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The Gnostic Gospels

The chapter 2 "One God, One Bishop? The Politics of Monotheism" the two God belief is discussed, and the explanation regarding this theory is given. It is described that orthodox Christian attacked the beliefs Gnostics in the political sense. The difference that exists between Gnostics and ordinary Christians is based on their actions towards each other. The Gnostics shows the same level of compassion towards each other as according to the Valentinus beliefs they were trapped in the same hell (Pagels, p.p.45). According to the views of Bishop Irenaeus, Gnostics were considered agents of Satan because they were following the code of Simon Magus, a person who tried to buy the spiritual power but earned the curse instead. The chapter makes it clear that Gnostics shared most of the beliefs with orthodox Christian as they use to go to the same church. The followers of Gnostic beliefs had two sources of traditions one was open while other was closed. The Gnostics had no hierarchy in their religious belief which was the reason for their fame. The God to Gnostics was a supreme spiritual entity that who was not the almighty creator of everything.

The chapter 5 "Who's Church Is the True Church?" is discussed through their doctrine beliefs. Gnostics beliefs were considered different than both the Christian and pagans in their religious beliefs. The traditional Christians believed in the absolute certainty of the oneness of God and Jesus as their lord. Gnostics had acknowledged the belief of a dead man as the Lord "Jesus" to get the freedom of a true church. Gnostics believed that they were the representative of the true church. Baptism was not much crucial according to the beliefs of Gnostics as they considered it insufficient for people to become Christians. According to the Gnostics beliefs that the true church is not based on the understanding between church and its believers but it instead it depends upon the general relation between the believers. Gnostics believed in the friendship between the participants of the church. The most basic different could be the fact that Gnostics believed in individual spirituality. Spirituality was an essential factor for Gnostics because all the materialist world was evil to them.

The early beliefs made it clear that they wanted to exclude the people who were not of the same views as the traditional Christians. The New Testament presented a God of love, but the Old Testament represented the God of wrath who was focused more on the punishment than benevolence. The dualistic view of God leads to the orthodox view that is focused on the single ideology of God who is the maker of everything (Pagels, p.p.41). The early orthodox Christians belief were focused on the ones of God and Bishop. They viewed the Bishop as the direct representative of God. According to the earlier ideology of Christians, the rulers were directly selected by God because the church backed their faith. According to these previous beliefs the rulers were implementing the will of God. In that time most Christians were indirectly worshiping the creator who was reprehensive of God. Orthodox Christians of that time were in constant competition with each other.

Catholic Christians were considered the Christians that had fallen into the hands of wrong people. They were allowing themselves to be ruled, heretical representatives or kings. During the early Christianity, both the orthodox and Gnostic Christians considered themselves the true representative of the church. There was lots of tension between Christians even when it came to the most fundamental aspects such as Baptism. The Orthodox Christians in the late second century also established the criteria for Christianity and the membership of the church was based on this selective criteria. The qualitative criteria associated with being the member of the church was also eliminated, and it was reserved for the broader administration of the church. Later the Orthodox Christians such as Christian Ignatius made it clear that Bishop was the direct representative of God. He clarified that the authority given to the Bishop provides the bishop with the same power as Jesus Christ. There was a lot of tension between different religious groups of Christians even when their fundamental beliefs were similar. The self-proclaimed Christians who were not accepted by the church were considered worse than the pagans, and there was lots of debate over the different versions of the bible. Christians were too afraid to even question the most clashing belief out of the fear for being prosecuted. The general views of Christianity were actively being challenged throughout the earlier Christianity

The fundamental conflict that existed between the proponents of orthodox originated from the ideology surrounding the perception of God. According to the general view of Orthodox Christians, the god was almighty and was the creator of everything in this world. This idea was challenged Marcion who believed that there have to be two Gods due to the existence of disease, suffering, and pain in the world. According to Marcion the God described in the bible was benevolent and loving so there was no way that a God like that can be so opposite to how it was described in the holy book. Orthodox Christians disagreed with this ideology so they there was significant conflict between the two God and one God ideology. To shows, the actual influence of power the Bishop became the representative of God with the ability to influence everyone. According to the beliefs of Orthodox, anyone who classed with the ideology of orthodox and was not following its priests should be considered as heretics.

Orthodox Christians had established the criteria for the church members and based on this criterion the stand of a person would be decided. Orthodox Bishop Christian Ignatius claimed that bishop has been given the same status as Christ and claimed that separation from the church was like separation from God. Orthodox Christians were focused on the imaginative views of Gnostics and were more focused on the social relationships of the Gnostics (Pagels, p.p.111). Orthodox Christians did not understand the doctrine believes that the Gnostics ideology was based on they only believed what was visible. The Catholic Christians were considered heretical, and they were allowing themselves to be ruled hieratically. Any Bible that was not matching with the Bible of Orthodox Christians were heretics. According to their beliefs, anyone who considers themselves Christians without the consideration of church should be regarded as a heretic.

The intended audience of the author is all the Christian because it sheds light on the historical background of Christian beliefs. The Author is not focused on a specific religious group but is instead it focuses on the background history of every religious group associated with Christianity. The author considers general Christianity while describing the beliefs. The author has clearly expressed the Orthodox Christians believes and how they were different than other tenets of Christianity. So basically the author is trying to create harmony through the history of Christianity.

I selected these two chapters because it sheds light on the general view of Christianity and how all sects of Christianity are linked with each other. The two sections are not focused on the history of the factors that lead to the classification of Christianity into different religious groups. The chapter also shows the doctrinal beliefs of Gnostics and how they are different than other Christian groups. The two chapters also show the religious conflict that exists in Christianity.

# Works Cited

Pagels, Elaine H. The gnostic gospels. Vintage, 1989.