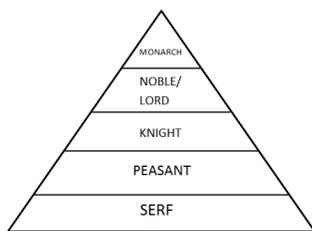


CHURCH HISTORY

"Now these things took place as examples for us..."

Lesson 10

The Power Structure in Feudalism



Feudalism developed when monarchies were weak and power rested more with local landowners.

Monarchs - granted lands (manors) to loyal Lords, powerful men in his kingdom.

Lords - were vassals to the king and managed these large estates.

Knights - were often granted a portion (fief) of a manor for heroic service. He would provide protection.

Peasants - were often the more skilled among the residents and free to move to other manors.

Serfs - were the lowest, bound to the Lord, providing menial labor and services.

The Middle Ages - Pt. III

Back and Forth. Back and Forth

With the failing of Charlemagne's empire under weak leadership, the struggle for supremacy between European kings and Roman bishops intensifies. The balance of power will swing back and forth many times. Several factors are involved.

The Rise of Feudalism

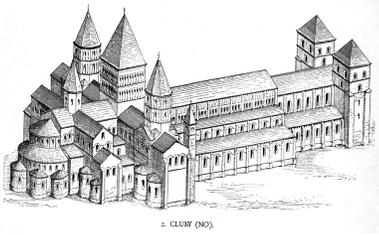
Feudalism is a system of political organization based on possession of land (manors). The local lord provided ordered government and protection and received services in return. Knights served lords and provided protection. Others provided agricultural and other needed services.

Church influence actually grew in this system. The many and monasteries and monks came to control much of the land. They received gifts of land made by lords to atone for wrongs or as contributions to the pope. Thus, the feudalization of land led to a secularization of the church. They controlled lands, trade, commerce, knights - and all this needed supervision to retain power. And since lands and power were in the hands of the church, church offices held great power. Nobles now wanted their sons to become abbots or bishops and often bought these offices, giving even more riches and power to the church. Material and political gain became more important than religious motives among the bishops, monks and monasteries.

Cairns put it this way: "Such controversy led to a loss of spiritual life on the part of the leaders of the church, the neglect of their spiritual duties, and the secularization of their interests as they give more attention to control of their land and local feudal squabbles than they did to the affairs of the church." - Cairns; p. 187.

The feudal system was destroyed to a great extent in Europe by the Viking, Slav, and Magyar invasions. The Vikings later merged with the Anglo-Saxons and controlled much of Europe and England.

The Abbey at Cluny



It was established in 909 free from all secular and episcopal control under the direct protection of the pope. It was an effort to reform corruption in the church. The Abbot of Cluny established many other monasteries under his control. By the 12th century over 1100 monasteries were under his leadership. With its far reaching influence and land holdings, its full submission to the pope only increased his power.

A New Holy Roman Empire

The ideal of a revived Roman Empire is realized in German emperors of the tenth century founded under Otto I. He was successful in uniting the varied German states. He also took over supervision of the church by selecting bishops and abbots he wanted. When he crossed the Alps to do the same in Italy he became a supporter of the pope who crowned him emperor of the Holy Roman empire in 962. Henry ruled all central Europe, (which lasted until Napoleon in 1806). It was a period of several weak popes and German control only increased. This produced a lot of tension between the papacy and the rulers of the empire. The church would eventually gain control under Innocent III who humiliated King Charles and regained control of Italy.

The Monastic Reforms

By the 10th century, secularized monasteries and abbeys had become exceedingly corrupt. As often happens when the church becomes corrupt, spiritual reform movements arise. This happened mainly through new monastic orders that were established. The Cluniac movement began in Cluny, France. Given essential autonomy it established many other monasteries with great influence. These believed strongly in the power of the pope and were directly under his control. Such movements returned power of the papacy into Europe. Later the right to elect the pope was taken out of the hands of the people and invested in the college of cardinals (powerful bishops near Rome). This contributed to stronger church rule. The church was again becoming the most powerful force in Europe.

The Height of Papal Power

Under Gregory VII (1073) and Innocent III (1214) the papacy reaches its greatest power. The pope became strong enough to force rulers of rising nation-states to do his bidding. These popes no longer accepted the idea of a kind of co-regency of the emperor and pope. They believed rulers received their power from the pope. And they were about the only ones ever able to enforce this claim.

Under Gregory VII a new church document called the *Dictatus* proclaimed there had never been error in the Roman church and that, according to the Bible, it would never err. Gregory's assertion of such church superiority was backed up by him in many ways.

Innocent III came to power in 1198. He believed the pope stood only below God but above all mankind. He successfully challenged rulers, often on moral or spiritual failures, bringing them to their knees. It was he who initiated the Fourth Crusade. It is also under Innocent III that a crusade was carried out against the Albigenses, regarded as members of a heretical sect

The Crusades

First Crusade - 1095

Second Crusade - 1145

Third Crusade - 1189

Fourth Crusade - 1201

Albigensian Crusade - 1209

Children's Crusade - 1212

Fifth Crusade - 1217



Knight Templar
Defender of Jerusalem

called the Cathari. Because they claimed to base their beliefs on the Bible, the papacy later forbade the people to possess a Bible. The doctrine of Transubstantiation was ratified under him, claiming the blessing of the priest turned the communion into the literal body and blood of Christ. The common man came to fear the clergy who had the power to give or withhold the life-giving sacraments.

After Innocent's death, the tremendous power of the papacy led to great corruption in the church. Nepotism, simony, drunkenness, neglect of the people, and worse, came to characterize the church leaders. The rulers of the rising nation-states were gaining power and were no longer intimidated by the papacy.

During one of these confrontations, pope Boniface VIII (1294-1303) issued a papal bull known as *Unam Sanctum*. In it he claimed "neither salvation nor remission of sins" could be found outside the Roman church, that the pope as head of the Roman church had spiritual and temporal authority over all, and that submission to the pope was "necessary to salvation." (It is only recently the Catholic church has begun to soften this idea.) Boniface was not strong enough to back this up, though. In fact, at one point Philip of France imprisoned Boniface to prevent him from excommunicating the king.

In 1309 Clement V unwisely moved the papal court to Avignon in France. The French King Philip was able to exert greater power over the pope as he resided in Philip's kingdom. While the papacy remained under the influence of the French monarch it lost the great moral and temporal power it had in Europe. Its own internal failures and corruption sped the decline of the power of the papacy.

The power is about to swing again, back to the political rulers.

The Crusades

Periods of zeal for reform and crusades against the infidel appeal in the 12th and 13th centuries.

The Crusades to the Holy Lands were actually preceded by crusades against Muslims in Spain and Sicily. The Great Crusades intended to recapture Palestine from the brutal Seljuk Turks. There were political and economic motives involved but the overwhelming motive was religious. They were preceded by an unorganized mass of untrained men, who left France and were disastrously destroyed as soon as they crossed into Asia Minor. Survivors were imprisoned or sold as slaves.

The First Great Crusade was led by nobles from Europe. They successfully captured Jerusalem in June 15, 1099. many Lords stayed and created their own feudal fiefs.

The Second Crusade went to recapture some of these feudal fiefs northeast of Jerusalem, It failed and Jerusalem was recaptured by Saladin's forces in 1187.

The Third Crusade (1189-92) was only successful in reaching

agreement with Saladin to give pilgrims access to Jerusalem. It is not until the sixth Crusade that access is gained again to Palestine. Access to and control of Jerusalem, Bethlehem and Nazareth is now under Christians.

but eventually control falls back under control of the Muslims. The Children's Crusade of 1212 was composed of over 100,000 teens and children. Most died from hunger and war and the rest were sold as slaves.

Crusading ended with the fall of Acre in 1291.

This concluding period of the Middle Ages sees the continual tension between church and state. The struggle goes back and forth for centuries. Though the church has periods of control, its pre-eminence is about to come to an end. Rulers of rising nation states in Europe, who are building their own armies, chafe at the control of the church. They challenge its power more and more.

Finally, a disgruntled priest in the little town of Wittenburg, Germany will give them reason to rise up and break the chains of the power of the Roman church. Paradoxically, it will be spiritual zeal that overthrows the Roman church's power.