

The History of Christianity

(taken from Eerdmans' Handbook to the History of Christianity)

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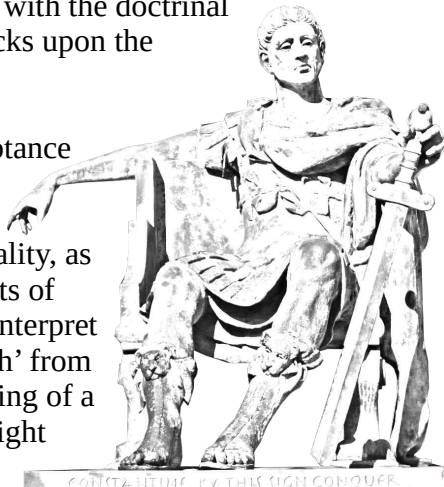
Introduction: The Christian Centuries, Part 3

(excerpts from Robert D. Linder's introduction)

A state religion. By the time the Emperor Constantine died, in 337, the Christian faith was firmly established in the Roman Empire. Constantine himself was converted to Christ and in 313 made the faith a recognized religion of the Empire, on a level with all other state religions. Later, in 395, the majority position of the Christians in the Roman state was recognized when Christianity became the only official state religion. Only a little more than three hundred years after the death of Christ, the new religion had conquered a mighty empire. However, as time was to show, in its sweep across the Greco-Roman world Christianity had lost some of its original zeal, as well as much of its earliest simplicity.

The basis of this initial period of staggering growth was aggressive evangelism: the preaching of the dynamic message of the gospel which brought new hope and peace with God through a crucified and risen Christ to hundreds of thousands of people. Furthermore, the movement was able to grapple with the doctrinal issues of the age and to refute attacks upon the faith by pagan intellectuals.

Many historians feel that the acceptance of Christianity during the fourth century as the official state religion seriously damaged spirituality, as Christian leaders became confidants of emperors. Others go further, and interpret this period as the 'fall of the church' from its apostolic purity—as the beginning of a new era in which the issue of the right relationship between church and state had to be resolved.



Constantine I, 272-337 AD
Roman Emperor 306-337 AD

“Fruitful Discussion”

1 Timothy 1:8-20

July 6, 2025

Hartford Bible Church

Dan Hummel 2024-2025 Series “David & the 5 T’s”

1. The _____ is not for us (8-11).

Definition of a fruitful discussion: 1 Tim. 1.

Gal. 5:13-26.

Stewardship of the message: 1 Cor. 9:16-17; Ga 2:7; Col 1:25;
1Th 2:4; Tit 1:3.

2. Closer to God, more aware of _____ (12-16).

v 14: hyper-abundant grace.

Paul's progress in Christian humility: 1 Cor. 15:9; Eph. 5:8;
1 Tim. 1:15.

3. Fight the good _____ (17-20).

How God empowers us to fight:

1. Remembering what God has done.

2. Talking to Him.

3. Knowing God's plan for you.