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A GLOSSARY OF CHURCH HISTORY TERMS

AMBROSE (340-397 A.D.). The earliest of the Latin Fathers. The Bishop of Milan. He is best known for his commentaries on the Old Testament and for his influence in bring Augustine into the Catholic Church.

ANTE-NICEAN FATHERS

Justin Martyr	Cyprian
Irenaeus	Caius
Hermas	Novatian
Tatian	Gregory Thaumaturgas
Athenagoras	Dionysius the Great
Theophilus	Julius Africanus
Clement of Alexandria	Methodius
Tertullian	Lactantius
Hippolytus	Commodianus
Punicus Felix	
Origen	

ANTI-NOMIANISM: The term means "against law." It was coined by Luther in 1527 to stigmatize the teaching that Christians were under grace and had no need for the Law.

APOCRYPHA: The name given to several books claimed to be missing from the Bible. The word often refers to the seven books which the Roman Catholic Church places on a level with the Bible: Tobias, Judith, I and II Maccabees, The Book of Wisdom, Ecclesiasticus, Baruch, and certain additions to Esther and Daniel.

ARCESTILAEUS (316-241 B.C.): Greek philosopher of the Socratic method. He was opposed to the Stoics and maintained that man could not know anything and must, therefore, be satisfied with probability. Arcestilaeus wrote nothing and is noted for his clearness of thought and facility of speech.

ARIANISM: School of thought founded by Arius in the fourth century A.D. It was strongly opposed to the doctrine of the divinity of Christ. Arius maintained that there was a time when the Son was not, therefore, the Son could not be eternal or equal with God.

ARISTOTLE (384-322 B.C.): Ancient Greek philosopher who influenced the thinking of many of the early Church Fathers, especially Thomas Aquinas.

ASCETICISM: Rigorous self denial or self discipline. Asceticism had been practiced from the times of the ancients and can take the form of a religion. Two forms of primitive asceticism are: fasting, denial of sexual instincts, self infliction of pain, mutilation.

✓ AUGUSTINE (354-430 A.D.): Considered one of the greatest of the Catholic Church Fathers. His writings established many of the Church's doctrines and also the Catholic views on sex.

BARNABUS (Epistle): One of the apocryphal books of the New Testament. It stood at the end of the Codex Sinaiticus as a sort of appendix to the New Testament. The epistle is sometimes ascribed to the apostle Barnabas, but internal evidence makes this assumption impossible. It is more reasonable to assume it was fathered by the Alexandrian Church, where it also had its greatest authority.

✓ BASILIDIANS: A heretical sect founded by Basilides which appears to have died out after the fourth century. Their philosophy seems to have been a tangent of Oriental dualism and later produced the religious system of Manichaeism.

✓ BOETHUSIANS: A Jewish sect founded by Boethus in rejection of the Torah. The sect is closely related to, if not a development of the Sadducees. The Sadducees were the political and the Boethusians the religious opponents of the Pharisees.

CASSIANUS (? 360-435 A.D.): A monk of the fifth century, one of the first founders of monastic institutions in western Europe. He founded the doctrine of Semi-Pelagianism, a doctrine strongly opposed to that of Augustine. Semi-Pelagianism contends while man is by nature sinful, he has some good in him, and that while the immediate gift of God's grace is necessary to salvation, conversion may also be begun by the exercise of man's will.

✓ CATHOLIC: Term originally meant "wholly or entirely." Modern usage now renders it as a member of the Roman Catholic Church, or pertaining to a universal belief or church.

CATHOLIC EPISTLES: A term applied to those books of the New Testament not addressed to any specific group of people, but to the Church as a whole. Usually refers to the epistles of Peter, James, John, and Jude.

✓ CERINTHUS (about 100 A.D.): A heretic of the first century. He taught a mixture of Judaism, Christianity, and Gnosticism. He lived principally in Palestine, Syria, and Asia Minor.

CHRYSOSTOM (345-407 A.D.): Known as "Goldenmouth" because of his speaking ability. He was the most famous of the Greek Church Fathers. He served as an archbishop in the Catholic Church at Constantinople. He was martyred because he would not lower his moral convictions.

CICERO (106-143 B.C.): Great orator and philosopher of Rome. His prime concern was human cooperation. He believed that there was a divine element in every human being, therefore all human beings are essentially equal.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA (? 155-217 A.D.): Greek theologian and head of the catechetical school of Alexandria. He is not very well known because his student, Origen, did much more writing, but they both believed the same things. Clement's main contribution was that of tying all the religious beliefs together into a unified religion by philosophies.

CLEMENT OF ROME: One of the "Apostolic Fathers," and third successor to the papacy after Peter, according to Irenaeus. He is best known by his only surviving work, the Epistle to the Church of Corinth, which is one of the most important documents of the subapostolic age.

✓ CONSTANTINE (272-337 A.D.): The first professing Christian emperor of the Roman empire and was largely responsible for the turning point in the history of the Catholic Church in its rise from persecution to official recognition.

✓ DIAGRAM: "The teaching of the Lord by the Twelve Apostles to the Gentiles." This is a work discovered in Constantinople among remains of early Christian literature. It claims to reflect the style and method of Christian teaching in the age immediately succeeding that of the apostles.

DIO CASSIUS (? 150-235 A.D.): Roman historian noted particularly for his work on the last years of the republic and the early empire.

DIOCLETIAN (245-313 A.D.): Roman emperor from 284-305 A.D. He effected an administrative and financial reorganization of the Roman empire and ordered the last great persecution of the Christians.

DIONYSIUS EXIGUUS (? -445 A.D.): Roman theologian and scholar. He is credited with a collection of 401 ecclesiastical canons, and he also introduced the present method of calculating the Christian era.

DISPERSION: Refers to the scattering of the Jews throughout all the kingdoms of the world as a result of captivity and wandering.

DOCEPTISM: A religious sect of the nature of Gnosticism. They maintained that Jesus' body was not physical, but only appeared that way. They also rejected the idea of Christ's physical birth.

DOGMA: When used in reference to religion, the term applies to the doctrines set down by the different churches and preached as Biblical truth.

DUALISM: The philosophy that regards the realm of matter as illusory of evil, or both. It regards the body as a tomb from which the immortal soul must be released.

✓ EASTER: The annual festival throughout Christendom in commemoration of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The name is a corruption of "Ishtar," pagan sun-goddess. The early Christian Church did not keep Easter, but the Passover. Easter was not universally observed until this was made mandatory by the Council of Nicaea. The Council declared that Easter was to be kept the first Sunday after the full moon following the vernal equinox.

EBIONITES: Obscure Jewish-Christian sect extant during and shortly after the Apostolic Age. They denied Paul and the virgin birth and insisted on strict adherence to Mosaic Law and circumcision.

ECCLESIASTICAL: Relating to the church or the clergy; pertaining to anything associated with the church.

EPICUREANS: Name applied to the followers of Epicurus.

EPICURUS (342-270 B.C.): Greek philosopher who taught that pleasure is the ultimate good, while pain is the ultimate evil. Therefore, man should regulate his desires to achieve pleasure.

EPHREMIANUS (? 315-403 A.D.): Greek Church Father, bishop of Constantia. He is noted for his severe opposition of Origen. It was his life's task to crush this opponent whom he considered the father of all heresies. His importance lies in his writings which afford a valuable insight into the theology of the period. His works are also a valuable source for the heresies of the fourth century.

EPIPHANY: A Christian feast celebrated on January sixth originally and still in the Eastern Church commemorating the baptism of Christ and secondarily the marriage feast at Cana. Since the fifth century the Western Church has used it to commemorate the coming of the Magi and the occasion of the first manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles.

ESCHATOLOGY: The study of last things (as the second coming of J.C., resurrection, judgment, etc.)

ESSAINS: An ascetic and penitential brotherhood among the Jews of Palestine from the second century B.C. to the second century A.D. who practiced a community of goods and rigorous discipline and for the most part shunned the company of women.

EUCCHARIST: The name applied to procedures involved in the celebration of the Lord's Supper or Holy Communion.

EUSEBIUS (260-341 A.D.): He is known as the "Father of Church History." His works serve as the primary source of Church History up to 324 A.D. He was also well known as a corrector of Biblical texts and drew up a standard Bible under imperial commission.

EXEGESIS: The science and art of interpreting literature, especially the scriptures.

EXEGETAE: A board of three persons in ancient Athens to whom application might be made in all matters relating to sacred law and celestial phenomena or signs by which future events were foretold.

GIBBON, EDWARD (1737-1794): Historian noted for his work, The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire. He was seemingly an agnostic and his writing shows a prejudice against Christianity.

GENS: Among the Romans, those persons who were born of freemen, had no slaves among their ancestors and who had not been reduced from a superior to an inferior condition.

GNOSTICS: A series of religious sects predominant in the second and third centuries which derived their principles from combining various Jewish and Chaldean and Oriental concepts into a philosophy attempting to solve the problems of the origin of the universe and its destiny. The following is a representative list of Gnostic sects:

Adamites	Elkesaites	Naassenes
Basilidians	Encratites	Ophites
Cainites	Entychites	Peratikoi
Carpocratians	Madecans	Sethites
Cerinthians	Manicheans	Simonians
Clementines	Marcionites	Valentinians
Docetists	Montanists	

HAMARTIOLOGY: That part of theology concerning the doctrine of sin.

HEGESIPPUS: Early Christian writer from the period of 150-180 A.D. He wrote a five-volume history of Christianity which became lost after the sixteenth century. -pity!

HELLINISTS: Jewish people who were usually born and/or trained in a country where the Greek language, education and cultural environment was predominant.

HERESY: Originally the term signified an act of choice whether good or bad. However, modern usage describes it as adherence to religious opinion that is contrary to established doctrine of a church.

HERODIANS: Members of a political party of biblical times which consisted of Jews who were apparently partisans of the Herodian house and together with the Pharisees opposed Christ.

HIPPOLYTUS (?-236 A.D.): The most important theologian and most prolific religious writer of the Roman Church in the pre-Constantine era. Most of his works have been lost or are known only through scattered fragments.

IGNATIUS (50-2115 A.D.): One of the early Church Fathers. His main contribution was the crystallizing of the doctrines concerning the holiness and infallibility of the Church, and the immaculate conception of Mary.

IRENÆUS (?130-? A.D.): Bishop of Lyons at the end of the second century and one of the most distinguished theologians of the ante-Nicæan Church. He is credited with the wide spread of Christianity in Lyons and its neighborhood. He devoted particular attention to trying to reconcile the many sects which menaced the Church. He produced a work which is still valued as the first systematic exposition of the Catholic belief.

JEROME (?340-420 A.D.) One of the more important of the early Church Fathers. He is known for his translation of the Bible into Latin. This translation is commonly known as the Vulgate. He was also the main instrument in introducing the ascetic life into the Catholic Church.

JOSEPHUS (37-95 A.D.): Jewish historian and military commander. He was a precocious law student and member of the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes. He had a considerable part in the Jewish rebellion of 66-70 A.D. His most important contribution was the writing of his two books: The Jewish Wars and The Jewish Antiquities. These are both valuable reference sources for that period.

KABBALISTS (Cabala): A system of mystical interpretation of the scriptures, developed among Jewish rabbis in the Geonic period and transmitted to certain medieval Christians. The system laid stress on the hidden sense in the scriptures and occult means of interpretation.

KARPOKRATES (Carpocrates): An Alexandrian Jew who founded the sect of the Carpocratians. The basic doctrine was based on Platonism interspersed with Christian ideas. The religion was an offshoot from Simon Magus' religion.

LAODICEA (Council): A council held by the Catholic Church somewhere between the years of 320-380 A.D. It was held primarily to condemn the growing custom of praying to angels. It also adopted sixty canons (rules of law). Most of these were disciplinary.

LINUS: The first bishop of Rome after the martyrdom of Peter and Paul in 64 A.D. He was called an Etrurian, a native of Volanterrae.

LIVY: A Roman historian of the first century B.C. His works are considered one of the most precious relics of Latin literature and have become a primary source of all knowledge for that period of Rome's history.

LUCIAN (120-180 B.C.) A satirist of the Silver Age of Greek literature. He was a skeptic, scoffer, and non-believer of all religions. He maintained that there was no such thing as truth.

MAGUS, SIMON: High priest of the Chaldean mystery system during the time of the early apostles. Simon had done magical signs and wonders for a long time in Samaria and had become known throughout all Samaria as a "Great One," a god.

MANICHEANS: The followers of an Eastern religion based on dualism founded in the third century. The religion was founded by Mani, whose basic belief was that there existed only two forces, light and dark. Light is good, dark is bad.

MARTIAL: The greatest of the epigrammists. He revealed through his epigrams the decay and daily living of the time between 50-100 A.D.

MARTYR, JUSTIN (?100-169 A.D.): One of the ablest men of his time, and defender of the faith. His books give valuable information about the Church in middle of second century.

MENANDER: One of the earliest Gnostics. He was a pupil of Simon Magus and formed the transition from Oriental to Hellenistic Gnosticism.

MILLENNIUM: Derived from Latin word "mille" meaning a thousand years. It usually refers to Christ's messianic reign after His return to earth.

MITHRAISM: Oriental religion which rivaled Christianity for leadership of the Roman world. It parodied the central ideas and practice of Christianity, and was the forerunner of Manichaeism.

MONASTICISM: A life of total abstinence brought down through the ages by the Ascetics. Life is spent in the solitude of a cloister pursuing religious ideals.

MOSHEIM, JOHANN LOVENZ VON (1694-1747): Important German Lutheran Church historian of his age.

NAZARENES: The name applied to the true church as a result of their following Jesus of Nazareth. The Nazarenes fled to Pella shortly before the fall of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.

NERO: Roman emperor from 54-68 A.D. He is often charged with the conflagration of Rome in 64 A.D., which resulted in the persecution of the Christians and the martyrdom of Paul.

NESTORIANISM: Religious sect from the fourth century to the present. Their main doctrine taught that Christ was two persons, human and divine. They currently reside in Iraq, a very primitive and down-trodden people.

NICAEA (Council): Called in 325 A.D. by Constantine to resolve two major controversies in the Catholic Church: (1) the question over the deity of Christ and (2) the celebration of Easter. It was the first ecumenical council called and made the Sunday observance of Easter universal.

NICOLAITANS: Religious sect beginning during the Apostolic Age of the Christian Church, sometimes falsely tied with Nicolas of Antioch (Acts 6:5). Their basic doctrine was one of freedom of the flesh. They taught that the deeds of the flesh had no effect upon the health of the soul.

ORIGEN (185-254 A.D.): Writer and philosopher known as the Father of the Eastern Church's science of biblical criticism and exegesis in Christendom. He laid the foundation of all criticism of the Old and New Testaments of the Bible.

PAPIAS (70-155 A.D.): A student of John who recorded traditions about the origin of Matthew and Mark.

PELLA: Ancient city located east of the Jordan in the Gilead Mountains. It is the city in which the Christians sought refuge during the siege and destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.

PERSIUS (34-62 A.D.): Roman poet and satirist. Although obscure and difficult, his writings reached the pinnacle of Roman satire.

PHARISEES: The most popular party among the ancient Jews noted for strict observance of rites and ceremonies of the written law, and for insistence on the validity of the traditions of the elders. They differed from the Sadducees in traditionalism and in their teachings concerning the immortality of the soul, the resurrection of the body, future retribution and coming Messiah.

PHILO: Most important representative of Hellenistic Judaism. His writings give the clearest view of what this type of Judaism was and aimed at. He had a close affinity to Plato, and many of his ideas are of Platonic origin.

PILATE, PONTIUS (30 B.C. - 40 A.D.): Roman governor of Judea, 26-36 A.D. He is known for his part in the trial of Christ whom he sentenced to death.

PLINY (the elder, 23-79 A.D.): Roman historian known for his description of the Roman empire as it was in the time of Christ. His main work is Naturalis Historis, a type of encyclopedia of the entire Roman civilization consisting of 37 volumes.

PLINY (the younger, 61-113 A.D.): Nephew of the Elder, but became his life as a member of the Senate. Known for his series of writings, "Letters of Pliny," picturing the interests of Roman gentlemen.

PLATO: Eminent Greek philosopher of the fourth century B.C. He is the originator of many of today's ecclesiastical beliefs: immortal soul, hell, purgatory, heaven, and the Trinity.

POLYCARP: A Gentile convert to the Church in Asia. He was taught by the apostles and appointed bishop of the church at Smyrna. He is known for his appearance before Anicetus, bishop of Rome, at which time he defended the observance of the Passover rather than accept Easter.

POLYCRATES: The bishop of Ephesus during the latter part of the second century. Chief mention is made of him in connection with the Easter controversy. He called a synod of the bishops of Asia Minor, and they determined to keep the 14th of Nisan as the celebration of the Passover rather than consent to a Sunday observance of the resurrection.

POLYTHEISM: The doctrine of, or belief in, a plurality of gods.

POST NICAEN FATHERS:

Socrates	John of Damascus	Aphrahat
Sozomenus	St. Ambrose	Eusebius
Curil of Jerusalem	Tulpitiu Severus	Theodoret
Gregory of Nyssa	Vincent of Lorens	Jerome
St. Jerome	John Cascian	Gennadius
Basil	Ico the Great	Rufinus
Hilary of Poitiers	Ephraim Syrus	Augustine

PROSELYTE: Modern usage designates a convert from one religion to another.

PYTHAGORAS: Philosopher of the sixth century B.C., and founder of the Pythagorean theorem of geometry. Believed in transmigration of the soul and asceticism. Influenced the Essens and the Therapeutae.

QUARTODECIMAN: A controversy which arose between the Christians of Jewish descent and those of Gentile descent over the day upon which Easter was to be observed. The Jewish Christians observed Easter immediately following the end of the Paschal fast (which ended on the 14th day of the moon at evening), without regard to the day of the week. The Gentile Christians identified the first day of the week with the resurrection, and kept the preceding Friday as the commemoration of the crucifixion, irrespective of the day of the month. The controversy was settled by the Council of Nicaea, whose decision was that Easter was to be kept on Sunday, and on the same Sunday throughout the world.

QUIRINIUS (Cerenius): The governor of Judea during the time of Jesus' birth. He is known because of the census and taxation which he took of the Jews.

SADDUCEES: A sect among the Jews dating from the second century B.C. to the latter part of the first century A.D. It consisted largely of priestly aristocracy. They opposed the Pharisees politically and doctrinally. They interpreted the law more literally and less strictly -- rejecting the authority of the other parts of scripture and the rabbinic tradition, the immortality of the soul, retribution in a future life, and the existence of spirits.

SAMARITANS: A nation of people extant at Christ's time which is now almost extinct. Their doctrines and beliefs came from their Pentateuch, rather than the Bible. They believed Moses to be the only Prophet and that he will intercede for them at the Judgment Day. They observed the Babylonian mystery system of religion. Their high priest was Simon Hagus.

SANHEDRIN: The supreme council and tribunal of the ancient Jewish nation consisting of 70-72 members and having jurisdiction over religious matters and important civil and criminal cases.

SCRIBES: A class of men devoted to the study and exposition of the law during Persian and early Greek periods of Jewish history. Originally they served as copyists, editors, and interpreters of Scripture and especially of the Law. In New Testament times they acted mainly as jurists.

SEMI-PELAGIANISM: (See "Cassianus").

SENECA, LUCIUS ANNAEUS (3 B.C. - 65 A.D.): Eminent statesman and philosopher in the early Roman Empire. Taught a theistic conception of soul-happiness and soul-obligations. Also emphasized the right and privilege of suicide.

SEUTONIUS: Roman historian of the first century A.D. His Lives of the Caesars, is the only work which is entirely preserved and is esteemed as authoritative by Tertullian, Horace, and Servius. About his personal life -- very little is known.

SIMONY: In ecclesiastical law, the practice of buying and selling holy orders and offices.

STOICISM: A system of thought founded by Zeno in the fourth century B.C. It declared virtue to be the supreme good and that man should live according to nature, subduing all rebellious emotions.

SOTERIOLOGY: That branch of theology dealing with the study of salvation.

STRABO: Famous Roman geographer. His writings comprise an encyclopedia of information pertaining to the various countries of the inhabited world.

TACITUS: Considered by many the greatest Roman historian. His "Annals" and "Historiae" covered Roman history from the death of Augustus to that of Domitian.

TERTULLIAN (150-220 A.D.): Eminent Catholic Church Father -- second only to Augustine. His various writings have influenced church doctrine along almost every facet of canon law.

THEOSOPHY: Belief about God and the world held to be based on a combination of mystical insight and philosophical speculation.

THERAPEUTAE: A monastic sect of Jewish ascetics extant long before the Christian era. They devoted their lives to abstinence and contemplation. The community included male and female members.

VALENTINIANISM: A form of Gnosticism founded by Valentinus which gained prominence during the early part of the second century. The system attempted to amalgamate Greek and Oriental speculations with Christian ideas.

ZEALOT: A Jewish sect fanatically opposed to Roman rule. Founded by Judas of Galilee. The Zealots were influential in bringing on the Jewish War of 66-70 A.D., which resulted in the destruction of Jerusalem.

ZOROASTER: An ancient Persian prophet who founded the religion of Zoroastrianism. It is from this religion that Christianity has received its ideas on dualism.