

REMINDER

Volume XV

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Number 28



IN DEFENSE OF BIBLICAL, HISTORICAL CHRISTIANITY

by Dr. Thomas Cassidy, Pastor
First Baptist Church - Spring Valley, California
(fourth in this series)

THE CELTIC CHURCHES OF IRELAND

These churches came about largely through the efforts of Patrick who preached in Ireland from 432 until 465. It is interesting that between 544 and 565. These Celtic churches in Ireland were revived through the ministry of the Welsh churches, which were the remnants of the old churches of the Britons, largely through the preaching of such men as "Saint" David.

In 521 a man named Columba was born to parents belonging to one of these Celtic churches. In 563 he began to do missionary work among the Picts in Scotland. To do this, he established a base on the island of Iona in the Hebrides group off the west coast of Scotland (half way between Scotland and Ireland). From this mission station, missionary teams evangelized Scotland and England, then Normandy, Friesland, Denmark, and parts of Germany. Columba died in 597.

Following his example, other mission bases were founded by missionaries from Iona, including one in Northumbria on the island of Lindisfarne (holy island in Gaelic), established by Aidan. This Northumbrian mission evangelized the Saxons from the north.

THE PAULICIANS

During the darkest days of the Papal strangle hold on "Christendom" there existed a group of Bible believing Christians that stood tall for the faith once delivered unto the saints. The Paulician churches were the most maligned of all the enemies of the Roman system.

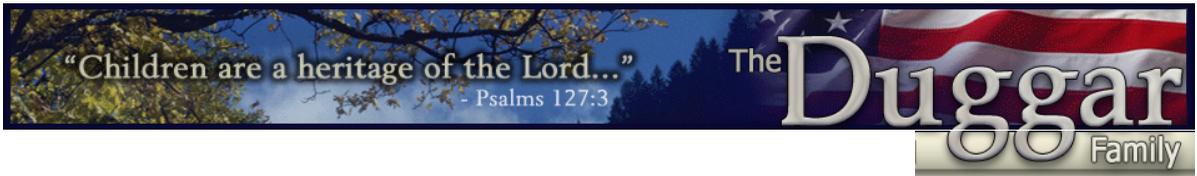
In 1891, a Paulician book entitled "Key Of Truth" was discovered by the Armenian scholar Frederic Cornwallis Conybeare (1856-1924), and published in 1898. For the first time, the Paulicians were allowed to speak for themselves.

The Paulician churches were of apostolic origin, being planted in Armenia in the first century A.D.- according to their tradition, by the apostle Thomas.

It is also quite evident that the Montanists, Novatians, and Donatists were perpetuated in the Paulicians. Schaff, in his History of the Christian Church (Volume II, page 92) states, "In spite of this strong opposition the Novatian sect...propagated itself in various provinces of the west and the east down to the sixth century." "In Phrygia it (the

(continued inside)

BE PLANNING NOW TO BRING SOMEONE TO MEET -



Rescheduled Date -

**Sunday Morning
August 2, 2009**

- ❑ **Duggar-family Musicians Will Play and Sing For Our Service!**
- ❑ **Jim Bob Duggar Will Be Speaking In The Morning Service!**
- ❑ **Michelle Duggar To Give Devotional At Rebekah White's Baby Shower At 1:30 p.m.**

PLAN NOW TO BE HERE!

Novatians) combined with remnants of the Montanists." "A remnant of the Donatists, as we learn from the letters of Gregory I, perpetuated itself into the seventh century." (Volume III, page 153).

In his classic, **The Rise and Fall of the Roman Empire**, Gibbon notes that the faith of the Paulicians stemmed from the first century and was a branch of Antiochan Christianity.

They managed to survive for such a long period of time largely due to the fact that Armenia is a very isolated and mountainous region located mainly in modern Turkey, but also extending into present day Iran and the old Soviet Union. It lies between, and to the south of, the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea.

The name **Paulician** did not come into general use until the 7th century and was applied because of the emphasis placed by these people on the epistles of Paul, and their adoption of Pauline names for their leaders. The Paulician movement rose to prominence during the 7th century, but existed long before they were called by that name.

At the request of the Patriarchs of Constantinople, all of the Eastern Emperors persecuted the Paulicians. Even the Armenian-born Emperor Leo III permitted the Paulicians to be attacked, with the exception of his allowing many of them to migrate to Thrace, where he granted them a city in southern Bulgaria called Philippopolis (Plovdiv) and a certain amount of religious freedom in 970 A.D.

The doctrines of the Paulicians were obscured by the writings of their enemies, notably Photius and Sidelites, which Gibbon called "malice and poison." However, the discovery of their book, "The Key Of Truth" has done more to shed positive light on these people than any other discovery of this millennium.

According to their own writings, the Paulicians claimed to have originated with Christ and the Apostle; accepted the Bible as the sole rule of faith; recognized only believers baptism by immersion; rejected transubstantiation; rejected ceremonialism; rejected penance as unprofitable and absurd; had no hierarchy or clerical office; they were strong Trinitarians; opposed all image worship (called the "holy relics" "JUNK!"); believed in holy living. They sound pretty good to me!

The accusations against the Paulicians were the most strident in the attempts of their enemies to discredit them. The first of these false accusations was that they were Manichaeans. Manichaeism was a semi-christian gnostic sect founded by Mani in 240 A.D. in Babylon. It was a combination of Persian Zoroastrianism and Gnostic tenets.

It is true that one of the leaders of the Paulicians (Constantine) had been a Manichaean prior to his conversion. W. A. Jerrell writes in his history, "From the time he got acquainted with these writings (the Gospels and Paul's Epistles) it is said he would touch no other book. He threw away his Manichaean library and exploded and rejected many of the abused notions of his

countrymen."

Paulicians taught the two natures of the believer, and this biblical teaching has been twisted by their enemies to be the "dualism" of the Manichaeans.

The major reason for the charge of Manichaeism-stigmatization, something the Roman church did very often to all who opposed them.

The second charge is that the Paulicians rejected parts of the Bible. However, it must be noted that the Catholic church used the Old Testament to support their concept of a formal "priesthood" and the "church-kingdom-state." When the Paulicians reject those false doctrines, it was charged they rejected the Old Testament, a false accusation. When the Paulicians rejected the Roman dogma of the primacy of Peter, they were accused of rejecting the writings of Peter, i.e., 1 and 2 Peter, another false charge.

The next charge was that the Paulicians rejected the ordinances. In fact, all that they rejected was the Catholic sacraments. It was also claimed that they were adoptionists, i.e., that the human Jesus was adopted by the eternal Word at the time of the baptism of Jesus (that is, that Jesus was not truly the eternal Christ, but was only used by Him during the incarnation). The charge most likely arose out of the Paulicians opposition to Mariolatry and the "Mother of God" teaching of the Catholic church. Like the Nestorians, who delineated the natures of Christ in their opposition of such heresy, the Paulicians were unjustly accused of being adoptionist.

There were other charges, most of them merely ridiculous, i. e. that they were cannibals, making cakes from meal and the blood of infants; that they conducted their prayer meetings naked; they practiced incest; and taught marriage was a sin (in spite of the fact that every one of their leaders was married!).

It is apparent the first century churches of Armenia remained in the backwaters of "mainstream" Christianity for many years, relatively unchanged in their New Testament simplicity.

Nevertheless, such churches had a profound influence upon some major developments in Christian and world history. One of those was the **Iconoclastic Movement**. The Iconoclastic Movement began in 726 when the Eastern Emperor Leo III, who ruled from 717-741, issued an edict against the worship of images and pictures, followings with a persecution of image worshipers and the wholesale destruction of icons, images, and paintings. Thus began a controversy which lasted until the reign of Theodora in 842. The Paulicians, like other non-conformist groups, were very much opposed to the veneration of images, a practice which had been going on since Helena, the mother of Constantine the Great, made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem in 325, and returned with (supposed) pieces of the cross and nails used in the Lord's crucifixion. The emperor Leo was himself from the Isaurian Mountains, part of the Taurus chain, and Armenian. **"Leo was virtually a Paulician, and it has been maintained that his successor, Constantine Copronymus, 741-775, was a 'pure**

Paulician'" (Newman, A.H., A Manual Of Church History, Volume I, page 381). It is doubtful that Leo was actually a Paulician, for he was a ruthless man in many ways, but he certainly held some Paulician sentiments.

The greatest impact of the Paulician movement was seen in its spread into Eastern Europe. The first Paulician emigrants settled in Thrace about 775. Thrace is an area which comprises part of Macedonia (present day Greece), European Turkey, and Southern Bulgaria. During the comparative respite of the iconoclastic period, a vast amount of missionary work was done by Paulician preachers. The Gospel was preached all over Asia Minor, into Bulgaria, and as far West as Bosnia.

During the severe persecutions of the ninth century, many Paulicians fled to the Balkans, where many churches were established. As mentioned previously, in 970 a large number were settled in Southern Bulgaria. In Bulgaria, the Paulicians came to be called "Bogomils", a word thought to mean "friends of God". These dear Christian people spread across the land with their simple (New Testament) brand of Christianity. Further Byzantine persecutions sent many Westward into Serbia where the Serbian Orthodox Church pushed them into Bosnia in the twelfth century. Pope Innocent III, in 1203, tried to eradicate these Bible-believing Christians in Bosnia, who were now often called "Cathari," meaning "pure ones." In 1291, a Dominican and Franciscan Inquisition was launched against them, the end result of which was to once again weaken the barrier against the onslaught of Islam, and by 1400, much of this area fell under the control of the Ottoman Turks.

Paulicians also found their way into Europe, particularly Southern France in the Languedoc region, and had a profound influence in the revival of the ancient Christians there. When Bogomils from the Balkan countries fled to Europe, they met many believers of like faith - the Albigenses.

- more next week



FINANCIAL FREEDOM CLASS CONTINUES TODAY!

Learn Biblical Principles For Finances That Will Free You From The Bondage Of Debt!

This class, though designed for our young adults and teens, is open to all from high school age and upward. Every Christian needs to learn how to handle their finances God's way!

Our class begins promptly at 9:45 each Sunday morning in the Conference Room. Please be on time.

NURSERY MINISTRY WORKERS FOR THIS WEEK

10:50 a.m. Service ----- Cradle Roll 1: Rebekah White
 Cradle Roll 2: Nathaniel White
 6:00 p.m. Service ----- Cradle Roll 1: Bertha Segebarrt
 Cradle Roll 2: Janet Bridges
 Wed. Eve. Service ----- Cradle Roll 1: Shirley White
 Cradle Roll 2: LeAnna White

AND THE PEOPLE CAME...

Week of July 5, 2009

Sunday School ----- 18
 Sunday Morning Service ----- 27
 Sunday Evening Service ----- 31
 Wed. Eve. Service, 07/08/09 ----- 27

AND THE PEOPLE GAVE...

Week of July 5, 2009

Undesignated Tithes & Offerings ----- \$ 1,104.00
 New Hymnals Fund ----- \$ 10.00
Total Received for Week of 07/05/09: \$ 1,114.00

*Average amount of Undesignated Offerings needed
 to operate the church*

EACH WEEK,

as a minimum = \$ 1,400.00 📢

FUND DRIVE REPORTS

NEW HYMNAL FUND

Offerings Received To Date: \$ 1,436.00

NEW PIANO FUND

Offerings Received To Date: \$ 570.00

PARSONAGE RENOVATION FUND

Total Received, To Date: \$ 335.00



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WHAT IT MEANS TO BE SAVED

1. *Admit that you are a sinner.*
2. *Admit that God says all sins must be paid for.*
3. *Accept the fact that Christ took upon Himself the suffering necessary to pay for all your sins.*
4. *You must change your mind about sin and sinning (God calls this repentance).*
5. *By an act of your will, accept by faith the Lord Jesus Christ, who can save you from the penalty of sin. Then, tell God about this in a simple prayer. Believe that God keeps His promise to save you, and thank Him for His salvation.*



Please Remember To Be Faithful to Give!

As with everything else, the costs of keeping a church going never go down - they always go *up*. Bills wait for no one, and churches are no exception to this. An extra, sacrificial gift today by everyone present would go a long way...

We encourage all of our membership to practice obedience to God by being faithful every payday to give back to Him His tithe (10%). *If every family in our church would practice this one simple discipline, we would never have weeks where we have to put off paying some bills until the following week!*

Everything is expensive, especially for a small church like ours, but ours is a BIG God, and He LOVES to bless His children when they are obedient to Him!

If you are already a tither, we thank you, and encourage you to also give offerings as well. If you're currently not tithing, won't you please start *today* - **OK?** Thank you.

Church Directory

Todd W. White ----- Pastor
 Mickie Shatwell ----- Pianist
 Dickie Eberle ----- Greeter, Custodian
 Larry Mathews, Caryn Quinnelly, Todd W. White ----- S.S. Teachers
 Larry & Mary Byars, Brian & Charity Crawford,
 Nathaniel & Rebekah White ----- Outreach
 Flowers ----- Hannah and Shirley White