

### *Disagreements between West and East*

Tensions began to mount as the first millennium was drawing to a close. While numerous doctrinal, political, economic, and cultural factors were working to separate the Church in an East-West division, two giant divisive issues ultimately emerged above others: (1) that one man, the Pope of Rome, considered himself the universal bishop of the Church and (2) the addition of a novel clause to the Church's creed.

1. *The Papacy:* Among the Twelve Saint Peter was early acknowledged as the leader. He spokesman for the Twelve before and after Pentecost. He was the first bishop of Antioch and later bishop of Rome. No one challenged his role.

After the death of the apostles, as leadership in the Church developed, the bishop of Rome came to be recognized as first in honor, even though all bishops were equals. but after nearly 300 years, the bishop of Rome slowly began to assume to himself a role of superiority over the others, ultimately claiming to be the only true successor to Peter. The vast majority of the other bishops of the Church never questioned Rome's primacy of honor, but they patently rejected the Roman bishop's claim as the universal head of the Church on earth. This assumption of papal power became one major factor in rending the Roman Church, and all those it could gather with it, from the historic Orthodox Church.

2. *The Addition to the Creed:* A disagreement concerning the Holy Spirit also began to develop in the Church. Does the Holy Spirit proceed from the Father? Or, does He proceed from the Father and the Son?

Our Lord Jesus Christ teaches, "But when the Helper comes, Whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth Who *proceeds from the Father*, he will testify of Me" (Jn15:26). This is the basic statement in all the New Testament about the Holy Spirit "proceeding," and it is clear: He "proceeds from the Father."

Thus, when the ancient council at Constantinople in AD 381 reaffirmed the Creed of Nicea (AD 325), it expanded that Creed to proclaim these familiar words: "And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Life-Giver, Who proceeds from the Father, Who is worshipped and glorified together with the Father and the Son. . . "

But two hundred years later, at a local council in Toledo, Spain (AD 589), King Reccared declared, "the Holy Spirit also should be confessed by us and taught to proceed from the Father and the Son." The King may have meant well, but he was contradicting Jesus' teaching, confessed by the entire Church, concerning the Holy Spirit. Unfortunately, that local Spanish council agreed with his error.

Because of the teaching of the Holy Scriptures, believed by the Church at Nicea and at Constantinople and for centuries beyond, there is no reason to believe anything

other than that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father.

But centuries later, in what was at least partially a politically move, the Pope of Rome unilaterally changed the universal creed of the Church without an ecumenical council. Though this change was initially rejected in both East and West, even by some of Rome's closest neighboring bishops, the Pope managed to eventually get the West to capitulate. The consequence, of course, in the Western Church has been the tendency to relegate the Holy Spirit to a lesser place than God the Father and God the Son. The change may appear small, but the consequences have proven disastrously immense. This issue, with the Pope departing from the Orthodox doctrine of the Church, became another instrumental cause separating the Roman Church from the historic Orthodox Church, the New Testament Church.