar who writes about the literature and law of sanctuary in medieval England. Historically, sanctuary seeking demonstrates a moral duty “ and even a legal obligation “ to protect the vulnerable. It was a last resort for those accused of crimes, often under chase by the community. However, once fugitives crossed the threshold into the churchyard, the community that had failed to capture them was legally required to keep them safe and even feed them for up to 40 days. Sanctuary protection granted accused felons mercy from the king of England. Sanctuary delayed legal decision, which enabled people to negotiate alternatives. Churches provided a safe sanctuary in medieval England. Such sanctuary practices saved lives , both by providing time for negotiation and by allowing people to go into exile rather than stand trial. But more than that, they had a symbolic value: Although sanctuary for felons was outlawed by James I in , the use of sanctuary to claim protection for vulnerable people continued into the 19th and 20th centuries. Protest in the U. Rather than providing a procedural exception within the law, sanctuary in the U. For slaves on the Underground Railroad a network of routes and houses used by 19th-century slaves to escape the South and later, for organizers during the civil rights movement, churches provided sanctuary space for organizing meetings. Such sanctuaries could be dramatically breached, as in the case of the bombing of the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama. The church offered a safe space for civil rights activists, but that sense of safety was shattered when a bomb planted in its basement killed four young girls. That tragic event exposed the violence of American racism and led to the Civil Rights Act of The refugees were provided shelter, medical care, employment and legal representation. The administration of President Ronald Reagan had supported rebels in Nicaragua and El Salvador during the Cold War years as a way to resist socialist uprisings. This led to many human rights violations and an influx of refugees into the U. The Reagan administration, however, refused to admit the atrocities that were being committed by the Central American governments. That prompted religious activists, lawyers and migrants themselves to organize in open opposition to the Immigration and Naturalization Service INS. The sanctuary movement broke the immigration law in order to show that Central American immigrants were fleeing a U. Although most of the defendants in these trials were convicted, none was sentenced to jail time. The legislature eventually turned in favor of harboring Central American refugees. Sanctuary has continually sought to make American law more just “ even by working around or against the law. Sanctuary was instrumental in ending slavery and segregation at home, and in exposing human rights violations abroad. Why does this matter now? Today, there are practical limits to what colleges and universities can do without breaking the law. Just as the medieval law of sanctuary provided only bare-bones physical survival, so too universities can legally provide only limited resistance to deportation. Still, in concrete terms, sanctuary campuses could restrict campus police inquiries, provide counseling services for undocumented students, refuse to offer information about such students to Immigration and Customs Enforcement ICE and set up online courses for deported students. More than this, sanctuary campuses could recognize the vulnerability of their students and claim a moral right to protect them. Campuses could declare themselves free of bullying and hostility on the basis of immigration status, race, religion or sexuality. I believe making such declarations could help counter recent campus attacks. At Baylor University, the student who was shoved off the sidewalk was escorted to class the next day by a crowd far larger than necessary to keep her safe. In declaring sanctuary campuses, administrators have a rich symbolic opportunity. When universities publicly resist attacks on immigrants, religious minorities and people of color, that speaks to their core purpose. Universities are, by definition, sanctuaries. To declare them sanctuary campuses would emphasize that they are spaces where

students and faculty are free to think in innovative, critical and varied ways without harm to one another.

## Chapter 8 : History of Christian theology - Wikipedia

*Why does the Reformation matter today? Look to its main characters to understand. (NeONBRAND / Unsplash) Phillip Campbell is a lay Catholic history teacher, I like Early Church History.*

Summary Answering two objections to History One common objection that historians encounter is the instant put-down that is derived from Henry Ford I, the impresario of the mass automobile. In he stated sweepingly: Nonetheless, this is the phrasing that is attributed to Ford and it is this dictum that is often quoted by people wishing to express their scepticism about the subject. Well, then, what is the use of History, if it is only bunk? This rousing old-fashioned term, for those who have not come across it before, is derived from the Dutch *bunkum*, meaning rubbish or nonsense. Inwardly groaning, historians deploy various tactics in response. One obvious reaction is to challenge the terms of the question, in order to make questioners think again about the implications of their terminology. To demand an accountant-style audit of the instant usefulness of every subject smacks of a very crude model of education indeed. It implies that people learn only very specific things, for very specific purposes. For example, a would-be voyager to France, intending to work in that country, can readily identify the utility of learning the French language. Humans do not just learn gobbets of information for an immediate task at hand. And, much more fundamentally, the past and the present are not separated off into separate time-ghettos. Thus the would-be travellers who learn the French language are also learning French history, since the language was not invented today but has evolved for centuries into the present. And the same point applies all round. The would-be travellers who learn French have not appeared out of the void but are themselves historical beings. Their own capacity to understand language has been nurtured in the past, and, if they remember and repeat what they are learning, they are helping to transmit and, if needs be, to adapt a living language from the past into the future. Learning the French language is a valuable human enterprise, and not just for people who live in France or who intend to travel to France. Similarly, people learn about astronomy without journeying in space, about marine biology without deep-sea diving, about genetics without cloning an animal, about economics without running a bank, about History without journeying physically into the past, and so forth. The human mind can and does explore much wider terrain than does the human body though in fact human minds and bodies do undoubtedly have an impressive track record in physical exploration too. Huge amounts of what people learn is drawn from the past that has not been forgotten. But the second criticism levelled at the subject is that it is basic and boring. In other words, if History is not meaningless bunk, it is nonetheless poor fare, consisting of soul-sapping lists of facts and dates. Further weary sighs come from historians when they hear this criticism. It often comes from people who do not care much for the subject but who simultaneously complain that schoolchildren do not know key dates, usually drawn from their national history. Such pedagogic styles are best outlawed, although the information that they intended to convey is far from irrelevant. Facts and dates provide some of the basic building blocks of History as a field of study, but on their own they have limited meaning. Take a specific case. It would be impossible to comprehend 20th-century world history if given nothing but a list of key dates, supplemented by information about say population growth rates, economic resources and church attendance. On its own, information is not knowledge. That great truth cannot be repeated too often. Having access to abundant information, whether varnished or unvarnished, does not in itself mean that people can make sense of the data. In his novel *Hard Times*, 1 he invented the hard-nosed businessman, Thomas Gradgrind, who believes that knowledge is sub-divided into nuggets of information. In the Dickens novel, the Gradgrindian system comes to grief, and so it does in real life, if attempts are ever made to found education upon this theory. People need mental frameworks that are primed to understand and to assess the available data and “as often happens” to challenge and update both the frameworks and the details too. So the task of educationalists is to help their students to develop adaptable and critical minds, as well as to gain specific expertise in specific subjects. Above all, History students expect to study for themselves some of the original sources from the past; and, for their own independent projects, they are asked to find new sources and new arguments or to think of new ways of re-evaluating known sources to generate new arguments. Such educational processes are a long, long way

from memorising lists of facts. Such exercises are memory tests but not ways of evaluating an understanding of History. Noting two weak arguments in favour of studying History Some arguments in favour of studying History also turn out, on close inspection, to be disappointingly weak. These do not need lengthy discussion but may be noted in passing. But that says absolutely nothing about the content of the subject. These are abilities that History as a field of study is particularly good at inculcating. Nevertheless, the possession of analytical and interpretative skills is not a quality that is exclusive to historians. The chief point about studying History is to study the subject for the invaluable in-depth analysis and the long-term perspective it confers upon the entire human experience – the component skills being an essential ingredient of the process but not the prime justification. That response says something but the first phrase is wrong and the conclusion is far too weak. It implies that understanding the past and the legacies of the past is an optional extra within the educational system, with cultural value for those who are interested but without any general relevance. Such reasoning was behind the recent and highly controversial decision in Britain to remove History from the required curriculum for schoolchildren aged 14 – Yet, viewing the subject as an optional extra, to add cultural gloss, seriously underrates the foundational role for human awareness that is derived from understanding the past and its legacies. Dropping History as a universal subject will only increase rootlessness among young people. The decision points entirely in the wrong direction. Instead, educationalists should be planning for more interesting and powerful ways of teaching the subject. Celebrating the strong case for History Much more can be said – not just in defence of History but in terms of its positive advocacy. The best response is the simplest, as noted right at the start of this conversation. Here it should be reiterated that the subject is being defined broadly. In this discussion, History with a capital H means the academic field of study; and the subject of such study, the past, is huge. In practice, of course, people specialise. Indeed, the boundaries between the specialist academic subjects are never rigid. Legacies from the past are preserved but also adapted, as each generation transmits them to the following one. Sometimes, too, there are mighty upheavals, which also need to be navigated and comprehended. And there is loss. Not every tradition continues unbroken. But humans can and do learn also from information about vanished cultures – and from pathways that were not followed. The metaphor is not one of fixation, like dropping an anchor or trying to halt the flow of time. Another way of putting it is to have secure roots that will allow for continuity but also for growth and change. Nothing, indeed, can be more relevant to successful functioning in the here-and-now. The immediate moment, known as the synchronic, is always located within the long-term unfolding of time: And the converse is also true. The long term of history always contributes to the immediate moment. Hence my twin maxims, the synchronic is always in the diachronic. The present moment is always part of an unfolding long term, which needs to be understood. The diachronic is always in the synchronic: As living creatures, humans have an instinctive synchro-mesh, that gears people into the present moment. But, in addition to that, having a perspective upon longitudinal time, and history within that, is one of the strengths of the alert human consciousness. It may be defined as a parallel process of diachro-mesh, to coin a new term. On the strength of that experience, societies and individuals assess the long-term passage of events from past to present – and, in many cases, manage to measure time not just in terms of nanoseconds but also in terms of millennia. If educational systems do not provide a systematic grounding in the study of History, then people will glean some picture of the past and the role of themselves, their families, and their significant associations which include everything from nations and religions to local clubs and neighbourhood networks from a medley of other resources – from cultural traditions, from collective memories, from myths, rumours, songs, sagas, from political and religious teachings and customs, from their families, their friends, and from every form of human communication from gossip to the printing press and on to the web. People do learn, in other words, from a miscellany of resources that are assimilated both consciously and unconsciously. But what is learned may be patchy or confused, leaving some feeling rootless; or it may be simplified and partisan, leaving others feeling embattled or embittered. A good educational system should help people to study History more formally, more systematically, more accurately, more critically and more longitudinally. By that means, people will have access to a great human resource, compiled over many generations, which is the collective set of studies of the past, and the human story within that. Humans do not learn from the past, people sometimes

say. People certainly do not learn from the future. And the present is so fleeting that everything that is learned in the present has already passed into the past by the time it is consolidated. Of course humans learn from the past – and that is why it is studied. The repentance of Henry Ford: It has remained in circulation for 90 years since it was first coined. And it exemplifies a certain no-nonsense approach of the stereotypical go-ahead businessman, unwilling to be hide-bound by old ways. But Ford himself repented. He faced much derision for his apparent endorsement of know-nothingism. Some business leaders may perhaps affect contempt for what has gone before, but the wisest among them look to the past, to understand the foundations, as well as to the future, in order to build. Indeed, all leaders should reflect that arbitrary changes, imposed willy-nilly without any understanding of the historical context, generally fail. There are plenty of recent examples as well as long-ago case-histories to substantiate this observation. Politicians and generals in Iraq today – on all sides – should certainly take heed. He had spent the previous 15 years testing a variety of horseless carriages. It took a lot of human history to create the automobile. So the next invention that followed upon his innovations provided synchro-mesh gearing for these new motorised vehicles – and that change itself occurred within the diachro-mesh process of shared adaptations, major and minor, that were being developed, sustained, transmitted and revolutionised through time. Later in life, Henry Ford himself became a keen collector of early American antique furniture, as well as of classic automobiles. In this way, he paid tribute both to his cultural ancestry and to the cumulative as well as revolutionary transformations in human transportation to which he had so notably contributed. Moreover, for the Ford automobile company, there was a further twist in the tale.

*The church of Jesus Christ would be a place where every single person matters, where every member contributes to the health and mission of the church (see Eph ).*

Why Does It Matter? What is the Meaning and Spiritual Significance of Pentecost? How can Pentecost make a difference in your relationship with God? You may download this resource at no cost, for personal use or for use in a Christian ministry, as long as you are not publishing it for sale. All I ask is that you acknowledge the source of this material: For all other uses, please contact me at [markblog -at- markdroberts](mailto:markblog-at-markdroberts). Daily inspiration for your life and work. There is no cost. You can unsubscribe easily at any time. This coming Sunday, Christians across the world will celebrate Pentecost. In fact, not all Christians recognize this holiday holy day. Pentecost is not as well-known or as popular as the Christmas and Easter, though it commemorates a watershed event in Christian history. In many ways, Pentecost is the birthday of the church. For Christians, Pentecost is a holiday on which we commemorate the coming of the Holy Spirit on the early followers of Jesus. This is also true from a spiritual perspective, since the Spirit brings the church into existence and enlivens it. This name comes from an expression in Leviticus It was originally a harvest festival Exod What actually happened on that day of Pentecost? All of a sudden, a sound came from heaven, like a strong wind, filling the house where the people had gathered. Something like tongues of fire rested on their heads. Notice the tongues of fire on the heads of the people in the painting by Restout. The languages spoken by the early Christians were intelligible not other worldly and were heard by thousands of Jewish pilgrims who had come to Jerusalem to celebrate Shavuot. Many who heard these messages in their own languages were amazed, though others thought the Christians were just drunk 2: At some point, Peter, one of the leading followers of Jesus, stood up and preached his first sermon. He interpreted the events of that morning in light of a prophecy of the Hebrew prophet Joel. In that text, God promised to pour out his Spirit on all flesh, empowering diverse people to exercise divine power. When the crowd asked what they should do, Peter urged them to turn their lives around and be baptized in the name of Jesus. Then they would be forgiven and would receive the gift of the Holy Spirit 2: Acts reports that about 3,000 people were added to the church that day 2: Should we believe that all of this actually happened? In fact, some scholars have questioned the historicity of Acts 2. They observe that this event appears in the New Testament only in Acts, and that it describes miraculous events that are beyond the scope of historical inquiry. These scholars tend to view Pentecost as a powerful metaphor for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the early church, rather than as an event that gave birth to the church. Whether we believe the biblical account of Pentecost has everything to do with our estimation of the historical trustworthiness of Acts of the Apostles and the possibility of miraculous events actually happening. Of course, as a Christian, I also believe that God could send the Spirit in astounding ways and empower people to speak in languages that they did not know. How is Pentecost related to Pentecostal Christians? Pentecostal Christianity used to be a small segment of Protestantism, but today it has spread throughout the world and is the fastest growing form of Christianity. Many Christians who are not Pentecostals nevertheless celebrate Pentecost and hope that the Holy Spirit will renew and empower the church, though not necessarily with the particular manifestations of the first Pentecost. How do Christians celebrate Pentecost? As you might expect, there are a wide range of Christian celebrations of Pentecost. Some churches do not recognize the holiday at all. Most churches at least mention it in prayer, song, or sermon. Some churches go all out, with worship focused on remembering the first Pentecost and praying for a similar outpouring of divine power. Churches that employ liturgical colors generally use red on Pentecost as a symbol of power and fire of the Spirit. A couple of years ago, my church, St. Centuries ago in Britain, those joining the church wore white for baptism. What might God want to do in our lives and in our churches on Pentecost? What is the Spiritual Significance of Pentecost? What actually happened on the day of Pentecost? I will be writing as a Christian, and though my comments are addressed primarily to my fellow believers, they may be of interest to others as well. So, then, what difference does it make for us today that the first Christians were filled with the Holy Spirit almost two millennia ago on the Jewish festival of Pentecost? There is no simple, one-size-fits-all answer to this question,

because Pentecost knits together several themes, emphases, and experiences. I will suggest four possible ways that Pentecost matters today. On the day of Pentecost, seven weeks after the resurrection of Jesus, the Holy Spirit was poured out upon those followers of Jesus who had gathered together in Jerusalem. What happened on the first Pentecost continues to happen to Christians throughout the world today, though usually not in such a dramatic fashion. We rarely get a heavenly wind and tongues of fire anymore. Nevertheless, God pours out the Spirit upon all who put their faith in Jesus Christ and become his disciples see Romans 8: Christians are meant to live in the presence and power of the Spirit of God. The Spirit guides us Gal 5: Pentecost presents us with an opportunity to consider how we are living each day. Are we attentive to the guidance of the Holy Spirit? Is the fruit of the Spirit love, joy, peace, etc. Most Christians I know, including me, live in the presence and power of the Spirit, but only to an extent. Pentecost offers a chance to confess our failure to live by the Spirit and to ask the Lord to fill us afresh with his power. This gathering became the first Christian church. New believers in Jesus were baptized as they joined this church. They, along with the first followers of Jesus, shared life together, focusing on teaching, fellowship, breaking of bread, and prayer. They shared their belongings so that no one was hungry or needy. Thus we speak of Pentecost as the birthday of the church. In theory, the Spirit could have been poured out on the followers of Jesus when they were not gathered together. There are surely times when the Holy Spirit touches an individual who is alone in prayer, worship, or ministry to others. But the fact that the Spirit was given to a gathering of believers is not incidental. The actions of the earliest Christians put all of this in boldface. The Holy Spirit is not only given to individuals, but also, in a sense to the gathered people of God. Many Christians, especially those of us who have been influenced by the individualism of American culture, live as if the church is useful but unnecessary. We seem to believe that as long as we have a personal relationship with God, everything else is secondary. But Pentecost is a vivid illustration of the truth that is found throughout Scripture: Thus, Pentecost invites us to consider our own participation in the fellowship, worship, and mission of the church. It is a time to renew our commitment to live as an essential member of the body of Christ, using our gifts to build the church and share the love and justice of Christ with the world. Symbolically, this miracle reinforces the multilingual, multicultural, multiracial mission of the church. As Paul writes in Galatians 3: Although there are some glorious exceptions, it seems that the church has not, in general, lived out its multilingual mission. We are often divided according to language, race, and ethnicity. Pentecost challenges all of us to examine our own attitudes in the regard, to reject and repent of any prejudice that lurks within us, and to open our hearts to all people, even and especially those who do not share our language and culture. Yes, I know this is not easy. But it is central to our calling. And it is something that the Spirit of God will help us to do if we are available. The Inclusive Ministry of the Church After the Holy Spirit fell upon the first followers of Jesus, Peter preached a sermon to help folks understand what had just happened. In this sermon he cited a portion of a prophecy from Joel: Your sons and daughters will prophesy. Your young men will see visions, and your old men will dream dreams. In those days I will pour out my Spirit even on my servantsâ€”men and women alikeâ€”and they will prophesy. This was a momentous, watershed event. For the first time in history, God began to do what he had promised through Joel, empowering all different sorts of people for ministry. Although this truth would not mean that every Christian would be gifted for every kind of ministry, it did imply that all believers would be empowered by the Spirit. The church of Jesus Christ would be a place where every single person matters, where every member contributes to the health and mission of the church see Eph 4: Each Christian needs to ask: Am I serving God through the power of the Spirit? Am I exercising the gifts of the Spirit in my life, both in the gathered church and as I live for God in the world?