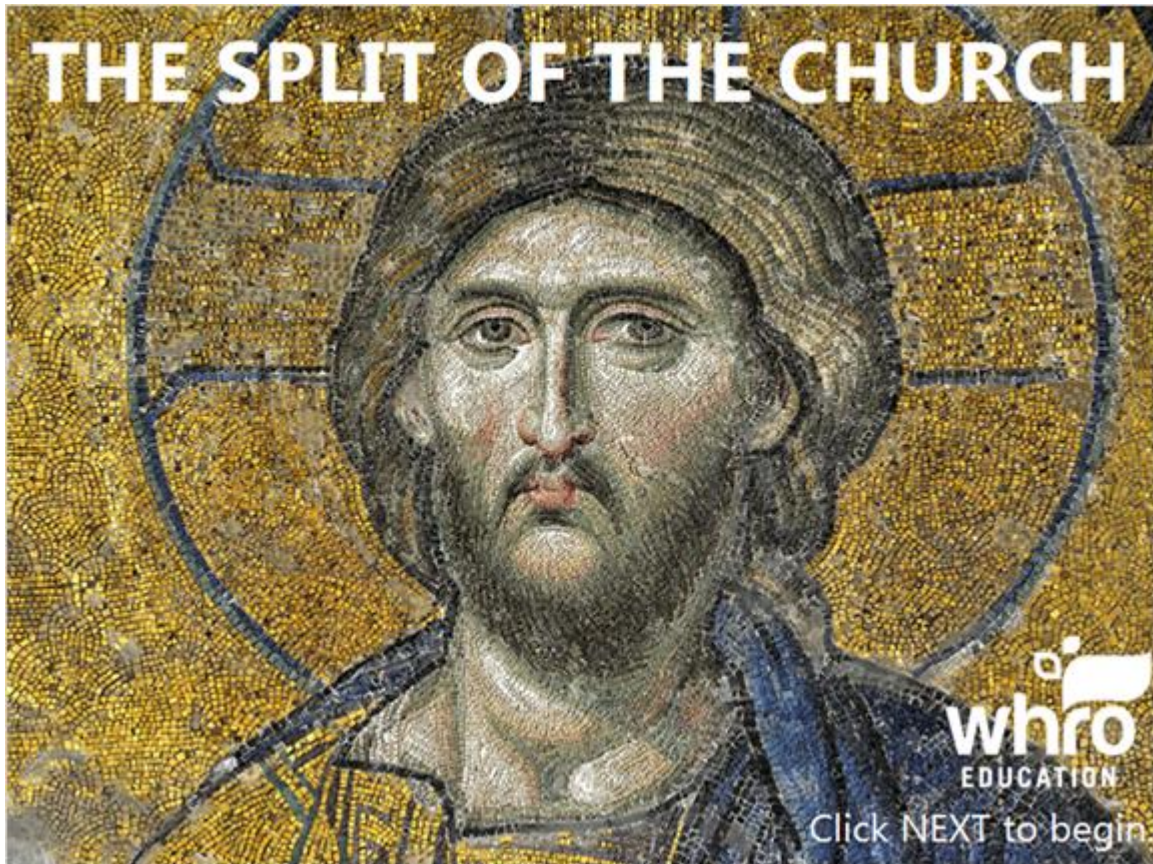


Module 6: The Byzantine Empire and Eastern Europe

Topic 2 Content: The Split of the Church

Introduction



Click NEXT to learn about the split of the church.

Module 6: The Byzantine Empire and Eastern Europe

Topic 2 Content: The Split of the Church

Comparison between the Eastern and Western Churches



While the Christian Church did not formally split into Roman Catholicism and Greek Orthodoxy until 1054 A.D. (C.E.), there were several centuries of disagreement and differing doctrines.

After Constantine established Constantinople as the capital of the Roman Empire in 330 A.D. (C.E.), the focus of the Eastern Church centered on this city, as it was close to the source of political power for the Eastern Empire. The religious services were held in Greek, which was the language of the people who worshipped there. While the patriarch was the leading bishop of the east, the emperor was still the highest authority.

Operating under the assumption that Constantine had chosen Constantinople as a capital in political name only, the Western Church believed that Christianity was still centered in Rome, with the pope as the head of the Christian Church. Even when the Western Empire was invaded by Germanic tribes toward the end of the 5th century A.D. (C.E.), church services continued to be held in traditional Latin.

Module 6: The Byzantine Empire and Eastern Europe

Topic 2 Content: The Split of the Church

The Use of Icons

The Use of Icons

Christianity was influential in the West and East.

Icon
A holy image that appeals to one's emotions and aids in prayer.

Image: A 6th century icon of Jesus Christ



Eastern Church	Western Church
Outlawed by the emperor	Ruled acceptable by the pope
Use was eventually restored	The pope excommunicated the emperor

Christianity was as influential in Western Europe as it was in the Byzantine Empire; however, religious divisions existed between the two regions. What drove a larger wedge and solidified a split with Christianity was a dispute that occurred during the Middle Ages over the use of icons. An icon is a holy image that appeals to one's emotions and aids in prayer.

In 726 A.D. (C.E.), the Byzantine emperor outlawed the use of icons, claiming it was comparable to the worship of idols. The restriction sparked a response from the pope, who reasserted that the use of icons was acceptable and expected. Violence between the west and east erupted, and resulted in the pope excommunicating the emperor, and declaring him an outcast from the Church. Although the use of icons was eventually restored, the conflict left feelings of hostility between the Christians in the west and those in the east.

Module 6: The Byzantine Empire and Eastern Europe

Topic 2 Content: The Split of the Church

The Great Schism



Differences between the Eastern and Western churches continued to grow, and in 1054 A.D. (C.E.), Christianity was permanently divided between the Roman Catholic Church in the West and the Greek Orthodox Church in the East. Click on each numbered circle to view more details about the permanent differences between the two Christian churches.

Religious Authority: The pope is the religious authority of the Western Church, and he claimed authority over all kings and emperors. The patriarch and other bishops head the Eastern Church. The emperor claimed authority over the patriarchs and bishops of the empire.

Religious Center: Rome is the religious center for the Western Church; Constantinople is the religious center for the Eastern Church.

Priestly Marriage: The Western Church forbade priestly marriage, and instead advocated for a policy of priestly celibacy. The Eastern Church allowed priestly marriage.

Icons: Conflict between the two churches originally erupted over the issue of using icons. The Eastern Church outlawed their use, and the Western Church supported their use. Eventually the use of icons was restored to the Eastern Church.

Liturgy: Latin is the language of worship (liturgy) used in the Western Church. Greek is the language of worship (liturgy) used in the Eastern Church.

Holy Trinity: Those in the Western Church believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and after his resurrection he became the embodiment of God. Those in the Eastern Church believe in *Arianism*, which asserts Jesus Christ, who was the Son of God, is distinct from God, and thus subordinate.

Module 6: The Byzantine Empire and Eastern Europe

Topic 2 Content: The Split of the Church

Shared Beliefs and Practices



While many differences still exist between the two churches, the Roman Catholic Church and the Greek Orthodox Church share a number of major beliefs and practices. Click on each numbered circle to view more details about these similarities.

New Testament: Both churches accept the New Testament as the inspired word of God, containing the accounts of the life and teachings of Jesus, as well as writings of early Christians.

Jesus Christ: Both churches believe Jesus Christ is the Son and incarnation of God. They both believe in the divinity, crucifixion, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Holy Trinity: Both churches recognize a Holy Trinity that includes God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit.

Holidays and Leadership: The two faiths share many of the same holidays and continue to structure the leadership of their churches similarly.

Module 6: The Byzantine Empire and Eastern Europe

Topic 2 Content: The Split of the Church

Conclusion



You have reached the end of this interactivity.