

Power and the Kingdom: The Crusades and Inquisition

Overview

Shock. Disbelief. Embarrassment. Disgust. These strong words describe the feelings of many Christians when they study the church's activity during the time of the inquisition and Crusades. 21st century believers in countries where walls exist between the church and the state, and where the church consists of hundreds of denominations, often share similar feelings of revulsion and confusion.

For many, the history of the church is difficult to reconcile with the origins of Christianity. Jesus was tortured and executed as a despised teacher. Most of the original apostles were martyrs. The early church was persecuted first by the Jewish establishment, and then by Roman rulers. Then how did the church come to sanction military crusades and various forms of persecution as methods of dealing with unbelievers and heretics?

What can we learn from this ugly part of church history? How do these historical events and approaches relate to the challenges facing our contemporary church?

In this issue we will address the following questions:

- How should Christian beliefs influence governmental laws?
- Is war justifiable or moral? Should Christians support war? Under what conditions?
- To what lengths should Christians go to oppose the oppressive and hostile forces of other religions?
- What actions should the church take when its integrity and survival is threatened?
- What dangers threaten the church when it achieves earthly power?

Power and the Kingdom

Understanding the Setting

The early church arose in the context of a Jewish system in which religion and the state were inseparable. In the Old Testament, faith was so linked with civil authority that war was seen as part of God's divine plan. Moreover, there was no distinction between the spiritual law and the laws of the state. This meant that those who failed to obey God's commands were disciplined and punished. Even in the time of Christ the high priest was involved in the decision to crucify Jesus.

Over the centuries there were many changes in the relationship between the church and state. For its first 300 years, the church had no political power. Rather, it experienced periods of intense persecution. Then, in 313 with the Edict of Milan, Constantine created political toleration for the church. Eventually Christianity became the official religion of the Roman Empire. After the fall of Rome, the Roman church developed increased power as a stabilizing force in Western Europe. In sharing power with secular leaders the church was able to influence the affairs of the state. In Medieval times, political power was held by feudal lords while the power of the church in the West was held by the Pope. Both the Crusades and the Inquisition characterized this melding of power between church and the state.

1000

1054 Great schism of Church (East/West)
1095-99 First Crusade

1100

1147-49 Second Crusade
1188-92 Third Crusade

1200

1201-04 Fourth Crusade
1212 Children's Crusade
1228-29 Fifth Crusade
1232 Pope Gregory IX establishes Inquisition
1248-54 Sixth Crusade
1270-72 Seventh Crusade

Step 1: Grasp the Issue

Sound Bites

“How is it that Christians, called to dispense the aroma of amazing grace, instead pollute the world with the noxious fumes of ungrace? If grace is so amazing, why don’t Christians show more of it?” – Phillip Yancey

“Jesus was in the business of cleaning up society one person at a time from the inside. He held out little hope for reforming societal systems or getting pagans to behave themselves better through public pressure. He called for a revolution of the heart, which in turn would make all the difference in visible conduct. Somehow he thought this was more effective in the long run.” – Dean Merrill

“For the first three centuries, no Christian writing which has survived to our time condoned Christian participation in war.” – Kenneth Latourette

“Every Christian reformation is accompanied by violence.” – Jonathan Riley-Smith

“[The Inquisition] was an ugly business, but almost everyone, after Augustine, agreed that saving the body by amputating a limb was the path of wisdom. Clearly the Church of Rome was the body and the heretic the rotten limb.” – Bruce Shelley

Case Studies

Your 22-year-old son no longer attends church, and has even pulled away from most of his Christian friends. “I refuse to be a part of organized religion. The whole system is based on an abuse of power and an attempt to impose beliefs on others. It has more to do with human greed and lust for power than with the teachings of Christ.”

In light of the church’s history, how would you respond? Is he right?

Power and the Kingdom

In a church board meeting, one leader has asked that a member of the church be removed from the church roster and asked to leave. Despite loving confrontation by the church's leaders for false teaching, he continues to undermine the pastor, and has convinced several families to join his faction. In his defense, another elder stands and says, "It is not for us to judge his motives, nor to enforce God's will. Jesus said that it was not our job to try to pluck the weeds from the wheat. We should leave that to him."

How would you respond?

Your pastor has just preached a great sermon on the tragedy of abortion. As you leave church with one of your good friends, you pick up a voter's guide to help select pro-life candidates for the upcoming election. To your surprise, your friend says, "I think this effort is so misguided. We keep trying to impose our values on others, rather than introducing people to Christ. I think we just polarize people with our anger. The key to fighting abortion is changing hearts not laws."

What would you say?

What are some questions we need to explore as we seek to gain a better understanding of this issue?

Step 2: Study the Scriptures

John 18:36

- What are the implications of Jesus' statement for Christians' relationship to governmental power?

1 Peter 2:11-17

- What guidelines for our relationship to government do you find in this passage?
- Do you think these principles would have been different in a Christian culture, with Christians in governmental positions? Why?

1 Corinthians 5:1-5, 9-13

2 Corinthians 2:5-8

- What principles for church discipline are found in these passages?

Power and the Kingdom

Step 3: Consult Other Sources

How did a church established by a persecuted and executed homeless person become an organization that sanctioned war and torture to enforce the faith? Reading 1 very briefly fills in the blanks over the 1000 year period from Constantine to the time of the Crusades and Inquisition. The Crusades represent a response to two perceived threats to the Christian faith – one external and one internal. Reading 2 contains a fascinating interview with a professor of history to help understand the mindset and logic behind the Crusades. Reading 3 discusses the church’s response to a flood of heresies that threatened to undermine the core teaching and beliefs of the church. As we noted in Issue 5, the problem of heresy was already being addressed the church leaders in church councils beginning in the 4th century. But the response of the church to these threats would change with the rise of the Papacy and the church’s acquisition of worldly power.

As you read, try to answer these questions: How did the relationship between the church and state change over time? How did the concept of the “church” change? How did Christians justify the use of violence? How did the Crusades change the world’s view of the church? How did the church come to a place where it would authorize torture to enforce correct doctrine?

“Overview,” by Justo Gonzalez.

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“Persecution and Inquisition,” by Ronald Finucane.

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Overview by Justo Gonzalez

The Christian Empire

From the Edict of Milan (313) to the Fall of the Last Roman Emperor of the West (476)

With the “conversion” of the Emperor Constantine, things changed radically. The persecuted church became first the tolerated church, and eventually the official religion of the Roman Empire. In consequence the church, which until then was composed mostly of people from the lower echelons of society, made headway among the aristocracy.

The change was not easy, and Christians responded in many different ways. Some were so grateful for the new situation that it was difficult for them to take a critical stance before the government and society. Others fled to the desert or to remote places and took up the monastic life. Still others simply broke away from the majority church, insisting that they were the true church. There was also a pagan reaction of people seeking to re-establish the ancient religion and its relationship with the state.

The most outstanding leaders of Christianity took a middle position: they continued living in the cities and taking part of the life of society, but with a critical stance. It was thus that, finally freed from the constant threat of persecution, the church produced some of its greatest teachers. It was a time in which great theological treatises were produced, as well as important works of spirituality, and the first history of the church. But it was also a time of bitter theological controversies—especially the one that had to do with Arianism and Trinitarian doctrine.

This period came to an end with the

invasions of the “barbarians,” Germanic peoples who broke into the Roman Empire and settled in its territories. In the year 410, the Goths took and sacked Rome itself, and in 476 the last Western emperor (Romulus Augustus) was deposed.

The Early Middle Ages

From the Fall of Romulus Augustus (476) to the Schism between East and West (1054)

Since the Roman Empire had earlier been divided into two main regions (the Western Empire, where Latin was spoken, and the Eastern, where Greek was spoken), the invasions of the “barbarians” did not affect all of Christendom in the same way. They had a much deeper impact on the Latin-speaking Western church than on the Eastern and Greek-speaking branch of Christianity.

In the Latin West (what today is Spain, France, Italy, etc.) there was a period of chaos. The Empire ceased to exist, and its place was taken by a number of barbarian kingdoms. Since these were times of pain, death, and disorder, Christian worship, instead of centering on the victory of the Lord and on his resurrection, began to be concerned more and more with death, sin, and repentance. Therefore communion, which until then had been a celebration, became a funeral service, in which one was to think more on one’s own sins than on the victory of the Lord.

Much of the ancient culture disappeared, and the only institution that preserved some of it was the church. For that reason, even in the midst of chaos, the church became ever stronger and more influential, with

Power and the Kingdom

monasticism and the papacy playing important roles in the process.

Meanwhile in the East, the Roman Empire (now called also the Byzantine Empire) continued for another thousand years. There the state was much more powerful than the church, and the former frequently imposed its will on the latter. There were also in that area important theological controversies that helped clarify Christological doctrine. One of the results of these controversies was a number of dissident or independent churches that continue to this day—churches that usually go by the designations “Nestorian” and “Monophysite.”

Toward the middle of this period Islam arose as a new threat to the church. It soon conquered vast territories and cities that until then had been important centers in the life of the church—Jerusalem, Antioch, Alexandria, Carthage, etc.

At the same time that Islam was experiencing its greatest territorial expansion, in western Europe a new political power was growing in the Kingdom of the Franks, whose most powerful ruler was Charlemagne. In the year 800 the Pope crowned Charlemagne “emperor,” in an attempt to resurrect the ancient Western Roman Empire. Although the new empire was never the same as the old, the title (and sometimes the power) continued to exist for centuries.

The result was that Christianity, which until that time had existed mainly around an axis running from east to west across the Mediterranean, now began to revolve around a new line running from north to south, from the kingdom of the Franks to Rome. However, although here in the West the church seemed to be quite powerful, the truth was that it had difficulty trying to stem the surrounding chaos—and that to a degree the strife within the church itself contributed to the chaos. The

measure of order that was achieved took the form of “feudalism,” in which each feudal lord followed his own policies, making war as he pleased, and sometimes even falling into brigandage.

It was in the East that there was still a certain degree of order, and where the literature and the knowledge of antiquity were best preserved. But Constantinople, the ancient capital of the Byzantine Empire, was progressively losing its influence. Probably the greatest achievement of Byzantine Christianity was the conversion of Russia, usually dated on the year 988. The relation between the East and the West became increasingly tense, until the definitive rupture in 1054.

The High Point of the Middle Ages

From the Schism Between East and West (1054) to the Beginning of the Decline of the Papacy (1303)

The Western church stood in need of a radical reformation, and this came from among the ranks of monasticism. Eventually those monastics who longed for a reformation came to take hold of the papacy, which gave rise to a series of reformist popes. This however led to conflict between the secular and the ecclesiastical authorities, and particularly between popes and emperors.

This was the time of the Crusades, which began in 1095 and lasted for several centuries. And it was also the time of the Spanish “Reconquista”—the process by which the Moors were expelled from the Iberian Peninsula.

In part as a result of the Crusades, commerce flourished, and in consequence the cities also grew, for they themselves were centers of trade. Money, which had practically

Power and the Kingdom

disappeared during the earlier period, began to circulate again. These events gave rise to a new class, the “bourgeoisie” (that is, people from the city), who lived by trade and later through the development of industry.

As a response to the new conditions, several new monastic orders arose. Most important among them were the Franciscans and Dominicans, known as mendicant orders for their practice of supporting themselves through begging. They produced a new awakening in missionary work, and also penetrated the universities, where they became the leaders in the theology of the time—a theology called “scholastic.” That theology reached its high point in Bonaventure (a Franciscan) and Thomas

Aquinas (a Dominican).

The growth of cities also gave rise to the great cathedrals. The “romanesque” style that had dominated ecclesiastical architecture in the earlier period now ceded its place to “gothic,” which produced the most impressive cathedrals of all times.

Finally, it was also during this period that the papacy reached the height of its prestige and power, in the person of Innocent III (1198-1216). But already toward the end of this period, in the year 1303, the papacy had begun its decline.



Power and the Kingdom

Holy Violence Then and Now

by Jonathan Riley-Smith

In the first three centuries, Christians were pacifists. By 1096, they embarked on a holy war. What caused such a huge change?

First, the early church was not entirely pacifist. In Romans 13, for example, Paul justifies the violence of the pagan emperor, for the emperor is yet a minister of God. And Christians served in the Roman army from the second century on.

Following the conversion of the emperors, in the fourth century, the church became more open to using violence. Church leaders, after an initial shock, began supporting the use of force against heretics.

Then Augustine formulated his theory of “just war,” but his terms effectively mean “holy war.” Augustine and the medieval world concluded that violence is not evil. Instead, violence is morally neutral. That makes a crusade possible.

How did medieval Christians support their idea that violence was morally neutral?

Augustine gave this example: Suppose a man has gangrene in the leg and is going to die. The surgeon believes the only way to save him is by amputating the leg. Against the man’s will, the surgeon straps him to a table and saws off the leg. That is an act of extreme violence.

But was that violence evil? Augustine said no. And if you find one exception to the idea that violence is evil, he concluded, then violence cannot be intrinsically evil.

Thus, for medieval theologians, violence may or may not be evil; it depends largely on the intention of the perpetrator. Until the

sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, this was the normative Christian view. In fact, the majority of Christians over 2,000 years have believed that violence may be justified under certain circumstances.

It’s one thing to say violence is morally neutral, but how did the crusaders justify an offensive strike against Islam?

If you had asked a canon lawyer (theologian), he would have said the crusades were *defensive*: Christians were defending their brothers and sisters in the East from Muslim aggression and oppression, or they were regaining land that had been taken by Muslims. Senior churchmen maintained that when Christianity goes to war, it can only be in defense or for the recovery of property.

But if you had mingled with a crowd of knights in the late eleventh century, they would have said they were fighting for “the liberation of Jerusalem”. That’s not so hard to understand when you consider that Christians reach the same conclusions today.

Should Christians crusade today?

Think about the more militant advocates of Christian liberation. Although liberationists argue for rebellion rather than war, they put forward arguments that were made in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries: Violence is morally neutral; Christ intends people to live in just political structures; Christ is present in the process of liberation; we must show solidarity with our oppressed brothers and sisters; dying in this cause is martyrdom.

Power and the Kingdom

It's often said that Christians were more cruel than the Muslims—for example, when they captured a city. Do you think that's true?

I don't think it is. The case that is always given is this: When the Christians took Jerusalem in 1099, they mercilessly sacked the city, killing nearly everyone; but when the Muslims under Saladin captured Jerusalem in 1187, they allowed captives to go free.

But that example accords with the medieval laws of war: if a city surrenders, you don't sack it; if it resists, you do. Jerusalem resisted in 1099, and it was sacked. When it surrendered in 1187, it was not. In actuality, you find cruelty on both sides.

We must also be aware of combat psychology. Long campaigns, as many of the crusades were, put tremendous stress on combatants. Today we recognize that under the stress of battle and fatigue, discipline can disintegrate, often with tragic consequences.

In the late nineteenth century, people looked at the crusaders and said, "These are brutal men." Modern historians are likely to add, "These are also brutalized men."

Yet how can we understand the slaughtering of entire villages of Jews in Germany? This happened at the very beginning of a campaign.

In this area, the Christians behaved abominably. Too often, Christians have excused these horrendous persecutions on the grounds that they were led by peasants and rabble. That is not strictly true; the so-called People's Crusade was led by a significant number of nobles and knights. We have to face up to the terrible crimes committed by these Christians.

Why did they do it? Remember that in order to sell the crusading idea to the masses,

preachers had to use ideas that people understood. And they used terms of family: "The Eastern Christians are your brothers and sisters, and they are being persecuted by the Muslims. Christ is your Father, and he has been shamed, because his estate has been taken away by the Muslims. You must go to defend your brothers and sisters and to recover your Father's patrimony!"

This was the great age of the vendetta, and knights and nobles immediately thought in terms of blood feud and revenge. They responded to this preaching: "We are called upon to avenge the occupation of our Father's land in 638 [when Muslims occupied the Holy Land]."

But soon they added, "What about the destruction of his body in 33? Why shouldn't we punish these people who have disparaged our Father's honor even more than the Muslims did?"

Church leaders tried to halt that line of reasoning, but once they had taken the cork out of the bottle, they could not put it back in.

How much did greed for land or riches motivate crusaders?

Very little, because most crusaders became poorer as a result of their crusades.

A German knight called to fight in Italy in the mid-twelfth century, for example, expected his expenses to be twice his annual salary. If we assume that to live like a knight now would require \$50,000 a year, that means his expenses were \$100,000. A French or English knight crusading to the Holy Land might spend twice as much! The only way to raise this much money was to sell property.

Neither did crusaders get rich from booty. They did bring home relics, but you cannot sell relics; canon law forbids it. I know of no case of a crusader returning home rich.

Power and the Kingdom

We picture people, without a thought in the world, galloping off to the East. But we have to remember how unpleasant crusades were. Medieval Christians were frightened by them. Would you want to walk 2,000 miles, starve yourself periodically, drink only the dirtiest water, and subject yourself to violence?

How many people did, in fact, venture forth to crusade? And how many died as a result?

Throughout the crusading period, only a minority of people actually went on a crusade. The First Crusade was organized when there were probably 50,000 nobles and knights in France alone, yet only about 5,000 of these went.

As far as those who died, we simply don't have accurate information. Thousands and thousands, certainly. But from the medieval perspective, death is beside the point. Humbert of Romans, a great crusades preacher, said, "The aim of Christianity is not to fill the earth, but to fill heaven."

What happened to the crusading ideal once Christians were expelled from the Holy Land in 1291?

The traditional date, 1291, is convenient for marking the end of the crusades for Jerusalem. But 1291 is no longer a significant date to crusades historians.

There are as many crusades going on in the fourteenth century as there were in the thirteenth—some against Muslims, and some against heretics. Even as late as 1580 you have a crusade to Morocco that fits all the features of crusading.

We think of the Crusades as a military and political failure. Is that true?

In the Holy Land, they did fail. But the larger crusading movement was successful in preserving Christian Europe. Europe was threatened by Islam. For example, Muslims were advancing from the late fourteenth century to the late seventeenth century. Vienna, in the heart of Europe, was besieged twice—once in 1683, which is not very long ago. People were terrified of being invaded.

What would have happened in Spain, the Balkans, and in northern Europe without the various crusades against Muslims? The Muslims would have advanced, and the history of Europe and of Christianity would have been entirely different.

What were some of the unintended results of crusading?

One was a great advance in the field of nursing.

At the time, surgery was extremely limited. But the Salerno school of medicine taught that you should keep patients warm, clean, and quiet. This method was adopted by a crusader military order, the Hospitallers of St. John, and because of their influence, it spread throughout Western Europe.

The Crusades also introduced the income tax, without which no modern government could finance itself.

Did crusades bring any benefit to the church, to the average Christian?

The Crusades also developed the use of indulgences. For Protestants, this is a sticky affair, because they see how the indulgence was later corrupted. But for Catholics, the fully developed indulgence was a great advance in pastoral care.

Power and the Kingdom

Medieval men and women, especially in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, were obsessed with their sinfulness. They felt themselves locked in a world of sin, a world from which there was only one escape: renouncing the world entirely and going into a religious community.

Penance was available, of course, but one had to pay back to God an equivalent of the sin committed. Medieval Christians instinctively knew nothing they could do—crawling on their knees to Rome, standing in a stream for six months, whatever— could compensate for sin.

The indulgence simply said, “Such is God’s mercy, that he will treat your penitent act as though it were satisfactory (even though it is not).” Indulgences were an application of God’s love and mercy and grace to an uneasy conscience.

With an indulgence to go on a crusade, people didn’t have to enter the monastery. By traveling or soldiering, they could get on their way to heaven.

This yearning for salvation sounds like the spiritual unrest just prior to the Protestant Reformation.

It is very similar. The Crusades come during the eleventh-century reformation.

In Europe today, if you drive five miles along any road, you will probably find two churches. Nearly all of those churches are built on eleventh- and twelfth-century foundations. Previously, there might have been one church every twenty miles, from which priests would go out to serve the sacraments. Eleventh-century reformers believed religion should be taken into the villages, and this evangelizing drive resulted in a great building program. This burst of construction ranks with anything the Roman

Empire did. Someone in 1032 said, “France is becoming white with churches.”

Now, as one historian has pointed out, every Christian reformation is accompanied by violence—take for example, the Protestant Reformation, which led into the wars of religion. The eleventh-century reformation was no exception.

Are the Crusades a root of the problems in the Middle East today between Christians, Jews, and Arabs?

They might have contributed to the problem. If you talk to Arabs now, they express bitter feelings about crusading.

Ironically, the Arabs actually won the Holy Land Crusades. Christians as a political and military force were driven out in 1291 and haven’t returned since.

What should we think of crusaders?

First, we need to understand that medieval crusaders are likely to be our relatives. If you are of Western European origin, you have nearly a 100-percent chance of being a direct descendant of someone who had a link with a crusade. Even if your ancestors did not go on a crusade, they would have paid taxes to finance crusades, and they would have attended crusade sermons.

Second, as a historian I try to understand what people did and why they did it. Why did medieval Christians risk their lives and sacrifice nearly all they owned to crusade? Given the historical setting and their understanding, were these people trying to express love of God and neighbor through crusading? Though I cannot condone all of their actions, I have to say they were.



Power and the Kingdom

Persecution and Inquisition

by Ronald Finucane

What was the Inquisition?

The Inquisition was a special court with a peculiar power to judge intentions as well as actions. It was made up of several officials who assisted inquisitors in various ways: delegates—examiners who handled preliminary investigations and formalities; the *socius*—a personal adviser and companion to the inquisitor; familiars—guards, prison visitors and secret agents; and notaries, who carefully collected evidence and filed it efficiently for present and future instances of suspected heresy. Usually a few dozen councillors were present, but since the inquisitor was not bound to follow their advice, their role was often merely formal. The bishop, too, would be represented, even though there was not always cooperation between bishops and inquisitors.

As to classifying suspected heretics, the widest and most vague description would be applied in the first instance, and eventually specialized phrases came to be used. Distinctions were made between heretics who had additional beliefs and those who denied orthodox beliefs, and between perfected and imperfect heretics; or again, since mere suspicion was sufficient cause to be summoned, individuals were classified as lightly suspect, vehemently suspect, or violently suspect. The web was carefully woven, and it was often simpler to confess than to try to defend oneself.

The inquisitor or his vicar would arrive suddenly, deliver a sermon to the townspeople calling for reports of anyone suspected of heresy, and for all who felt heresy within

themselves to come forth and confess, within a period of grace. This was the ‘general inquisition’. When the period of grace expired, the ‘special inquisition’ began, with a summons to suspected heretics who were detained until trial.

At this trial the inquisitor had complete control as judge, prosecutor and jury. The proceedings were not public, evidence from two witnesses was sufficient, and it was usually possible to learn only the general nature of the charges. The names of witnesses, who might be of most questionable character, were equally difficult to discover. The suspect was not allowed a defence lawyer or, rather, lawyers quickly discovered that defence of a suspected heretic might result in their own summons to the Holy tribunal. Certain pleas might be accepted as an alternative to admitting the charges; for example, ignorance, or that the charge was brought by malice—but since the suspect did not know the names of his accusers, he could at best merely provide the court with a list of individuals whom he suspected of such hatred towards him. Trials might continue for years, during which the suspect could languish in prison. Torture was a most effective means to secure repentance. Though it could not be *repeated*, torture could be *continued*, and though torture of children and old people had to be relatively light, only pregnant women were exempt—until after delivery.

‘Penance’ following confession might be light, such as the hearing of a number of masses or, more commonly, pilgrimage to specific local or distant shrines, where scourging might be prescribed. Confessed

heretics were sometimes forced to wear symbols denoting their fallen state, such as crosses of special design and colour. Penitents might instead (or in addition) be fined or have their property confiscated. In some countries, heirs who were not heretics might subsequently recover these lands. A sentence to the inquisitorial prison was among the heaviest of penances, and degrees of detention were specified as open or strict. Besides loss of liberty heretics suffered civil ‘death’, and were disqualified from holding office or making legal contracts. In many cases sentences could be cut for a price. But the papacy found this and many of the other penances too harsh or extortionate, and at times particular inquisitors were directed to cool their ardour.

For a final group of heretics, the ‘unreconciled’—classified as insubordinate, impenitent, or relapsed—a much more terrible fate was in store. The first two categories could still save themselves from the flames, to suffer less severe punishment. But for the last, especially after the middle of the thirteenth century, the only possibility was death at the stake. This the Inquisition entrusted to the secular authorities, which pronounced and carried out the sentence, since the church could not shed blood.

Did the Inquisition succeed?

The success of the Inquisition varied from one region to another, depending upon political relations with the papacy and the amount of co-operation given by local church dignitaries. Its influence was affected by events such as the Avignon ‘Captivity’ and the papal Schism. In Spain the Inquisition had come under secular control as early as 1230, but it was not until 1480 that the Catholic monarchs Ferdinand and Isabella made the Spanish Inquisition a royal instrument with its

centre at Madrid. This near-independence in Spain produced a unique institution which was very influential until the nineteenth century.

In Germany, papal and imperial feuds meant that the course of the Inquisition never ran smoothly. Conrad of Marburg is perhaps the best-known of thirteenth-century inquisitors; his reign of terror resulted in his murder. In the middle of the fourteenth century further attempts to enforce inquisitorial procedure in Germany met with little success, and by the end of the fifteenth century the papacy allowed German church dignitaries to oversee the Inquisition.

France was the scene of extensive activity by the Inquisition. Though the Cathars were of little importance after the mid-fourteenth century, constant demands were made upon the Inquisition. For example, after the condemnation of the Franciscan Spirituals in 1317, the Inquisition in Languedoc directed its energies against them and in 1318 four Spirituals were executed at Marseilles. The Beguines, too, came under attack and some were executed about 1320; but the Waldensians proved more elusive.

Northern France, too, saw some inquisitorial activity. The Inquisitor Robert le Bougre, active during the 1230s, was imprisoned by the pope for an excess of zeal after rampaging through northern France in search of heretics. In the fourteenth century the Flemish-German doctrines of the Free Spirit resulted in some executions in the north, but after the mid-fourteenth century the French *Parlement* and the University of Paris tended to manipulate the Inquisition for political ends. During the fifteenth century, pressure from the Inquisition declined generally except for sporadic condemnations of those with Hussite views.

Italy, too, had much business for the Inquisition, particularly against the Cathars

Power and the Kingdom

who were strong in the north. After the assassination of the Inquisitor Peter Martyr in 1252, the Dominican inquisitors in Lombardy were increased from four to eight. There was much local resistance to this papal institution in those states which had a tradition of political independence. Venice especially resented the intrusion of the Inquisition, and heresy remained a matter for the civil government of that powerful city-state. In the Papal States themselves, inquisitors found that any enemy of the pope was automatically suspected of heresy, but, on the other hand, in the Alps the Waldensians managed to survive through the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries in spite of harassment.

In two countries, England and Bohemia, the Inquisition made little impact. Heresy became a problem in England with Wyclif's doctrinal and the Lollard's political-social movements of the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries. But the fact that Parliament passed a statute in 1401 for the burning of heretics indicates how little reference there was to the Inquisition. According to church law such a statute was superfluous. Though inquisitors entered Bohemia in 1318, little

headway was made during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries in the independent atmosphere before the Hussites. In both England and Bohemia the political situation clearly restricted the effectiveness of the Inquisition.

Inquisitors were not all agitated zealots such as Conrad of Marburg. Most were well-educated and devoted to what they considered their duty. Some of them produced treatises for the use of other inquisitors. Of these, perhaps the best-known were by Bernard Gui, inquisitor in southern France in the early fourteenth century, and Nicholas Eymeric in Aragon in the later fourteenth century. With the publication of *Malleus Maleficarum* (*Hammer of Witches*) by Kramer and Sprenger in Germany in the late fifteenth century, in which sorcery became a terrible heresy and the main purpose of the inquisitor to detect and eradicate witchcraft, there arose a different and in some ways far more sinister world of persecution.



Power and the Kingdom

Step 5: Discuss the Issue

1. What associations do you have from your personal history about the church's exerting power over others? What experiences have shaped these associations?
2. The church of the middle ages was based on a power sharing relationship with the state that was likely influenced by the theocratic model of the nation of Israel. How do you reconcile the teachings of the New Testament on government with those of the Old Testament?
3. Should Christians ever use power to make God's will come to fruition on earth? If yes, give some examples. If not, why?
4. Is violence neutral? Can it be morally and spiritually commendable? If so, when? If not, why?
5. What guidelines does the Bible give us for national policy—particularly war?
6. Many churches are reluctant to exercise church discipline. Is this appropriate? If not, what changes should be made?
7. What lessons can we learn from the activity of the church in the Crusades? In the Inquisition?

NOTES

Issue Evaluation Form

Name: _____

Please make brief comments on any of the following aspects of this issue:

Sound Bites and Case Studies (Were any of these particularly helpful or unhelpful? Are there any quotes or scenarios you think we should add?):

Study the Scriptures (Were the passages selected appropriate? Are there other passages you might have added?):

Consult Other Sources (What were your overall impressions of the articles? Did they hold your interest? Were they instructive? Are there any you would drop or add?):

Form a Response & Take Steps to Obey (Were the exercises helpful and meaningful? Are there any you would drop or add?):

Discuss the Issue (Were any of the questions particularly unhelpful or especially helpful? Were they clear? Did your group discuss any issues that could be added to our list of questions?):

Overall Impression of this Issue (Please rate the issue 5= Outstanding, 1= Poor. Also include any general impressions or comments regarding this issue.):

1 2 3 4 5

Corrections (typos, grammatical errors, wrong passages, etc.):