

## V. THE CHURCH FACES POLITICAL REALITY

Foreword: Following the Edict of Milan, politics becomes a dominant part of church interest. There will be an ongoing dispute for authority between the church as a body politic and the state. And there will be an internal strife in the church itself as various parts of it seek for authority over other parts.

Victimized in this process is the great feeling of oneness or togetherness that marked the church of the first three centuries. We do not glamorize that time as having no problems but the "oneness" concept was very strong. The common foe bound the believers together but now that foe is a friend, so to speak, and jealousy over that friendship will be a very big thing.

Our time period is not very precise (313-600) but gives us a time for perspective on the total matter. No new chronology is detailed here..it will be picked up in our next major heading.. and the student will need to understand that a number of things happen in a simultaneous fashion.

### A. The Legalization Process

#### 1. Political Factors (in review, etc.)

Although the church was illegal for three centuries we do learn something about its growth and socio-politico status from a couple of things:

- church buildings
- some legal privileges
- art work

#### 2. Demographic Factors

--just a general note on the spread of Christianity and how, in some ways, it simply outgrew the opposition.

#### 3. Julian the Apostate 361-363

In some ways this was the last gasp of paganism when Julian, as emperor, decided to reverse history and eliminate the church. A lot of grief for the Christian community but short-lived.