

Whole books have been written on the subject but what it meant as far as our course is concerned is that the most stable thing in the west, after 313 AD, was the church. It soon could not depend on the western emperor and prominent bishops served to make it the stronger force in the west. Leo I (Roman Bishop) succeeded in persuading the emperor Valentinian to give an edict placing all the western clergy under Leo's administration and eventually this, as the mere survival of the church, allowed Rome to become the established authority in the west. Eventually this supremacy would be demonstrated by Gregory I (590 ff) with the formation of a "vatican" army and the development of Rome, the church-city, as the church-state.

Consequently authority in the west was, in practical aspects, the church and in the east was the political power. This does not build for good relationships in years to come and contributed a good bit to the claims of Rome for ecclesiastical superiority. This material is discussed more fully when we talk about the Holy Roman Empire..sometime future to this!

3. The Religious Consensus

This is comprised of church tradition, ecclesiastical understanding and church teaching..and is the idea the unanimity is a great evidence of what is right and how it may be used.

We may wonder today why this authority structure was needed..and we will probably talk about it for a few moments. Some have said, in this light, that legalization was a bad thing for the church but it was inevitable and certainly in the overall program of God.

C. Development of the Ecclesiastical Structure

This is a matter of political reality for the church. The little band of two or three cannot maintain the body politic and gives way to structured forms in all parts of Christianity..even to those parts that categorically reject the concept of structure!