

III.1.d
Christianity
Legalized

The Legalization of Christianity

The centuries of being on the wrong side of the law ended with the Edict of Milan in 313. The church was able to have two large and legal synods in 314: Arles (France) in the west and Ancyra (Ankara) in the east with the full support and aegis of the government. To these meetings churchmen travelled hundreds of miles in the open. The romance of church and state had begun. The state would "pick up the tab" for the occasion and enforce the decrees of the ecclesiastics as well.

In very short time the clergy would adopt formal garments that paralleled the official garments of the state officials and the church gatherings would be more like the Roman senate than a gathering of saints. The remarkable oneness that had marked the church would begin to tarnish as churchmen vied for political power and earthly prestige. Many worldly customs would be adopted to make the movement into the society a simpler process.

But not all of this was bad. If a holiday or secular occasion could be Christianized, there was perhaps nothing actually wrong with that. The danger came in the secularizing of the Christian ideals and that happened rather often. By 325 the church would be thinking of itself as a mind shaper of world ideals. Some have said that Constantine's conversion was more damaging to the church than the previous persecutions. That is doubtful as in the passage of time the church had to grow into the legal status and Constantine's move was, in the providence of God, the means of that accomplishment. But with the legalization a sort of camaraderie of God was lost and a pursuit of earthly advantage was gained. It was not an even trade.

III.2
Spiritual
life of the
church

THE SPIRITUAL LIFE OF THE CHURCH

Admittedly the defining of the spiritual life is hard because the qualities of spirituality are not so easily discerned. For each of the periods we seek to give an approximation of what we conceive the spiritual life to have been. In the concept of spiritual life we discuss the problems the church faced in the age and the reactions it gave to deadness within and stress without. We also look at its productivity