

## 2. Paragraph summaries and charts of the periods

On the following pages we offer a paragraph summary of each of the periods from page 9 as well as a chart that indicates the major factors of the age. A fuller discussion would be needed if we were working on a very complete horizontal program but for the moment this should be a sufficient guide to keep one posted on where we are and what the accounts of history are. Although the material is sketchy, it is the sort of stuff to which you should have recourse for historical data later in the course.

### a. The Ante-Nicene Period

The name for this period comes from the Nicene council of 325 AD which is the "cut-off" date for the period. It effectively covers the time from Pentecost until 325 AD and is divided into two major periods:

the apostolic age during which time apostolic influence did much to control thought (to 150 AD) in the Christian community, and

the post-apostolic period when the church depended largely on apostolic thought. The period was influenced by the fact that Christianity was illegal and, although not widely persecuted at all times, was still frequently subject to widespread terrorism. The academic world was overrun with philosophies old and new, strong mystical schools existed and while the older paganism was hardly a serious spiritual threat, the attachment for the older order was still a realistic force. The church was not an institutionalized whole but a loose knit body of many arms and divisions. During much of the time there was no finalization of canon and the search for authority was a primary problem. This, coupled with challenges about the character of God, gave the Anti-Nicene economy its largest headaches. Therefore most of the doctrinal interest in the church was geared in the area of theology proper and in the search for right authority. Most of the apologetic influence was to stress the fact that Christianity had a right to exist on one hand and that it was markedly superior to rivals on the other.

### b. The Conciliar Period

The name is derived from the word "council" and the idea is that during this time solutions to problems were sought in ecclesiastical councils. The designation of this period finds its ending with the Rome/Greece division of the western church...a time during which there were 7 churchwide councils and one or two others of notable interest.

During the first part of the period the church had a notable unity although not an organized structure.

(continued on page 12)