

14 The Early Middle Ages

Europe underwent tremendous changes in the five hundred years after the fall of Rome. First, the single ruler in Rome gave way to local kings and lords. Then with the recognition of Charlemagne as Emperor of the Franks, an attempt was made to bring back a single ruler over a large area. Both of these changes reflected the increasing power of the Roman Catholic Church. Meanwhile, a threat from the east arose in the form of the new religion of Islam. We will also look at one king in early Medieval England and at life among the marauding Vikings. The Bible study concerns what the Bible says about evangelism.

Lessons in This Unit

Lesson 66—Factors in the Middle Ages

Lesson 67—Key Event: The Rise of Islam

Lesson 68—Key Person: Alfred the Great

Lesson 69—Everyday Life Among the Vikings

Lesson 70—Bible Study: Methods and Motives in Evangelism

Books Used in This Unit

- The Bible
- *In Their Words*
- *The Imitation of Christ*

Writing Assignment for This Unit

Write a two- or three-page paper on one of the following subjects.

- Imagine that you are living in Constantinople in 750 AD. You want to consider the religions of Christianity, Islam, and Buddhism. Write what you are looking for in a religion and why you choose Christianity over the others.
- Write a letter to a friend explaining the Christian faith and why your friend needs to become a Christian.
- Nation Project: Write about what was happening in your country during the period from 500 to 1000.

What Was Happening in the World?

476—Odoacer becomes king of Italy; the Western Roman Empire ends.

481—Clovis becomes king of Franks.

570-632—Life of Mohammed

c. 610—An Italian monk invents pretzels to reward children for their prayers. The shape of pretzels is to look like arms crossed over the chest in prayer.

622—Mohammed flees Mecca; he returns and conquers the city in 630.

c. 730—The stirrup is introduced in Europe.

731—Bede completes his Ecclesiastical History of England.

c. 770—Horseshoes are introduced in Europe.

800—The pope crowns Charlemagne Holy Roman Emperor.

812—A Chinese bank develops paper money.

c. 830—Algebra is developed by a Muslim mathematician.

c. 850—The Arabs develop the astrolabe.

c. 850—Jews in Germany begin speaking Yiddish, a language derived from Hebrew and German dialects.

c. 900—The Chinese invent gunpowder.

962—Otto is crowned Holy Roman Emperor, the first non-Frank to hold the position.

982—The Viking Eric the Red discovers Greenland.

1000—Leif Ericson sails west and discovers North America.

1054—The final break occurs between the Catholic and Orthodox Churches.



Astrolabe

Lesson 66—Factors in the Middle Ages

A seventeenth-century Dutch writer divided history into three periods: ancient, modern, and the one-thousand-year epoch between them that he called the middle era, or medieval times. The millennium between the fall of Rome in the fifth century and the beginning of the Italian Renaissance in the fifteenth has sometimes been called the Dark Ages. Like many labels, the term has some truth but is not entirely accurate. Western civilization certainly became different than it had been, but it was not entirely stagnant. Learning and change did take place. Europe in 1500 was not the same as the Europe of 500, although the changes were gradual and progress was made at different rates in different places. In addition, significant intellectual development occurred in some areas.

Several key factors dominated life in the Middle Ages. The primary influence was religious. For example, the Roman Catholic Church took on a central role in politics and government with the decline of the Roman Empire and its replacement with the pattern of local lords that was derived largely from the practice of Germanic tribes. The church was in a sense the only international superpower at the time. Meanwhile, the Byzantine Empire, the eastern remnant of the Roman Empire, was also strongly influenced by the expression of Christian faith that predominated within it. In addition, the new religion of Islam burst onto the scene and had a profound effect not only in the Middle East but also in Europe, and not only in religion but also in culture, architecture, and science.

A second main influence on European life was the social structure called feudalism. This highly structured and sometimes overly-complicated system determined what just about everyone from the kings and nobles to the village peasants did on a day to day basis. Feudalism influenced economics, politics, war, religion, and social relationships. A third factor was the almost continual warfare in Europe. The entire continent was not embroiled in conflict during the entire period; but some group was almost always fighting some other group, upsetting the lives of the peasants, causing shifts in political alignments, and contributing to the already-fragile life that most people lived.

The Rise of the Franks

The Germanic tribes that controlled Europe and brought down the western Roman Empire did not have one single king. Instead, each tribe had its own king who was supported by his warrior chiefs.



Government was simpler among the tribes than it had been in Rome. They had few government officials, no taxation, and laws that were based on customary decisions rather than a detailed legal code.

As inter-tribal warfare wore on, the Franks established dominance in central Europe under the rule of Clovis in 481. He converted to Christianity, but some have wondered if his conversion was politically motivated to gain the support of the church. Other tribal kings were believers, but most of them were Arians while Clovis adopted orthodox beliefs. When he died, Clovis willed that his kingdom be divided among his sons, a move which left each son with a smaller and weaker kingdom. The descendants of Clovis were not effective leaders, even though his family ruled the kingdoms of the Franks until 751. The Frankish kings during this era were more interested in making war and indulging in personal excesses than in governing, so they generally handed real power over to the mayor of the palace, who was something like a prime minister.



The Effusion of Clovis

In the late 600s, one family was able to consolidate several mayor of the palace positions among the Franks and stake a hereditary claim to the office. From that family, Charles became mayor of the Frankish palace in 714 and strengthened his position further. He also fended off an Islamic invasion that threatened all of Europe. Muslim armies had spread out from Arabia and taken control of northern Africa, Spain, Sicily, and the Balkans. From Spain, they began heading into western Europe. In 732, an army led by Charles defeated an invading Muslim force at Tours, south of Paris. Charles was hailed as the savior of Europe and given the nickname Martel (the Hammer).

Charles had done all of this while still mayor of the palace. His son Pepin (nicknamed the Short) was elected king by the Frankish nobles in



During the reign of Pepin, the pope produced a document which stated that Constantine had given the pope jurisdiction over all western lands when he had moved the capital to Byzantium. The document was shown to be a forgery in the 1400s, but meanwhile the popes used it to exercise political power in Europe.

751, and a new dynasty replaced the family of Clovis (which had been known as the Merovingians for Meroveus, the family patriarch). The pope in Rome endorsed Pepin's reign, perhaps to give the church's seal of approval and perhaps so that the pope could call on Pepin for help, since Rome was being threatened by the Lombard tribe that was gaining power in Italy.

The pope appealed to Pepin for assistance in 756. Pepin defeated the Lombards and granted to the pope a strip of land across central Italy. This became the States of the Church or Papal States, a sovereign

country under the political jurisdiction of the pope, which existed until Italy was unified in 1870. More importantly, the Frankish dynasty and the papacy, the two most powerful forces in Europe, became allies.

Charlemagne

Pepin's son and successor, Charles, was one of the leading figures of Medieval Europe. We refer to him by a title given to him in his memory many years later: Charlemagne or Charles the Great.

During his forty-six year reign (768-814), Charlemagne expanded the Frankish kingdom to include almost all of present-day France and Germany, much of southeastern Europe to the Balkans, and the northern half of Italy. He strengthened the Franks' ties with the pope and sought to further the spread of Christianity in Europe, where the presence of paganism was still significant. Some of Charlemagne's bloodiest battles were fought in the name of extending Christianity to other tribes.

The line between church and state was further blurred as Charlemagne appointed bishops and used church leaders as agents of his government. Royal inspectors (usually a pair, a nobleman and a clergyman) traveled throughout the kingdom to check on local administrators. Charlemagne, by the way, abolished the position of mayor of the palace. He wanted no question about who held the real power in the kingdom.

The king encouraged the work of Christian missionaries as well as artists and artisans. The beautiful palace he ordered built at Aachen in what is



Charlemagne (742?-814)

now Germany was the first significant stone building to be constructed north of the Alps since the fall of Rome. Dismayed at the low level of learning among priests (some of whom did not understand the Latin masses they said), he required better education of the clergy. Charlemagne organized a palace school at Aachen where copies were made of ancient Latin literature. Previously, Latin (and Greek) had been written in all capital letters. Under the leadership of Alcuin, copyists began to use capital and lower case letters to create a handwriting that was easier to read. This was the beginning of the writing style that we use today. Charlemagne himself could read but could not write. Historians have conflicting opinions about whether he ever learned to write. Besides clergy training, some monasteries provided schools for the children of nobles; but formal education for the general public was non-existent.

In 799, the people of Rome became convinced that Pope Leo III was a scoundrel. He was severely beaten and run out of town. Leo went north and enlisted the help of Charlemagne, who used his power to restore the pope to his position. On Christmas Day 800, Charlemagne was attending mass at St. Peter's Basilica in Rome. In what was apparently a surprise to the king, the grateful pope placed a crown on Charlemagne's head and declared him to be "Charles Augustus, Emperor of the Romans." The pope thus attempted to restore the Roman Empire under the leadership of a Frankish king.

The coronation of Charlemagne as emperor was significant for many reasons. First, it was an attempt to create a unified rule over all of Europe. Second, the pope claimed the power to bestow the throne as a gift from God, which put him above the king. Although Charlemagne continued to exercise authority in local church affairs, matters had reversed a great deal since the emperor Constantine called church councils and set church policy. Third, the move strengthened the alliance between the Frankish king and the papacy. Fourth, it was a slap in the face of the emperor in Byzantium, who still claimed to rule the western lands of the empire. The ruler in Byzantium at the time was the empress Irene, whom the pope did not recognize.



Charlemagne

The new (or restored) Roman Empire was, however, only a shadow of its former self. It was nowhere near as large or as powerful as the empire based in Rome had been. It had no unified government and bestowed no citizenship. Few large cities existed in the lands claimed by Charlemagne, and no road system tied the domain together. The only thing Roman about it was that it included the city of Rome and was declared by the bishop of Rome; otherwise, it was really a Frankish kingdom based in central Europe.

The Decline of Charlemagne's Empire

Charlemagne's empire was short-lived. His son, Louis, tried to pass it on to his oldest son, Lothar; but Lothar's younger brothers

staked claims to shares of the kingdom based on the precedent Clovis had set many years earlier in dividing his kingdom among his sons. The Treaty of Verdun in 843 divided the Frankish kingdom three ways: Lothar received Italy and the territory north of the Alps, Louis received the region east of the Rhine, and Charles got the lands west of the Rhine. Lothar's portion was merged into the other kingdoms through continued family feuds. The areas of the other two brothers were the beginnings of what became France and Germany many centuries later.

Coupled with this weakened domestic situation, Europe was besieged by numerous foreign invaders. Muslim raiders took control of southern Italy and even Rome itself for a time. The Magyars or Hungarians moved in from Asia, established control in eastern Europe, and at times attacked as far as the Netherlands and southern France. The most dangerous attacks, however, were launched by the men of the North (or Norsemen, also known as the Vikings) from Scandinavia. Fierce, pagan warriors who were looking for more land for their growing population, the Vikings took control of northern Europe, the British Isles, and the Baltic and Black Sea regions; and they threatened most of the rest of Europe at various times. Other Viking invaders entered Russia, Greenland, and Iceland. In 911, the king of the Franks gave the Norsemen the region of northern France that came to be called for them: Normandy. Leif Ericson apparently sailed as far west as Newfoundland in North America about 1000.

Faced with these threats, Europeans turned to whatever source of defense they could find, which was usually not the weak king in their area. Instead, the people promised to serve wealthy local nobles, who in turn promised to use his resources to defend them. Peasants agreed to work the noble's land in exchange for a place to live in relative safety. Warriors who owned relatively less land vowed to fight for a lord of greater stature. Kings depended on the nobles to collect taxes and provide defense for the realm. Thus the most powerful people in Europe around the year 1000 were not kings but landowning nobles or lords. This was the beginning of the system of feudalism, which remained in place in Europe to varying degrees until modern times. We will discuss feudalism in more detail in lesson 74 of the next unit.



The Role of the Roman Catholic Church

During the early Middle Ages, the Roman Catholic Church played a central role in European life. We have seen the influence of the pope in the naming of kings. In the first century, Paul taught Christians to be subject to the governing authorities. In the early Middle Ages, the church had grown in power to such an extent that governing authorities were subject to the church.

The church greatly influenced daily life as well. Charlemagne developed the system of local parishes, each with its own priest, that brought the church hierarchy down to the local level. Church buildings became the center of village and town life. Priests and bishops gave their blessings to armies going off to war, to marriages being consummated, and to every other significant event in village life. Often the priest was the only person in town or on the manor who had any kind of formal schooling.

A tax or tithe was collected by the church from the people. Some of the money stayed in the parish, some went to the pope, and the rest was directed to the treasury of the king. We must remember that the separation of church and state was not a common concept at the time. The government was seen as ruling by the blessing and permission of God and as protecting the church from harm. In return, the church blessed the government and gave it spiritual guidance.

The Roman Catholic Church was a large umbrella that included many different activities. The pope and the bishops were involved with politics and power, both in the church and in government. The local priest was the face of the church that common people saw on a weekly basis. Monks were withdrawn from everyday life in one sense, but in another sense the monasteries were a major presence of the spiritual realm in local communities. The church was other-worldly and this-worldly at the same time. It claimed to be the route to heaven; but its hierarchy, political influence, and accumulation of property were all very much involved with this life. The church taught about Jesus' way of life, but many church leaders did not live that way.

Byzantium

The eastern remnant of the Roman Empire was still a key player in world events during this period. Byzantium is the Greek name for the site of Constantinople. Byzantine



Emperor Justinian and Empress Theodora

culture was a mix of European, Greek, Hellenistic, and Oriental influences. Its power did not lie in the size of its territory, which by this time only included Syria and Palestine, Asia Minor, Greece and Egypt, and southeastern Europe. Rather, Byzantium served as a bridge between Western and Oriental cultures and provided our culture with significant gifts. Practically speaking, the Byzantine Empire protected the West from attack from the East until it fell in 1453. It also helped spread the Christian faith into areas such as the Balkan Peninsula and Russia.

Justinian (emperor from 527 to 565) was the most outstanding ruler of this period. In the role of absolute monarch, he reasserted the power of the empire and the power of the emperor, especially in church affairs. His

armies regained Italy, northwest Africa, several of the Mediterranean islands, and also gained a foothold in Spain. Justinian oversaw a codification of Roman law (known since then as the Justinian Code). He appointed the patriarch (the leader of the Greek Orthodox Church), decided matters of doctrine, and enforced church discipline.

Byzantine scholars copied the literature of ancient Greece to keep it available to future generations. Its craftsmen worked wonders in gold, silver, enamel, and other mediums. The outstanding accomplishment of Justinian's building program was the church of Hagia Sophia (Holy Wisdom). This complex structure, built in only six years, features domes and half domes and is highlighted by the main dome, which is 100 feet across, 180 feet high, and supported by four huge arches.

Byzantium and the Greek Orthodox Church had important interaction with the Slavic peoples of Eastern Europe. In the sixth and seventh centuries, the Slavs moved out of Western Asia and seized control of southeastern Europe from Byzantium. They also invaded Russia. The Byzantine church saw the Slavs as people to be influenced for Christ and sought to do so in the ninth and tenth centuries. Greek Orthodox leaders allowed the Slavs to conduct services in their native tongue instead of using the customary Greek. Church scholars even

The Slavs were the first known inhabitants of the region north of the Black Sea we now know as Russia. Viking invaders descended on the area in the eighth and ninth centuries, and some settled there. The Viking Rurik began to rule in the Slavic town of Novgorod in 862, thus creating the first dynasty in Russia. The capital of Russia was moved south to Kiev a few years later. The Russians established trade with Byzantium and adopted the Orthodox faith, which eventually became the Russian Orthodox Church. Early Russian art and architecture were strongly influenced by the Byzantine culture.



Orthodox church building in Albania

adapted the Greek alphabet to the Slavic language, creating the Cyrillic alphabet (named for Cyril, leading missionary among the Slavs). The branch of the church in Russia became the Russian Orthodox Church. Russia became the easternmost nation that was influenced by Byzantium.

Civilization in Transition

The Early Middle Ages saw many changes in Europe. Cities such as Rome, Athens, and Jerusalem were not as important and influential as they once had been. Society was more rural based. Kingdoms and nation states were not as significant as large estates owned by nobles. Population growth was not

large, and it even declined for a time with a serious outbreak of bubonic plague that affected the Mediterranean rim and Western Europe in the sixth century.

Central and Western Europe, the cultural ancestors of America, were seeing the creation of a new civilization. Like any civilization, it built on what had come before: Roman culture, European tribes, and a strong Christian presence. The result was a new culture with a shape of its own that has influenced not only that area but the entire world from that time until today.

*For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us;
And the government will rest on His shoulders;
And His name will be called
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
Isaiah 9:6*

Bible Study Question

In the Old Testament, God commanded Israel to go to war. The church is not told to go to war in the New Testament (except in spiritual warfare). Why do you think God made this change?

Grammar Point—Semicolon IV

Semicolons are used to separate groups of words or phrases which contain commas. **In the picnic basket we had plates, cups, and napkins; sandwiches, chips, and potato salad; cookies, fudge, and pie.**

Reading

- Read the hymns by Columba (*In Their Words*, page 34).
- Continue reading *The Imitation of Christ*.

If you are using the optional Quiz and Exam Book, answer the questions for Lesson 66.

Lesson 67—Key Event: The Rise of Islam

This story begins about 1,400 years ago, but it is as relevant as today's headlines. It is an illustration of why we need to understand history and why just an understanding of European and American history is not sufficient to be knowledgeable and involved in today's world.

The Life of Mohammed

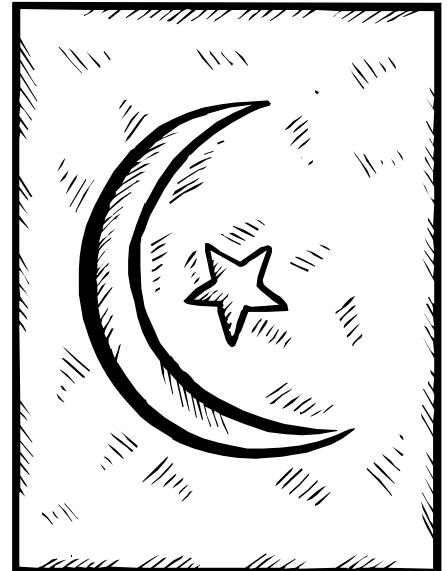
In the sixth century AD, most Arabs were nomad shepherds. Some were city dwellers involved in trade. The Arabs believed in many gods and spiritual beings. In the city of Mecca was a shrine called the Kaaba that housed the idols of many pagan gods as well as a sacred black stone believed to have fallen from heaven. Sometimes Arab worship involved infanticide. The level of morality was not high.

Mohammed was born about 570 in Mecca, a trading city in western Arabia. He was orphaned as a child, was reared by a grandfather and uncle, and became a merchant. When he was 25, he began working for a rich widow whom he married. In his trading activity he learned about Judaism and Christianity. When he was about forty years old, Mohammed left

The Koran includes some inaccurate renderings of stories from the Bible. A son of Noah was said to have refused to go into the ark and was swept away when he took refuge on a mountaintop. The Israelites were said to be few in number and possessors of gardens, fountains, and splendid dwellings before God delivered them from Egypt. Zechariah was said to be speechless for three days, not nine months, when he was told that John the Baptist would be born to him and Elizabeth. Mohammed apparently believed that Jesus died a natural death and that the Jews crucified a man who looked like Him.

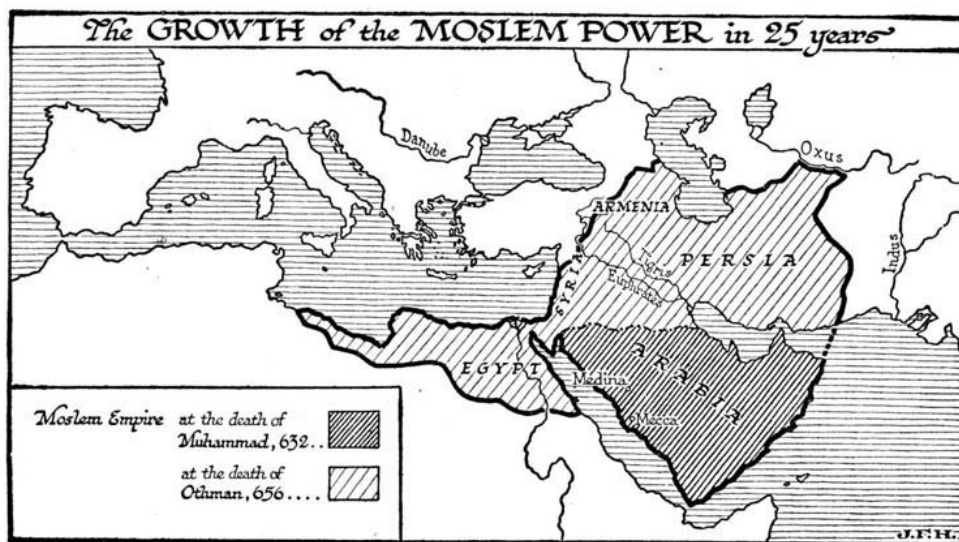
the business world and became a spiritual thinker. He believed that he received revelations from Allah, the one true God, and believed that he was supposed to tell others what Allah told him.

The central truth that he believed needed to be told was that Allah was the one God and that he, Mohammed, was the last true prophet of Allah. This message was not popular in Mecca, where Mohammed was denounced as a blasphemer. In 622, Mohammed and his few followers fled north to Yathrib (the Arabic word for flight is *hegira*, soft g). Here he was more warmly received and began building a movement. He changed the name of the city to Medina, which means City of the Prophet. The year we number 622 is in Muslim thinking Year One.



Mohammed wanted to unite the Arab world in one faith, wipe out paganism, end tribal feuds, and guide people to live upright lives. The way to accomplish this, he thought, was for everyone to submit to him as the prophet of Allah. The Arab word for submit is *islam*; a submitted person is a *muslim*.

The movement went beyond mere persuasion. Mohammed believed that he received a revelation allowing the use of force to convert unbelievers if necessary. This cause is called a *jihad* or holy war. Thus Mohammed became a military leader as well as a spiritual leader. Mohammed's followers began raiding caravans (which was a profitable form of evangelism) and taking the lives of those who refused to submit. Six hundred Jews were killed in one year alone. The city of Mecca finally yielded to him in 630, and Mohammed returned in triumph. The Muslims destroyed the idols in the Kaaba but kept the Black Stone as a symbol of the new religion. Desert nomads flocked to the new faith as well. When Mohammed died in 632, most of Arabia was under his control.



Mohammed married often but produced no male heir. His followers chose Mohammed's father-in-law as his successor (*caliph*) and continued the *jihad*. By 720, the Muslims controlled an area that extended from the western border of India across the Middle East, along northern Africa and southern Italy, and into Spain. Jerusalem fell to the Muslims in 638. Their invasion of Europe was stopped at Tours in France in 732, as described in the previous lesson. Generally speaking, the Muslim empire tolerated Jews and Christians if they paid a tax and refrained from warfare. Many Christians became Muslims; and nearly all of the countries which fell to Islam in its first century are still predominately Muslim.

Mohammed did not claim to be divine. He accepted the Old and New Testaments as revelations from God and believed that Jesus was a prophet. Mohammed's thinking was influenced by the Bible. He taught that the Arabs were descended from Ishmael, son of Abraham by Hagar. He was opposed to idolatry and the eating of pork, and he believed in angels. However, he shaped other teachings on his own. He encouraged people to do good

but did not emphasize self-denial the way Jesus did. He limited polygamy to no more than four wives to a man, although Mohammed himself was exempted from this limit thanks to a convenient special revelation he received. No limit was placed on concubines. He believed in rewards and punishments after death and in a kind of purgatory for Muslims. Paradise offered sumptuous banquets and beautiful women.

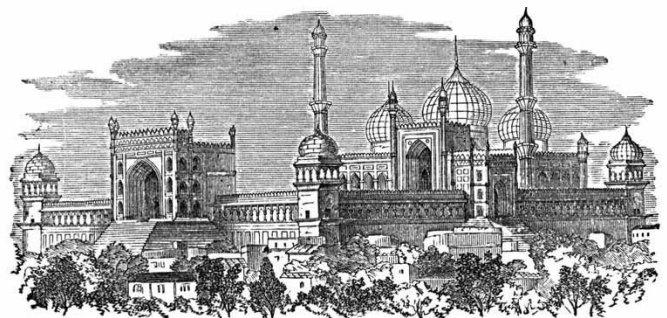
Islam has no system of rituals, no provision for images of any kind, and no priests, although religious scholars (*mullahs*) and holy men (*ayatollahs*) hold places of respect and authority. The only assembly is a prayer service at midday on Fridays. The sayings of Mohammed were written down shortly after his death and compiled in the Koran. To Muslims, the only true rendering of the Koran is in its original Arabic.

The Five Pillars of Islam

1. The belief that “There is no God but Allah and Mohammed is His prophet.”
2. Daily prayer offered five times per day (at dawn, midday, midafternoon, sunset, and nightfall); a formulaic prayer in Arabic, said while kneeling and bowing toward Mecca.
3. Giving to the poor, which became a routine tax in Islamic countries for helping the poor and for building and maintaining mosques.
4. Daylight fasting during the month of Ramadan (when Mohammed supposedly received his revelations)
5. If possible, a pilgrimage to Mecca and the performing of certain rituals while there. Most Muslims are not able to make this pilgrimage, but it has had a unifying effect on those who have.

(Early on, a sixth pillar for males was participation in the jihad.)

After Mohammed’s death, the Muslim movement broke into several factions. The Sunnis favored an elected leader as the successor to Mohammed and accepted traditional practices as well as the Koran as their authority. The Shi’ites believed that their leader should be related to Mohammed and accepted only the literal reading of the Koran as their guide. Other groups included mystics and free-thinkers. In 656, the Shi’ites deposed the Omniad family and chose Ali, the husband of Mohammed’s daughter Fatima, as their leader. Five years later, Ali was murdered. The Omniad family regained control and moved the Muslim capital of the Muslim Empire to Damascus, Syria (Mecca was always its spiritual center). Then in 750 the Shi’ites revolted, named a distant relative of Mohammed as their leader, and moved the capital to Baghdad, where they reigned in



increasing splendor until 1057. At that time they abdicated in favor of the Islamic Seljuk Turks. In 929, descendants of Ali and Fatima set up a rival caliphate at Cordova, Spain.

Arab-Islamic Culture

The Muslim faith was the driving force behind significant developments in Arab culture. The culture reached its zenith (an Arab word) in the ninth and tenth centuries. Increased trade with places such as Russia and equatorial Africa brought new wealth and encouraged the study of geography and navigation. The encouragement of learning led to the establishment of universities and advancements in medicine (such as the nature of smallpox, antidotes for poisons, and teaching hospitals) and science (sulphuric acid, nitrate of silver, and the processes of filtration and distillation). The Arabs introduced to the West the number system they discovered in India, which is why it is called Arabic numerals. Arabic mathematicians gave us the zero, the discipline of algebra, and advancements in trigonometry.

While European artistic endeavors were largely non-existent, Arabs were exploring rich forms and colors in tapestries, beautiful architectural forms including elaborate palaces,

domes, and minaret towers (the pinnacle being the Taj Mahal tomb in seventeenth century India). Prohibited by Islamic law from creating images of people or animals, Arabs fashioned elaborate geometric and floral designs.



Their literature took many forms. The *1,001 Arabian Nights* is a collection of stories (including some that are not morally pure) from the eighth and ninth centuries. It is the source of stories about Aladdin, Ali Baba, and Sinbad the Sailor. The *Rubaiyat* (Quatrains) of Omar Khayyam is a twelfth-century poem with one thousand four-line verses. Khayyam sees life as ultimately pointless and so encourages the enjoyment of pleasure now. Its thoughts are similar to some of those expressed in Ecclesiastes, but Ecclesiastes arrives at a very different conclusion.

Probably a greater intellectual contribution was their preservation of ancient Greek texts including those by Plato and Aristotle. Muslim schools were established in Cairo, Egypt; Toledo, Spain; and Palermo, Italy. European Christian scholars eventually attended these schools and rediscovered ancient writings assumed to be lost.

Arabic trade stimulated European commerce in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Medieval Gothic architecture was influenced by Muslim accomplishments. Versions of stories from the Arabian Nights found their way into European literature, including Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*. Many Arabic words have come into the English language, such

as traffic, bazaar, alcohol, muslin, tariff, check (the Arabs pioneered its use in trade), and magazine.

The Islamic movement had the impact it did because of the internal motivation of the faithful's beliefs. They believed that they were right and that other people needed to believe as they did. Muslim warriors were convinced that they would be rewarded with riches in this life and paradise in the next. Several external factors were involved as well. The drive for geographic and financial gain was strong. The Byzantine and Persian empires were weak. Europe was suffering from poor leadership and the effects of plague. Some of the peoples that the Muslims conquered welcomed a change from the rulers under whom they had been living. The Islamic Empire declined after the Crusades of the later Middle Ages and the Mongol invasions that came later. It eventually fell apart because of the difficulty in governing such a huge empire and because of internal sectarian and factional strife.

When Islam began, its followers thought that it was a more pure and democratic religion than Christianity. They perceived Christians as always arguing with each other, admitting elements of paganism into their faith, and worshiping three co-equal deities, which they saw as an impossibility. Today, many Muslims see so-called Christian nations as weak and purveyors of immorality through their media.

The militarism of Islam was present from the start. The September 11, 2001, attacks on America were merely the fulfillment of what at least some Muslims believe to be a divine call. Not all Muslims believe that such a jihad against the West is in keeping with their religion. It may be at best a matter of interpretation whether Islam as expressed in the Koran is an aggressive and militaristic religion; but enough of its adherents believe it to be so that they are a threat to the rest of the world.



African mosque

*And there is salvation in no one else [but Jesus];
for there is no other name under heaven
that has been given among men,
by which we must be saved.*

Acts 4:12

Bible Study Question

What convinces you that Christianity is right and other religions are wrong?

Grammar Point—Colon I

A colon may be used before a certain word, phrase, clause, or sentence which explains or emphasizes the main clause. **Tears came to her eyes as she looked upon the magnificent scene before her: the Canadian Rockies.**

Reading

- Read “Christian, Dost Thou See Them?” by Andrew of Crete (*In Their Words*, page 35).
- Continue reading *The Imitation of Christ*.

If you are using the optional Quiz and Exam Book, answer the questions for Lesson 67.



Caliph al-Mutawakkil of Baghdad, ruled 847-861

Lesson 68—Key Person: Alfred the Great



Alfred (849-899?)

The Vikings, seafaring bands from Norway, Sweden, and Denmark, were on the move in Northern Europe, from Ireland to Britain to France to Russia. Some made quick raids and returned home. Others stayed where they landed and built new homes. This was the world into which Alfred was born about the year 849. He is the only English monarch to be remembered as “the Great.” If that title is fit for any man, Alfred’s life and conduct suggest that it is fit for him.

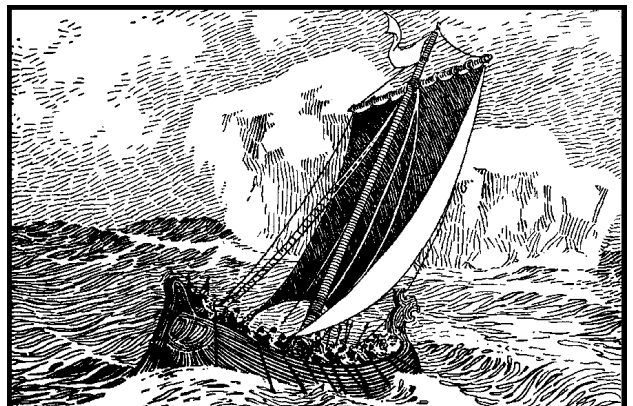
Conflict with the Danes

Alfred was born to King Ethelwulf of Wessex and his wife Osburga. His father took him to visit Rome as a boy. Alfred’s mother and father died when the boy was still young, and his older brothers ruled in turn after Ethelwulf.

In the 860s, the Danes sent major expeditions into England. The invaders found great treasure in the churches and monasteries, and they met little effective resistance among the unprepared Saxons. As the Danes spread out in the north and east, Ethelred, who was then king, prepared to face them with his brother Alfred at his side.

The first major confrontation came in 871. The Danes approached for battle while King Ethelred was still praying. Alfred was a devout man, too, but instead of waiting for his brother, he decided to lead the Saxons against the foe. Ethelred eventually joined Alfred in the lengthy fight, and they forced the Danes to retreat. Though it was only the beginning of a long struggle, this battle checked the Danish advance and proved that the Saxons were able to field a victorious army. Ethelred became ill and died that year. The Saxons looked to Alfred, still in his early 20s, as their new King.

After a difficult period that saw several defeats for the Saxons, Alfred made a treaty with the Danes. He had to pay heavy tribute, but at least his army was not destroyed. A few years of peace ensued until Guthrum, a new Danish leader, began his assault on Wessex. Alfred attempted to renew peace with Guthrum, but the Danes were ready for combat. In January 878 a surprise attack crushed the Saxon army. Those who were not





Legend says that while Alfred was regrouping, he visited a peasant woman who did not know who he was. She asked him to watch the cakes she was cooking while she was out. When she returned, she found the cakes burned, and she upbraided the king. Another story tells that Alfred infiltrated Guthrum's camp disguised as a harpist.

killed fled. Alfred and a few followers went into seclusion as he tried to rebuild an army.

After the Danes failed to capture a Saxon stronghold, Alfred called out the *fyrð*, the local militia. His subjects still respected and admired him, and they were ready to stand with him against their enemies. Alfred marched against the Danes. They met in a great contest, and this time the Saxons forced the Danes to flee. Guthrum and his men asked for peace.

Instead of seeking to destroy his opponents or even asking for hostages, Alfred wanted Guthrum to accept baptism. He hosted Guthrum in his camp, acted as godfather at his baptism, and called him his son. Alfred wanted to establish peace in the land between Saxon and Dane, and they had fourteen years of relative calm.

Building a Kingdom

As he led his people well in war, so Alfred led them well in peace. He was a devout man who recognized the importance of religion. He sought to insure justice for the poor. Alfred compiled a book of laws that combined Biblical principles with traditional customs.

Alfred also promoted education. He learned to read and write as king, and he personally translated works from Latin into English. He established a school featuring scholars from Britain and other countries; and

he developed the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, an historical record that was continued for many generations after him.

Part of his peace-time work included preparations for war. He divided the militia into two groups so that some could stay home when the others were in the field. He encouraged the construction and maintenance of fortifications. He also tried with limited success to establish a navy.

Continuing His Work

Guthrum died in 891 and another Viking army invaded England in 892. Alfred's health was not good, but his twenty-two-year-old son Edward followed in his footsteps as an able commander. Alfred attempted to negotiate with the opposing leader, Hæsten. Hæsten accepted money from Alfred and allowed his two sons to be baptized; but a major clash of arms hastened on. As the threat grew, Edward and his brother-in-law, Ethelred, attacked and

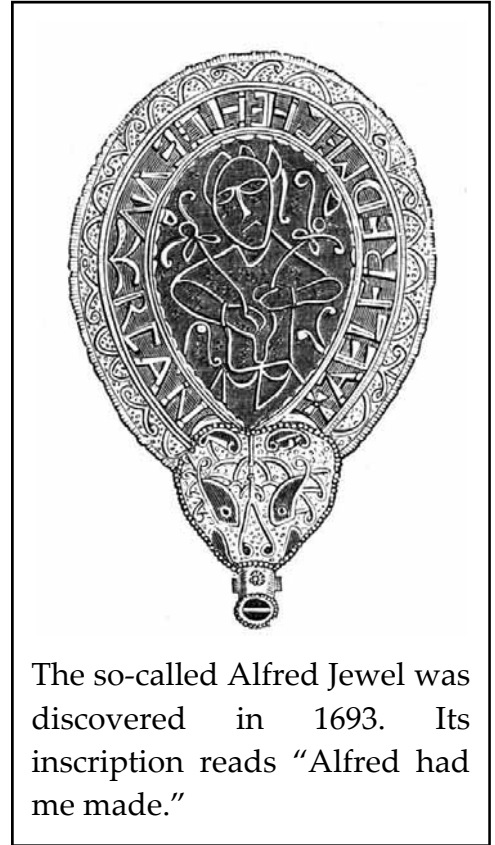
routed the Danish army. They struck again at a fortified Danish position and won a great victory.

In this battle, the Saxons captured women and children the Danes left behind, including Hæsten's wife and two sons. Alfred could have held them as hostages, but he returned them to Hæsten in a generous gesture of charity. The war continued until 896, but Hæsten apparently did not participate.

His Legacy

Alfred and his wife Ealhswyth had five surviving children and others who died in infancy. Alfred died in 899, and his son Edward took up his mantle. His daughter, Ethelfreda, became Lady of the Mercians after her husband died; and she and her brother worked together to resist the Danes. Alfred's legacy of noble leadership continued for many years in his descendants.

English society has undergone many changes in the 1100 years since Alfred, but his life remains an impressive example of a man who sought to do good.



The so-called Alfred Jewel was discovered in 1693. Its inscription reads "Alfred had me made."

The king gives stability to the land by justice . . .
Proverbs 29:4

Bible Study Question

What king in the Bible do you admire and why?

Grammar Point—Colon II

Use a colon to introduce a list. **We picked up everything on the grocery list: milk, butter, eggs, ice cream, and birthday candles.** Use a colon after the salutation of a business letter. **Dear Mr. President:**

Reading

- Read "O God, Our Maker, Throned on High" (*In Their Words*, page 41).
- Continue reading *The Imitation of Christ*.

If you are using the optional Quiz and Exam Book, answer the questions for Lesson 68.

Lesson 69—Everyday Life Among the Vikings

The term Viking was first used in the 11th century. It probably comes from the Swedish word *vik*, meaning bay. They lived in what is now Sweden, Norway, Denmark, and later Iceland. They were farmers, traders, and warriors. The first mention of Vikings in the literature of southern Europe was about 800 AD.

Viking society was ruled by chieftains. Free Vikings could carry arms and speak at assemblies. They were divided into *jarls* (or earls) and farmers. Viking slaves were called thralls. Vikings developed their shipbuilding skills and were able to travel to other lands, sometimes for trade and sometimes to wreak havoc.

An iron skate discovered in Scandinavia dates from AD 200. Probably skates were originally bone. The word “skate” comes from a Dutch word. It means leg or shank bone. Vikings enjoyed ice-skating and a board game called *hneftafl*.

Viking Life at Home

Families of three generations or more lived in long farmhouses, built of stone and turf or stone and timber. Roofs were thatched. The main room was used for cooking, eating, and sleeping. The houses also had a storage room and a dayroom, where women would weave on a loom and sew.

Vikings grew grain and vegetables and kept cows, which were milked for making butter and cheese. They cooked meat stew in huge iron cauldrons supported by a tripod. They had bowls and plates, usually made of wood. They ate with a knife and spoon. Spoons could be made of wood, horn, or bone and were often carved. Horns were used for cups. Sometimes these had metal tips and rims.

One way we learn about everyday life is from Viking graves. Women were often buried with tools for making flax into thread. Viking men were usually buried with a sword, shield, spear, ax, arrows, and sometimes blacksmithing tools. Great quantities of weapons have been found in Viking graves.

Viking women wore a long linen shift, which was sometimes pleated, under a pinafore of wool or linen. Women usually wore two large ornate bronze, silver, or iron brooches on their pinafores. Wealthy women might wear beads between the two brooches. The shift was usually embroidered at the top and often at the hem as well. Viking men wore trousers and a tunic made of wool or linen and an undershirt made of linen. Sometimes they were decorated with embroidery sewn with wool, linen, silk gold, or silver thread. Viking sagas indicate that clothes for both men and women were brightly colored.

Vikings practiced good personal hygiene, combing their hair and washing their faces and hands at least daily. Some combs were made of bone and occasionally from imported ivory. Some had two opposing rows of teeth, with one row of large teeth spread slightly apart

and one row of thin teeth close together. Perhaps they removed tangles with the large teeth and lice with the small ones. Men were buried with a comb and a comb case; women had a comb, but no case. Viking women carried an ear spoon for removing wax, a tool for cleaning fingernails, and tweezers. Sometimes these were ornamented and hung on a chain from one of the pinafore brooches.

Viking religion was pagan. Their chieftans served as priests. They sacrificed horses. Their epic poems or sagas tell myths about their gods and their relationship with giants, dwarfs, and men. Their most powerful god was the one-eyed Odin, god of death, justice, poetry, warfare, and wisdom. Their most popular god was the slow-witted but strong Thor. He was especially favored by the seafaring Vikings. Many people wore amulets shaped like Thor's hammer, supposedly made by dwarfs. Also important were the fertility gods, Frey and Freyja, a brother and sister. Vikings wore amulets, which were religious jewelry. Surviving amulet designs include a key, a heart, and Thor's hammer.

When Vikings built colonies in Normandy, Ireland, and the British Isles, many became Christians (some Viking women probably traveled to the new lands, but often Viking men just married local women). Also, German and Anglo-Saxon missionaries went to Viking lands. Christian churches were well-established in Denmark and most of Norway by the eleventh century and in Sweden by the twelfth.

Viking Life at Sea

The Vikings were good ship builders. They built fast, wooden longships, with overlapping planks. The ships were between 57 and 117 feet long and were outfitted with both sails and oars. Viking ships had no rudder. Instead, they were steered by an oar that was mounted on the starboard side. The ships were able to travel not only on the sea but also on rivers and streams because their draughts were shallow. A Viking crew numbered between 25

and 60. They sat on benches on open decks. Some of the largest ships may have carried 100 men. They also carried provisions and even packhorses, if needed. Ships had fierce figureheads at stem and stern. Shields were mounted on the ship's sides.

For three hundred years, Vikings went on voyages to raid and to explore. Raids were often conducted with a single ship, but sometimes ships sailed in fleets of as many as 100. Battles at sea were rare. When fighting at sea, ships were roped together. They usually tried to capture, but not destroy, enemy ships. Vikings usually fought on or near land. The picture of a Viking warrior in a helmet with horns is a myth. Actually the only helmets were probably worn by the leaders, and these were similar to those of European knights. Some Vikings may have worn armor made from reindeer hide.



The Norsemen's Galley.

Some Viking warriors were called “berserks.” They would work themselves into a frenzy. Reportedly, they bit the edges of their shields and could ignore pain. They may have been called “berserks” because they wore bearskin.

The sea-faring Vikings raided coastal lands. They raided many churches, presumably because churches were wealthy and had poor defenses. Sometimes the raids were seasonal. Warriors would go back home to farm or perhaps settle in the land they had raided.

Vikings made their mark over a wide area. Swedes penetrated Russia down to the Black and Caspian Seas in the east. Norwegians skirted the British Isles and moved west to Iceland, Greenland, and likely Canada. The Danes moved into England, France, and around Spain into the Mediterranean.

Lindisfarne (or Holy Island) is located on the eastern coast of Great Britain. At low tide, a causeway allows traffic between the island and the mainland. A monastery there produced the beautifully-illuminated Lindisfarne Gospels in the early 700s. Viking raiders drove the monks away from the island, but others monks later returned to it.

*Sing to the Lord a new song,
Sing His praise from the end of the earth!
You who go down to the sea, and all that is in it.
You islands, and those who dwell on them.
Isaiah 42:10*

Bible Study Question

What is something you have learned from another culture about living for God?

Grammar Point—Colon III

Never let a colon separate a preposition from its subject, nor a verb from its object or complement. *Incorrect: He searched through: his wallet, desk, dresser, and car. Correct: He searched through everything: his wallet, desk, dresser, and car. Incorrect: I cleaned: the bathroom, the living room, the kitchen, and all the bedrooms. Correct: I cleaned the whole house: bathroom, living room, kitchen, and bedrooms.* A colon is used to give a formal introduction to a sentence, question, or quotation. **Calvin Coolidge once said: “Let men in office substitute the midnight oil for the limelight.”**

Reading

- Continue reading *The Imitation of Christ*.

If you are using the optional Quiz and Exam Book, answer the questions for Lesson 69.

Lesson 70—Bible Study:

Methods and Motives in Evangelism

Jesus commanded the apostles:

“As you are going [participle expressing habitual action],

“make disciples of all *ethne* [“make disciples” is the main verb of the sentence, imperative form; *ethne* is the word for nations from which we get ethnic],

[the next two phrases are participial, explaining what is involved in making disciples:]

“baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, [the beginning step of making a disciple]

“teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you, [the long-term process of making disciples]

“and behold, I will be with you all the days, unto the end of the age” [indicating the power whereby they would be able to do what He had commanded] (Matthew 28:19-20).

The Lord commanded the apostles to carry the gospel to the world (see also Mark 16:15-16, Luke 24:46-47, and Acts 1:8). The Greek word *euangelion* means good news (*eu*=good, *angelion*=message). The word evangelism is not used in the New Testament, but some men are described as evangelists (Ephesians 4:11, Acts 21:8). Paul was God’s chosen instrument to take the message of salvation to the Gentiles (Acts 9:15). After the execution of Stephen, those who were scattered from Jerusalem went about “evangelizing” (proclaiming the good news of) the word.

God wants all people to be saved (1 Timothy 2:4). He does not want any to perish but wants all to come to repentance (2 Peter 3:9). The way that God has chosen for people to learn the message of good news is by individuals telling the gospel to others. When God could have spoken the message directly from heaven, as in the cases of Saul and Cornelius, He instead instructed other people to tell the message (Ananias and Peter, respectively).

Over the centuries, the church has grown through the teaching of the gospel to people who have not known the Lord. Missionaries have taken the good news of Jesus to every continent and to almost if not every ethnic group. In doing so, evangelists have used many different approaches. Some have gone as individuals, whereas in more recent years many missionaries have formed teams of workers to





Patrick (389-461?)

encourage and support each other. Some have been strictly teachers, while others have tried to meet the needs of the people (such as providing health care or teaching farming skills) as a way to establish contact and encourage interest in what the evangelists have to say and why they are there.

The period of the early Middle Ages saw important evangelism take place in many parts of Europe. Patrick, for example, took the gospel to Ireland. He was born into a Christian family in Roman-held Britain. At 16 he was kidnapped and sold into slavery in Ireland. There he became deeply committed to following the Lord. He eventually escaped, studied in Europe, and in 432 was ordained a bishop and sent back to Ireland.

Patrick taught the gospel to all. Members of the royal family as well as many everyday people came to faith in Christ. The predominance of the Roman Catholic Church in Ireland is credited to Patrick's influence. He trained native Irishmen to be priests and established monasteries. Through his influence, monks became copyists who preserved ancient literature—Christian and secular—in monasteries across Europe.

Augustine (not the bishop of Hippo) was born in Rome. The pope sent him to England in 597 to convert the Anglo-Saxons. Soon after he arrived, Augustine brought Ethelbert, the Saxon king of southeastern England, to faith (his wife was already a believer). Augustine led in the evangelization of England and became the first archbishop of Canterbury (that is, the leader of the church in England).

Boniface was born in England but devoted much of his adult life to teaching the Saxons in Germany starting in 719. The area had already seen considerable teaching of the gospel; but many had fallen back into paganism and some religious practices mixed Christian and pagan traditions. The story goes that Boniface cut down a large oak tree sacred to the Saxon god Thor and built a Christian chapel from the wood. When no thunderbolt came from Thor, many people decided to follow Christ. Boniface was supported by Charles Martel and his son, Pepin. After serving as an archbishop and overseeing the church hierarchy in his area for several years, Boniface returned to evangelism but was murdered by pagans in 753.

These are some of the most prominent people who were involved in evangelizing Europe, but the task involved many people in many different ways. Even monasteries, ostensibly withdrawn from the world, had an impact as non-believers wondered about what motivated such service and self-sacrifice.

The goal of evangelism is to bring a person to a saving faith in God as the one true God and in Jesus as Savior and Lord and to start that person on the road of faithful discipleship. Two common questions that arise concerning evangelism involve (1) the most effective means of evangelism and (2) what a person has to give up from his old life in order to be faithful to God.

Obviously a person has to be instructed in the basic truths of the gospel, who Jesus is, and what it means to follow Him. In some places in the world and at some periods in history, preaching on the street corner or in some other public place has been an effective means of evangelizing. However, in twenty-first century America and Europe this would probably not be effective. Christians have tried printed gospel messages, radio and television broadcasts, and other means of delivering the gospel in media to which people will listen.

A person must be taught in some way, but how to help a person be willing to be taught is an essential part of what has been called pre-evangelism. Seeing a Christian's life of faith or receiving help from a Christian can lead an unbeliever to be interested in the gospel. This is how every Christian can be involved in evangelism: not only knowing the truth and being able to share it, but having a life that backs up the message you want to teach.

The stereotype of the Christian warrior from the Middle Ages is someone who tried to make a pagan believe in Jesus at the point of a spear. This happened sometimes, but it was not the pattern of the Medieval church. When it did happen, it was the unfortunate result of trying to carry out the Great Commission through the world's ways of warfare. The spread of Islam was a much more clear example of influencing faith through military pressure. Christians must be careful not to use worldly methods in trying to carry out the Lord's will. It is often the case that when someone is pressured into making a confession of faith (whether at the end of a spear, through slick salesmanship, by the overly-dramatic appeal of a preacher, or in an emotion-charged group setting), the person's faith does not last very long.

The second issue involves what a person has to give up in order to become a faithful Christian. Someone who is converted to Christ must put away the old man of sin and put on the renewed person who has been made alive in Christ (Romans 6:3-11, Ephesians 4:17-24). The Christian must not do what the Bible says is wrong. A life of immorality, dishonesty, anger, filthy language, lust, and many other sins cannot characterize the Christian (Ephesians 4:25-5:4).

An immoral person must give up immorality, but a farmer does not have to give up farming. What the Bible does not condemn as wrong does not have to be given up to follow Christ. In the first century, Jewish Christians continued to have scruples about clean and unclean foods and, at least for a time, continued to observe Jewish festivals. Christian evangelists in medieval Europe did not press converts to eliminate every aspect of their

Despite the conversion of Europeans to Christianity, some vestiges of their pagan background remained. One example is in our names for the days of the week. Sunday was named in honor of the sun; Monday for the moon; Tuesday for the German war god Tiu; Wednesday for the central deity Woden; Thursday for Thor, the god of thunder; Friday for Fria or Frigg; the goddess of fertility; and Saturday for Saturn. The church decided not to force the abandonment of these names as people were being converted. Some Christmas and Easter traditions have pagan backgrounds as well.

pagan lives when they became Christians. As a result, new converts continued to believe in various pagan spirits and superstitions, some of which continue to be believed today. Evangelists must balance making the gospel attractive and teaching the full counsel of God while not insisting that the faith of a convert has to look just like the faith the evangelist knew in his home country. For example, Christians in Africa or Russia do not have to sit in pews or sing from American songbooks.

Europe was converted to the form of Christianity practiced by the evangelists, namely Roman Catholicism. Pagan beliefs were almost entirely eliminated (though not necessarily all worldly practices). The practice of Christianity changed significantly with the Protestant Reformation many centuries later, and the predominance of secularism today developed later still.

People who come to Christ have major decisions to make and often a deeply-entrenched lifestyle and belief system that they must give up. The more strongly that Biblical faith in Christ is instilled in people's hearts, modeled by other Christians, and taught in the home, the more likely it is that the faith will be adopted by new converts from the heart and continue from generation to generation.

If you are involved at all in teaching unbelievers, especially those from a different culture, you will almost definitely struggle with questions involving the most effective way to teach the gospel and what new believers must give up. Be sure that your consideration of these questions is not just theory but comes from helping other people know the Lord. The struggle is worth it to help other people be saved. Remember that the people you teach answer to the Lord and not to you.

*I have become all things to all men,
so that I may by all means save some.
I do all things for the sake of the gospel,
so that I may become a fellow partaker of it.
1 Corinthians 9:22b-23*

Reading

- Read “A Hymn of Glory Let Us Sing” by Bede (*In Their Words*, page 40).
- Finish reading *The Imitation of Christ*.

*If you are using the optional Quiz and Exam Book,
answer the questions for Lesson 70 and take the quiz for Unit 14.*