

of the Father in all respects." There was a time when Jesus was not, in the Arian view. He is the highest object of creation and the only person elevated to a Christian pantheon, so to speak, but He was not eternal. There was a time when, before our world was made, he, too, was made. Arianism was very much like the present day views of the Watchtower society so far as Jesus is concerned. The view is sometimes identified with the Greek term homoian meaning that Christ was like the Father but he was not God. In this scheme the nicest things can be said of Jesus and of his death, but the essential truth of his person is denied and the concept of the Trinity defied. Arius seems to have been an effective communicator and quickly had a large following in the east although he was almost unknown in the west. The western church, on the whole, was less mystical and less taken up with investigative theories in theology than was the eastern church. It seems that practical insights were more appreciated in the west, less in the east. As mentioned earlier, the Arian view of Christ removes the essential deity of the Savior.

Strong exception to his teaching came from Alexander and Athanasius in Alexandria. The latter was young but had a powerful theological sensitivity and with it a gift for considerable outspokenness. Seeing the danger in the Arian view, he expounded the concept that Jesus Christ is "very God of very God, of one substance with the Father and begotten of the Father from eternity." He would not say there was a time when Jesus was not but insisted that Jesus always was. He was not created but had an eternal begetting as the Son. He always was, is, and will be and yet is an individual entity in the deity apart from the Father entity. This view is identified by the Greek term homoousian meaning "to be one in substance."

The debate

Viewing the positions that Arius and Athanasius had in the church, it seemed to some that the view of the latter was more the response of brash youth against a more mature presbyter. But with the support of his bishop, Alexander, Athanasius launched a strong preaching campaign against Arianism and soon had hearers in all parts of the east. The nature of the dispute, to Athanasius, was the entire matter of salvation. He sensed that in Arianism there was no true salvation and while his thoughts