

c. Schism

There are a number of minor schisms in the Christian community of the early centuries but most of them were local and not long lasting. Here are two, however, that perplexed the church for some time.

-**Novatianism**...in Rome...the problem was how to react to those who had compromised in a time of persecution. Following the Decian persecution, the presbyters in Rome followed the idea of Bishop Stephen and Elder Cornelius in receiving eagerly those who wanted to return. Elder (presbyter) Novation opposed this and when the church decisions condemned his ideas he led a division in which about a third of the churches in Rome followed him...and the effects were felt in other places as well.

-**Donatism**...similar to the former but in the next century (314) and in North Africa (Carthage, et al) The schism followed Donatus the Great (second man in as hockey fans would say it) and this schism continued as a force until the Islamic conquests in the 7th century.

These were harmful and damaging divisions and, I suppose, in some ways indicative of what would come in the years ahead

5. Perplexing Questions

- a. The Date of Easter
- b. The authority of leaders
- c. Heretical baptism

B. **The Means of Survival**

I will outline some of these things in rather broad detail and dabble with them in class. They are key and instructive.

1. An overriding Providence