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| Name of the Challenge | East-West Schism |
| Source of the Challenge  | The Great Eastern Schism is the name given to the separation of the Roman and Byzantine branches of the Christian church.11th Century reform in the western church called for strengthening of papal authority causing the church to become more autocratic and centralized. This separation of the Latin and Greek churches is sometimes dated from 1054, the date when Byzantine and Roman officials excommunicated each other. Actually, the break came about through a gradual process of estrangement that extended from the 9th to the 15th century. The relation of the Byzantine Church to the Roman may be described as one of growing estrangement from the 5th to the 11th century. In the early church three bishops stood forth prominently, principally from the political eminence of the cities in which they ruled - the bishops of Rome, Alexandria, and Antioch. The transfer of the seat of empire from Rome to Byzantium (renamed Constantinople) in 324CE and the later eclipse of Alexandria and Antioch as battlegrounds of Islam and Christianity promoted the importance of Constantinople. The Byzantine Empire was the show piece of Christianity. The rise of Islam 700s CE threatened this Greek speaking East more directly than Rome, but fear was everywhere. After Charlemagne the King of the Franks coronation as the Holy Roman Emperor on Christmas Day 800CE in Rome by Pope Leo III, the Latin speaking Roman West gained confidence and was aligned most closely to Northern Europe. Western Church leaders grew in importance to become dominant in civil as well as religious affairs. Concurrently, the theological calmness of the West, in contrast to the often violent theological disputes that troubled the Eastern patriarchates, strengthened the position of the Roman popes, who made increasing claims to preeminence. But this preeminence, or rather the Roman idea of what was involved in it, was never acknowledged in the East. To press it upon the Eastern patriarchs was to prepare the way for separation; to insist upon it in times of irritation was to cause a schism.The theological genius of the East was different from that of the West. The Eastern theology had its roots in Greek philosophy, whereas a great deal of Western theology was based on Roman law. This gave rise to misunderstandings on what amount to trivial matters of discipline: could leavened bread be used at Mass?; could the priest be married? when does Lent begin and when should there be fasting in Lent?; should a priest celebrate the sacrament of Confirmation? is purgatory a satisfactory doctrine? The Eastern churches also resented the Roman enforcement of clerical celibacy, the limitation of the right of confirmation to the bishop, and the use of unleavened bread in the Eucharist. There had also emerged two widely separate ways of regarding and defining one important doctrine—the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father or from the Father and the Son. The Roman churches, without consulting the East, incorporated the procession of the Holy Spirit *and the Son* (*filioque*) into their creed.  |
| Details of the Challenge | Cardinal Humbert placed a parchment that declared the Patriarch of Constantinople, Michael Cerularius, be excommunicated. (Anathema sit)Break between Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholic churches. |
| Era  | 9th – 11th century (Middle Ages) |
| Dates  | Saturday, July 16th, 1054CE Humbert’s Bull of excommunication |
| Events  | 1054 Mutual excommunication of Byzantine Patriarch and Latin Pope (Leo IX was actually deceased at the time. |
| Places  | Cathedral of Haghia Sophia; ConstantinopleSt Peter’s in Rome |
| People  | Cardinal Humbert (legate of Pope Leo IX)Michael Cerularius (Patriarch of Constantinople) |
| Aspects of Religious Traditions effected by the challenge or used to respond to the challenge | Sacred Places: *What is the holiest city in Christianity? – Rome or Constantinople*Beliefs: *What is the correct wording of the Creed?* *How should belief be expressed?*Social Structure: *Who is the leader of Christendom?* |
| Stance taken by the tradition | The Normans (Western Christians) conquered the southern part of Italy, which was under Byzantine control, and insisted on enforcing Latin customs, with Rome’s blessing. Patriarch Michael Cerularius retaliated in 1052CE by closing the Latin rite churches in Constantinople.Pope Leo IX decided that Christian unity in the Latin mode should be forced by papal proclamation and sent the delegation East to secure that outcome. Rome claimed leadership over all Christian churches (Byzantine and Latin). This claim was ignored in the East.The standoff lead to the mutual excommunications but the schism was really the result of the long and slow separation.No one had any idea that mutual excommunications would be the beginning of a schism which would last for many centuries. Its immediate cause was a trivial local dispute over the control of Latin monasteries in Constantinople. Much bad feeling was displayed on both sides, but neither was yet ready for permanent schism. The way was prepared for this, during the next two centuries, by the coming of the Crusaders. |
| Responses taken by the tradition | The actions of the Latin Crusaders made the schism definitive. Although intended to rescue the Holy Land from Islamic control and release pressure on the East the Crusades had a different effect. During the First Crusade (1098–1099) the Latins captured Antioch and Jerusalem and set up Latin patriarchates, which caused friction with the Oriental patriarchates. In 1204CE, during the Fourth Crusade, the Latins sacked Constantinople. Their swords finally cut Christendom into two distinct Roman and Orthodox parts. Western pleas for reunion (on Western terms), such as those at the Council of Lyon (1274) or the Council of Ferrara-Florence (1439), were rejected by the Byzantines. The schism has never been healed. |
| Significance of the Challenge  | The separation of Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholics remains to this day.Under strong reforming popes to follow including Gregory VII, the papacy began to claim jurisdiction over the appointment of bishops, and even claimed power over leaders of state. A major event of the Vatican II, was the issuance by Pope Paul and Orthodox Patriarch Athenagoras I of Constantinople of the Catholic-Orthodox Joint Declaration of 1965. At the same time, they lifted the mutual excommunications dating from the 11th century. The act did not result in restoration of communion. |
| Theological Challenge/ Ethical Challenge/Challenge to Continued existence | **Theological Challenges:** *How should belief be expressed? What is the relationship between the leaders of Christianity and Sovereign Rulers? Who is leader of Christendom?***Challenge to Continued existence:** *Latin Christianity was under threat from Islam on the Iberian peninsula. Fear was palpable as much of the Byzantine Empire had been defeated by the Islamic surge. Christian unity should be forced.* **Ethical Challenge:** *Is it right to fight for Christ?* |
| Sources | 1054CE Leo IX Bull of Excommunication of the Patriarch Michael Cerularius*By the authority of the Holy and indivisible Trinity and that of the Apostolic See ... we [the legates] subscribe the anathema pronounced by our Lord the most Holy Pope on Michael and his followers if they do not reform themselves … and if they do not recant with all the heretics and with the devil and all his angels, Amen, amen.*Anathema: a formal curse by a pope or a council of the Church, excommunicating a person or denouncing a doctrine. |
| References | <http://www.christianitytoday.com/history/issues/issue-28/1054-east-west-schism.html> (23/07/2017)<http://greatschism.org/east-west-schism/> (23/07/2017)<http://www.christianitytoday.com/history/issues/issue-28/1054-east-west-schism.html> (23/07/2017)[https://www.britannica.com/event/Schism-of-1054 (23/07/2017)](https://www.britannica.com/event/Schism-of-1054%20%20%2823/07/2017%29) |