

The Great Schism

Conflict between the Roman Pope and the East mounted - especially in the Pope's dealings with the bishop, or patriarch, of Constantinople. The Pope even went so far as to claim the authority to decide who should be the bishop of Constantinople, in marked violation of historical precedent. No longer operating within the government of the New Testament Church, the Pope appeared to be seeking by political means to bring the whole church under his domination.

Bizarre intrigues followed, one upon the other, as a series of Roman popes pursued this unswerving goal of attempting to control all Christendom. Perhaps the most incredible incident of these political, religious, and even military schemes occurred in the year 1054. A Cardinal, sent by the Pope, slapped a document on the altar of the Church of Holy Wisdom in Constantinople during the Sunday worship, excommunicating the Patriarch of Constantinople from the Church!

The Pope, of course, had no legitimate right to do this. But the repercussions were staggering. Some dismal chapters of Church history were written during the next decades. The ultimate consequence of the Pope's action was that the whole Roman Catholic Church ended up dividing itself from the New Testament faith of Orthodox Christianity. The schism has never been healed.

As the centuries passed conflict continued. Attempts at union failed and the Roman Church drifted farther and farther from its historic roots. There are inevitable consequences in deviating from the Church. The breaking away of Rome from the historic Orthodox Church would prove no exception.