
Church History Timeline: God's Remnant in History

“For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye witnesses of his majesty.” II Peter 1: 16

Significant Events

- “For I delivered unto you first of all that which also I received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures;
 - And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day, according to the scriptures:
 - And that he was **seen of Cephas, then of the twelve:**
 - After that, he was **seen of above five hundred brethren** at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep.
 - After that, he was **seen of James; then of all the apostles.**
 - And last of all, he was **seen of me also**, as one born out of due time.” I Cor. 15:3-8
-

4 or 5 B.C.-Birth of Christ

- Until the Sixth Century the calendar was based on the founding of the city of Rome. A monk named Dionysius was commissioned by the Pope to create the calendar to begin with the birth of Christ. Scholars later discovered an error of approximately four years, therefore the Lord was born B.C.
 - A.D. 26-John the Baptist begins his ministry
-

A.D. 26-Christ's ministry begins

- Christ's ministry covered three and a half years. A year of inauguration was initiated by his baptism by John the Baptist. Culminating the experience was a profound exclamation from heaven, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."
-

A.D. 30– Christ’s death and resurrection

- After a year of popularity, followed by more than a year of opposition, Christ died at the hands of the Jews and Romans the cruel death by crucifixion being about 33 years old. After a triumphant resurrection on the third day, he appeared to many of his followers over the forty days between his resurrection and ascension.
 - It was recorded that “---- **for his word was with power.**” Luke 4:32, and “**And the common people heard him gladly.**” Mark 12:37
-

A.D. 30– Christ’s death and resurrection (continued)

- At the appointed time and place, the eleven disciples met him on a mountain near Bethany where Jesus said to them, “All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.” Matt. 28:30
-

A.D. 30– Christ’s death and resurrection (continued)

■ Christ’s ascension:

- Being gathered together with Christ in Jerusalem, the disciples asked him if he would “restore the kingdom of Israel at this time,” Christ spoke his last words on earth; “It is not for you to know the times or the seasons which the Father hath put in his own power. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses of me both in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.” Acts 1:7&8
-

A.D. 34-63

- A.D. 34 -- First martyr, Stephen, was stoned
 - A.D. 45 – Beheading of James ---- and his executioner!
 - A.D. 54 – Philip – stoned to death - took the church to Samaria (and Ethiopia?)
 - A.D. 63 – James, the son of Alpheus – cast from the pinnacle of the temple – survived the fall with both legs broken- was summarily stoned – he was 96 years old.
-

A.D. 64

- First ordered persecution of Christians by Emperor Nero -- death of Apostles accelerates.
 - Barnabas, Paul's companion – dragged by a rope around his neck out of the city of Salamina on the island of Cyprus and burned.
 - James, the Just, slain in Jerusalem
 - Mark, the evangelist, tied to a stake and dragged, died on the way to Alexandria.
-

A.D. 69

- Simon Peter – sentenced by Emperor Nero to be crucified – requested to be slain upside down because of unworthiness to die as the Master did – his wife died prior to his death.
 - Paul beheaded and buried along the Apian Way – it is believed he and Peter were prisoners together in Rome.
-

A.D. 70

- End of the Jewish State – persecution increases!
 - Paul's companions slain: Aristarchus, Epaphras,
 - Aquilla and Pricilla, Paul's relatives and co-laborers slain
 - Silas – Bishop of the church in Corinth – scourged and slain
 - Onesiphorus – tied to wild horses, dragged to his death
 - Andrew – first disciple of John the Baptist and Peter's older brother was tied to a cross and crucified
-

A.D. 70 (continued)

- Bartholomew – flayed on a cross – kept on preaching until his head was severed with an ax
 - Thomas – burned in an oven
 - Matthew – nailed to the ground and beheaded
 - Matthias – stoned and beheaded
-

A.D. 79-95

- A.D. 79 – Roman city of Pompeii destroyed
 - A.D. 93 – Luke hanged on an olive tree in Greece at the age of 84
 - A.D. 95 – Antipas, the faithful martyr (Rev. 2:12-14) burned alive in an oven
 - Clement, Bishop of Rome, wrote to the church of Corinth. “Not to leave the ancient examples, let us note the champions who lived nearest our times. Let us set before our eyes the good Apostles,-- who became notable patterns of patient endurance.”
-

A.D. 97-99

- A.D. 97 – John, the evangelist and revelator, exiled to the isle of Patmos by Emperor Domitian
 - A.D. 98 – Timothy, spiritual son of Paul and Bishop in Ephesus, stoned to death by heathens whose idolatry he reprovved.
 - A.D. 99 – John released from exile upon the death of Domitian, returned to Ephesus, died at the age of 80 after serving in the gospel 51 years.
-

End of the Apostolic Age

- The end of the century brought severe persecution of Christians under Emperor Trajan. Nevertheless, faithful men such as Clement and Polycarp were preaching the gospel of repentance toward God, faith in Jesus Christ, and the need for believers to live sanctified and separated lives in their world.

A.D. 109-110

- A.D. 109 – Simon Cleophas, a cousin of Christ, was crucified. Simon lived to be 120 years old and was an eye witness of Christ's entire life. He, Clement and Polycarp were the last eyewitnesses of the acts of the eleven faithful apostles and the Apostle Paul.
 - A.D. 110 - The Ethiopian Eunuch who was baptized by Philip, a preacher of the gospel in his own country, Arabia, and Ceylon, suffered martyrdom for the truth's sake.
-

A.D. 111

- Ignacius, a disciple of John, was a faithful servant in Antioch. He openly reproved the Emperor for sacrificing to idols in the temple. Many witnessed his death by wild beasts in the arena. He preached to those gathered to witness the event; “Now only do I begin to be a disciple of Christ. Pray for me an inward and outward strength be given me, not only to speak this, but also to perform and endure it so that I may not only be called a Christian, but also be found one in truth.”
-

A.D. 111 (continued)

- Through the second century, many faithful martyrs paid with their lives for the sake of Christ's kingdom. Their testimonies, written in blood, became the "seed grain of the church", a term frequently used by Christian writers of the day.
 - Significant events followed which advances the timeline more rapidly. An attempt is made to share significant details that shed light on the veracity of faithful servants in propagating the teachings of the Apostolic Fathers.
-

A.D. 168

- Polycarp, Bishop of the church of Smyrna. (Rev. 2:8-10), “And unto the angel of the church of Smyrna write; These things saith the first and the last, which was dead and is alive; I know thy works, and tribulation and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan. Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer, behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried, and ye shall have tribulation ten days. Be thou faithful unto death and I will give you a crown of life.”
-

A.D 168 (continued)

- Polycarp was outspoken in a time when to do so would almost certainly be a death sentence. Polycarp had a vision he would be burned to death for the sake of Christ. When heard he was to be apprehended, he made a dinner for his captors and personally served them. Afterward he was placed on a rack of wood and set ablaze. When the flames engulfed him, witnesses said the fire seemed to have little effect on him. His executioner was ordered to pierce him through with a sword. Blood issued forth so profusely that the fire was almost extinguished. Thus faithful Polycarp died both by fire and sword and entered into the rest of the saints.
 - In such times, the teachings of Christ were steadfastly proclaimed as the true believers were slaughtered.
-

A.D. 237

- Under Emperor Maximin persecution of the Christians continued in great numbers. The Emperor ordered soldiers to lock the churches when they were in session, place wood around them and burn them to the ground with the believers inside. It is said that the trapped Christians sang praises to God until their last breaths.
-

A.D. 285

- The first recorded deviation from apostolic doctrine occurred. The following is taken from the “Horizon History of Christianity” and is a quotation of the historian;
 - “During the first two centuries, the church had looked upon three sins as forgivable by God, (inaccurate as far as a guarantee for forgiveness – I Cor. 5:5) but never by the church. They are the denial of the faith, sexual immorality and the taking of life. The penalty for their commission was exclusion from the fellowship of the church and the deprivation of that sacrament which was the peculiar channel of divine grace, the Eucharist (Holy Communion). Ignacius had called it “the medicine of immorality and the antidote of death.”
-

A.D. 285

- “Exclusion from the Eucharist thus imperiled salvation, and offenders so penalized craved a relaxation of such rigor. But should the church run the risk of sullyng her purity by permitting the goats to resume fellowship with the sheep?”
 - The first to accept repentant sinners (former believers) as a matter of church policy was a Bishop of Rome, Calistus, who readmitted penitent fornicators on several grounds, including that the church of Rome is the heir of Peter to whom Jesus had given the keys both to bind and to loose. Tertullian was aghast and exclaimed, “We do not forgive apostates, and shall we forgive adulterers?” But the ruling of Calistus won general acceptance.”
-

A.D. 285

- History records that in the following decade, heretics and murderers were also readmitted to full fellowship in the church. This initiated many other departures from apostolic teachings and practices in the next hundred years and thereafter.
-

A.D. 303-313

- A.D. 303 – The beginning of the papacy and introduction of infant baptism. Emperor Diocletian increased persecution of Christians. In one month 17,000 were put to death.
 - A.D. 313 – Edict of Milan – Issued jointly by Constantine, ruler of the Western Roman Empire and Licinius, ruler of the Eastern Roman Empire. The Edict granted civil rights and tolerance to all religions including Christianity.
 - A.D. 324 – Constantine defeats Licinius, becoming sole ruler and Emperor of the Roman Empire.
-

A.D. 325

- Constantine convened and presided over the Council of Nicea to resolve divisive issues in the Christian church. Even though Constantine favored the Christian religion his affiliation remained ambiguous for most of his life. He was not baptized until shortly before his death.
-

A.D. 325 (continued)

- The Council, dealt with issues of the Father/Son relationship of the Trinity. These issues were formulated and became known as the Nicene Creed. Further formulation took place in A.D. 340 when another Council convened in Antioch, Turkey. Thus the teachings and doctrines of the Apostles became lost in the wrangling of church leaders over nonsensical matters.
 - The Church began to persecute the true believers who stood alone after church and state became one. The state church became a subsidized entity and ruled in all ecclesiastical matters. Those in opposition were persecuted.
-

A.D. 354 – Birth of Augustine – known as the father of Western Theology

- Early life until the age of 33 consisted of struggle with philosophy and ethics to overcome his propensity to sin. After struggling with immorality and having a son born out of wedlock, he claimed to hear a voice instruct him to turn to the bible and read wherever it opened. Romans 13:13&14 was the open passage which speaks about “putting on Christ.” He turned to Christianity and became a prolific writer of Christian thought.
-

A.D. 354 – Birth of Augustine – known as the father of Western Theology (continued)

- He was the ordained Bishop of the Hippo Church in North Africa. He specifically influenced the following:
 - Many tenets of the Catholic Church
 - The theology of infants being damned – promoting infant baptism
 - The need for “holy war” to spread Christianity
 - Adherents to his doctrines included Martin Luther and John Calvin, reformers of the sixteenth century
 - Was canonized by the Catholic church as Saint Augustine
-

A.D. 366

- Infant baptism gained support in many places. Those in opposition included teachers at Laodicea and Phrygia who resolved in a public convention that “—those who intended to be baptized should previously be instructed in the faith and examined concerning it,” and that “— persons who embrace the Christian faith, if they lead a pious life, be admitted to baptism in eighteen months or two years.”
-

A.D. 390

- Birth of John Chrysostom – raised under the influences of the Roman church, converted and baptized as a true believer at the age of 21, wrote on the need for complete conversion being necessary prior to the baptismal experience.
-

A.D. 606

- The Papal church government became universally accepted- four years later a Roman council made infant baptism church law.
 - The Roman state church became the persecutors of the true church which of necessity became an “illegal” underground church. From the mid- fifth century until the twelfth century they were persecuted and suffered martyrdom for the sake of Christ. Men, women and their children were slaughtered as “heretics.”
-

A.D. 606

- Conflict continued unabated through the next five centuries – Believers were slain for not taking an oath, refusing meat sacrificed to idols, and many other infractions against established church law. (ref - The Martyr's Mirror)
-

A.D. 1155

- Peter Waldo – a wealthy Frenchman, seeing a friend drop dead, was convicted and converted. He preached salvation through Christ by grace—founded a sect who called themselves Waldenses – was expelled by the Roman church for heresy.
 - This was the first evidence of the Anabaptist faith and was a precursor of the Reformation. They, along with Apostolics and Baptists were severely persecuted almost to extinction over the next four centuries.
-

A.D. 1440

- **Johann Gutenberg** – Mainz, Germany perfected the hand movable type set printing press – printed the Gutenberg Bible. The Roman church forbade reading the bible, yet the practice spread. Erasmus of Rotterdam stated, " I long for the day when the farmer behind his plow will sing psalms, when the weaver in time with his shuttle will intone Gospel songs, and the traveler will forget the weariness of his journey in contemplation of the Word of God."
-

A.D. 1440

- Greed, immorality and abuses of power, plagued the papal government of the Roman church. In the thirteenth century, John Wycliffe spoke out against the church as did John Huss in the fifteenth century. The Christian world was becoming bolder in its discontent and was ripe for a new spiritual awakening.
-

A.D. 1517-1520

- A.D. 1517 – Martin Luther nails his 95 Theses on the door of Castle Church in Wittenberg, Germany. – beginning of the Reformation
 - A.D. 1520 – Luther expelled from the Catholic church – Huldreich Zwingli persuaded the Zurich Council to forbid any religion that had any practices not based on the scripture.
-

A.D. 1524

- Conrad Grebel founded the Swiss Brethren, a movement that thrust the Anabaptist teachings into the arena of religious thought. Someone, observing the Swiss Brethren made the following observation, “I found the men who had surrendered themselves to the doctrines of Christ by repentance evidenced by fruits. They established a congregation in which repentance was evidenced by newness of life in Christ.”
-

A.D. 1527

- A.D. 1527 – The Schleitheim Confession – the first group confession to come from an Anabaptist gathering. It reveals the theology and ecclesiology of the Swiss and South German Anabaptists.
 - A.D. 1536 – Menno Simons – a Catholic priest awakened by the truth, rejected the error of Rome and gathered a following. John Calvin publishes the first edition of his institutes of the Christian Religion. During the Sixteenth and Seventeenth centuries, the Baptist movement spread through Europe. They endured great persecution and martyrdom.
-

A.D. 1642-1729

- A.D. 1642 – Quakers separated from the State Church.
 - A.D. 1648 -- On St. Bartholomew's night, during the French Inquisition, 40,000 Huguenots were slain under orders of Louis XIV – condemned as heretics (ancestors of S.H. Froelich escaped to Switzerland)
 - A.D. 1729 – Methodist movement - John and Charles Wesley
-

A.D. 1803-1825

- A.D. 1803 – July 4, Samuel Heinrich Froelich was born in Brugg, (Argau) Switzerland.
 - A.D. 1820-1825 – By persuasion of his parents, Samuel entered the University of Basel to study theology. Upon graduation, became a preacher in the State church – preached one sermon as an unbeliever.
 - A.D. 1825 -- Having come under great conviction by the Word, Samuel fought a great inner struggle. Casting himself on the mercy of God, he found peace and began to proclaim his new found faith in God.
-

A.D. 1827-1831

- A.D. 1827 -- Was nevertheless confirmed in Protestant State Church at Leutwil – was repeatedly reprimanded because his preaching demanded regeneration, repentance and rejected infant baptism.
 - A.D. 1831 -- Excommunicated from the State Church – worked for a time with the Continental Society of London
 - A.D. 1832 – In February of 1832, Samuel was baptized by a Pastor Bost, in Geneva.
-

A.D. 1836

- A.D. 1836 – On January 19, 1836 Froelich wrote, “It never entered my mind that I should found a sect here on earth, rather it was and is my purpose to gather the children of God. If I could not place my confidence in the Lord my God, that he had called me to his gospel, I would indeed repent to have begun something on which the Lord could not place his blessing, or with which he could not be pleased. Now, however, I place myself wholly in His hands, that He might lead me according to His good pleasure.”
-

A.D. 1839

- Two Hungarian locksmiths, John Denkel and John Kropatchek, in search of employment, met Froelich in Zurich – heard his sermons, believed the message and were converted and baptized by Froelich.
-

A.D. 1840

- Both returned to Hungary – Denkel preached his first Sermon May 8, 1840, to fellow workers. Among those who heard the gospel were John Denkel's brother, Kropatchek, Ludwig Hencsey, his brother Imre, an artisan Joseph Bela, and another man by name of Emerich. Denkel, Kropatchec and Henschey recorded the doctrine and as people converted, made copies and distributed them in Hungary, Serbia, Bosnia, Slavania, and Romania, where there were 226 congregations by World War II. At one time there were over 50,000 members in Hungary.
-

A.D. 1840 (continued)

- Ludwig often visited Froelich and conferred with him. He worked long days at his trade as a blacksmith and spent many sleepless nights spreading the gospel. His labors took a toll on his body and illness ensued. Joseph Bela and his brother Imre visited him often, keeping the Hungarian believers informed and encouraged.
-

A.D. 1844

- On March 14, in Zurich, Ludwig Hencsey left this earth to be in the presence of his Savior. His last wish was granted to be buried in a quiet cemetery reserved for foreigners “where the grass would not be trampled down,”
 - The same year Samuel Froelich was expelled from Switzerland – received a call from France and went to Strassburg. There he met John Diebold, a tailor, who along with Family Michel, was seeking like minded believers. 55 churches were established in the first 15 years of Froelich’s ministry.
-

A.D. 1850

- After 25 years, 110 churches were established.
 - The same year, Andrew Braun, a shoemaker, was baptized December 5. Andrew was jailed for preaching the gospel. Nevertheless was installed as elder in Strassburg. Brother Virkler was also installed as an elder, both by Bro. Froelich.
-

A.D. 1857

- Samuel Froelich died on January 15, 1857. – had respiratory problems due to spending much time living in unhealthy conditions. He was actively engaged until shortly before his death, very weak until he began to preach when his strength revived. – held 450 meetings a year – taught many children’s instructional meetings – maintained a diary and over two to three hundred letters in duplicate, annually.
-

The Apostolic Christian Church in America

(Evangelical or New Baptist)

A.D. 1815-1832

- A.D. 1815 – French Count de Chaumont founded the French Settlement at Black River, New York – needed farmers and contacted someone in Alsace-Lorraine.
 - A.D. 1834 – Two Mennonite families, Virkler and Farney, decide to emigrate to America to avoid possible military service in the Napoleonic wars. They were at sea forty-two days. As Mennonite preachers they preached the gospel.
-

A.D. 1847-1850

- A.D. 1847 – Because of some contentious Amish in the settlement, the need for spiritual guidance became acute. Joseph Virkler contacted Bro. Froelich, who in turn, ordained and consecrated Benedict Weyeneth and sent him to America. He was a powerful preacher and founded the first congregation in the settlement, eventually becoming the congregation of Croghan, New York.
 - A.D. 1850 – Weyeneth ordained Joseph Virkler as preacher and Elder in America. He then returned to Switzerland and married in November.
-

A.D. 1851-1854

- A.D. 1851 – Weyeneth returns with his bride to New York, then to Ohio, Iowa, then to Illinois. He began to farm in Morton. In 1853 he moved his family to Peoria and settled in on another farm. He and Nicholas Baumgartner walked from Elgin Illinois to Iowa in the winter. Their boots were so frozen they needed to open the seams to get them off.
 - A.D. 1854 – Henry Getz came with his family from Wittenberg to Peoria. They traveled westward on the first wood fired locomotive to Peoria.
-

A.D. 1854-1855

- A.D. 1854 (cont.) – Andrew Braun (grandfather of Bros. Philip and Guy) was severely persecuted for preaching the Gospel. On July 2, he began his journey to America with his family. The same year religious persecution ended in Switzerland.
 - A.D. 1855 – New Bremen, New York church established. Brother Weyeneth, a devoted evangelist, traveled across the country when his crops were harvested. Other families joined them, among them the Kochs, Phlederers and Riggerbachs.
-

A.D. 1858

- The first baptisms in America were in Newville, Indiana (Bluffton) officiated by Elder Joseph Bela. These, and other families, came across the stormy Atlantic in sailing ships, enduring 42-60 days at sea. Aeshlimans, Bailers, Gerglers and Strahms had children die and buried at sea. 10-15% making the trip died at sea. Each passenger had a space approximately 2X7 feet below deck.
-

A.D. 1864-1866

- A.D. 1864 – First meeting house in Roanoke – Benedict Weyeneth served as their elder.
 - A.D. 1865 – Church's name changed from Evangelical Baptist to Apostolic Christian Church
 - A.D. 1866 – Joseph Virkler dies – succeeded by his younger brother Peter. He also was a gifted preacher, traveled across America to the Pacific Northwest, founding the church in Oregon.
-

A.D. 1867-1879

- A.D. 1867 – Morton church established – Robert Welk as elder—also Naumberg, New York congregation
 - A.D. 1868 – Sardis church was founded – Bro. Joseph Bela as Elder (Aeshlimans, Gehrings, Gerbers, Keiphers and Baumgartners who came to America twenty years prior were among the founders of the Sardis church.
 - A.D. 1870 – Tremont congregation established
 - A.D. 1879 – Bro. Weyeneth baptized 159 converts that winter. He preached every evening except Saturday, never the same sermon.
-

A.D. 1886-1900

- A.D. 1886 – Bro. Henry Geistlich of Zurich visits America. He finds a small congregation outside of Mansfield. In a short time they grew into a large body of believers, primarily through the efforts of Hungarian Bro. Joseph Bela who had come to America earlier. No churches existed in Akron until the emigration of Serbian and Hungarian members who came in large numbers. Bro. Kalman preached to them from his farm home.
 - A.D. 1900 -- Around this time people began to settle down and the zeal to spread the Gospel diminished.
-

A.D. 1909

- Culmination of the “split” –(actually began in 1905)- Legalism became a dominant force in the church. As a result, our brothers became a denomination registered with the U.S. Government as the Apostolic Christian Church (Nazarean) because of their tolerance of the cultures of the immigrant brethren, some were expelled from the existing church body. The Akron church was later urged to divide by language, build separate buildings and become four distinct congregations. Sermons began to be preached in English and the ethnic languages, Serbian, Slovak, Hungarian and German around 1918.
-

A.D. 1909 (continued)-1947

- Post World War I and II saw a great influx of immigrants come to America and the Apostolic Christian Churches (Nazarean). They accounted for almost all the growth of our fellowship since then.
 - A.D. 1947 The first church Camp in Blumington, Illinois
-

A.D. 1948

- A.D. 1948 – The second church Camp in Canandagua, New York The greatest revival among our churches occurred in 1948, being attributed to the ending of World War II and the two previous Camp meetings. Church Camp has continued yearly and is still a major factor in conversions as attested to at most of the testimonies before baptisms that follow.
 - The first deterioration of long held doctrines of the church which began in Europe, manifested itself in America in late 1970's. A position needed to be taken by the Elder Body in an attempt to preserve the church from further spiritual decay.
-

A.D. 1980

- Moratorium on Reinstating Fornicators – after much discussion about the recent reinstatement of a person who had been expelled previously for the sin of fornication, an agreement was reached among the elders gathered. A letter was drafted stating that henceforth any elder who reinstates a fornicator shall by his actions separate himself from the Elder Body. All signed with one abstention. As certain elders violated the signed agreement, they were sanctioned by the elder body.
 - As time passed, sanctioned brothers gained support of other elders and the National Elder Body collapsed. Attempts to reconcile differences failed and National Elder meetings were suspended.
-

A.D. 1992

- A small group of elders took it upon themselves to call a national meeting and stipulated that “all elders were invited and that all elders would have equal voice and vote in all matters to be determined.” Those elders who believed the vows made at their ordination “to preserve the doctrines and biblical practices of the church” could not be violated, and could not attend the meeting based on the stipulations made by the meeting hosts. Each elder who was so persuaded declined the invitation in writing.
-

A.D. 1992 (continued)

- Thus the National Elder Body ceased to exist by becoming two separate conferences. Each conference of elders continues to meet, our conference on an every six month basis.
-