



ROMAN EMPIRE

0 100 200 300 400 500 MILES

SCALE



In the 1200's some democratic like cracks began to develop in the armor of the formidable formal church. The Magna Carta came along in 1215 A.D. where the rights were recognized for the individual. Peter Waldo (d.1217) obviously a spiritual man started the Waldenians. Francis of Assisi (d. 1226) started a reform movement (Franciscan Friars). This group was led by the love for their fellow man. Some of the Franciscans were ruled heretics by Pope John XXII (1316-1334) because they were probably too spiritual for him.

The papal headquarters was moved to Avignon in southern France. John Wycliff (1324-1384) had the courage to denounce this move and also translated the Bible into the English language. This enabled many more people to become familiar with God's Word. John Hus also condemned the papal move but he was burned at the stake for his transgression. Joan of Arc, a 19 year old girl, was burned at the stake in 1431 A.D. by corrupt formal church leaders of Britain. Her crime was not her military exploits but that she had received a vision from God. She was ruled a heretic and executed for much the same reason as Priscillian some 1000 years before in Trier. The formal church remained against any form of a manifestation from God or Gifts of the Holy Spirit.

The printing press came into being in the 1400's and the Gutenberg Bible was received by many people. This more than anything brought on the Reformation of the formal church. Martin Luther the most notable reformer had his tower experience in 1512-1518 and posted his ninety-five complaints against the formal church. Luther, an Augustine monk, only used Augustine for his church beliefs. He said this about the workings of the Holy Spirit, "the Holy Ghost calls, gathers, enlightens and sanctifies the whole Christian church. He denies human cooperation in things of the spirit". This theology was very much "Augustinian" and he only took the church back to Augustine instead of going back all the way to the ekklesia of Jesus and His Body of Christ.

After Luther, the reformers came out in force. Zwingli (d. 1531) paved the way for Protestantism. The Anabaptist rejected infant baptism. God subdued John Calvin in 1533 and he tried to reconcile the Catholics and Protestants. He was also an Augustine disciple like Luther and proposed a definite set of officials to be in charge of the new Protestants. The Reformation did not remove the formal part of the formal church.

The Puritans came along and 1564, and many of them went to the new colonies in America. They went to Jamestown in Virginia (1607) and Plymouth, Massachusetts in 1670. They came to America for religious freedom and to get away from the religious wars. For most people the landowner determined the religious system for the area.

In 1562 many thousand Huguenot's were killed in France by the Catholic Church. After this the Catholics began to reform themselves and the Jesuits (Society of Jesus) did a lot of mission work especially in South America. From Spain the Jesuits roamed the Americas and named such places as Los Angeles and San Francisco. Missionaries from France named such places as St. Louis and New Orleans.

The Bible became more well known as the King James Version came to the public in 1611. A group in Germany who met and studied the Bible seemed to go back to basics. They were called the "Pietist" and must have been very spiritual. When they decided to send a group of missionaries to America, a man came from England to join them. His name was John Wesley and he had been a member of the Holy Club at Oxford. In 1730 A.D. he had a spiritual experience and was a part of the "Great Awakening" in New England in 1740-1743. Methodism came from this and the Methodist-Episcopal church was started in 1784.

The U.S. Constitution and Bill of Rights (1776) expanded the God-given rights of freedom to man. This democracy was in line with the one God created for the Greeks in 500 B.C. The Ben Franklins, John Adams and George Washington's all believed in God, but did not push for some organized religious organization. They wanted the freedom of man to come forth with God as their leader. This all happened

during a time of spiritual renewal and firmly established a democracy that continues to shine to this day in the world for God.

The circuit riders spread the gospel across the great frontier of America. The Civil War caused many divisions in the Protestant organizations and after the war many different denominations were formed within the Protestant fold. This only added to the plethora of organizations.

In 1833 a Bible study started at Oxford in England grew into a group called the Oxford Group. They persisted outside the church in both England and America for many years. One of these groups had been successful in working with recovering alcoholics in the Boston area. In 1930 several men using the tenants of the Oxford Group started Alcoholics Anonymous. Since then this group with no organization or central control has been a huge success. In my opinion AA is more like the Body of Christ than any present day church organization that has crossed my path. They simply come together, give their testimonies, help each other, depend on the Higher Power and watch miracles happen time and time again.

In the latter part of the 1800's evangelists like Dwight Moody had thousands attending their crusades in America. In 1906 a revival in Los Angeles brought on many manifestations of the Holy Spirit and several spiritual groups were formed as result of that meeting. In the 1960's a spiritual awakening occurred outside the formal church. These were known as "Charasmatics" and there were representatives of this movement in almost every mainline denomination including the Roman Catholic Church. These people met in homes or neutral sites and experienced worship like they had never seen before and were exposed to the manifestations of the Holy Spirit. Many independent churches and some huge ministries came from this movement and most exhibited some manifestations of the Holy Spirit.

The larger ministries even had their own television programs and networks to witness to the whole world. But because of man's weakness we saw some colossal failures among these. In these one-man was usually the centerpiece and there was no Body of Christ to stabilize

the excesses of the one-man. We see this over and over again through history where the Holy Spirit will not compete with any top-heavy management or dominate leader. And if the Holy Spirit is not there, God is not there and all you have is a worldly edifice.

Lately the formal church has been struggling with issues that illustrate the absence of the Holy Spirit. The child molestation cases were covered up for years. What really alarmed the people was the regal arrogance exhibited by the Cardinals when confronted about the issue. Then there is the matter of gay priest and bishops where they become leaders of major worldwide church organizations. When this is the news, we know the Spirit is not there and God is not there either. As far as our religious life is concerned, we must again become involved with the manifestations of the Holy Spirit so we can gain the benefits of this spiritual power.