

Episode 05. "The Courthouses"

Tuesday, February 2, 2021. 43 Minutes Long.

This episode describes the damage the Emperor Constantine did to Christianity. He built the first "churches" and designed them like courthouses to intimidate worshippers. He named "Sun Day," appointed royal "priests" to supervise worshippers, and much more. These actions founded Institutional Christianity and are the root of today's Christian crisis.

John (00:00):

John Shields opens the episode by saying:

John (00:13):

Well, hello once again, my friends! And welcome to Episode 05 of the "Saving Christianity" podcast from Christian Family Online. And I want to thank you, here at the beginning today, for tuning in with us on our podcast. Maybe this is your first time. Maybe you've been listening every time. Whatever the case is, we're glad that you're here. I'm your host, John Shields. And we are continuing our discussion of *Saving Christianity*, a book that shows us how to have more peace, healing, and hope. And I'm sure I don't know anyone that doesn't want more of that in (his or her) life. Now today, this episode is called "The Courthouses." Yes, you heard me right. "The Courthouses."

John (01:04):

We're going to tell the rest of the shocking story – and that's not an understatement – of the Roman emperor, Constantine, and how he suppressed Christianity in the Fourth Century. And as we saw previously, he changed the structure of Christianity from a Spiritual design to a non-spiritual design as part of his overall plan – it was to be the Supreme Emperor of a United Roman kingdom. But before we go any further, let's pause to introduce – by now you know – my best friend and co-host of the podcast, Owen Allen. Owen, why don't you welcome our friends?

Owen (01:51):

Glad to, John! Nothing makes me happier than talking to our friends. That's why we're here! You know, I was thinking driving in, I miss the studio when we're not here recording – with our producer, Shannon Wolfe, behind the sound board and all of his equipment. You know ... and I can tell you this too, John ... I'm deeply gratified by the acceptance that our podcast episodes are receiving, not only in the U.S., but around the world. And you know, that's a very, very important thing. Because as I said, that's why we're here! That's what we feel like we need to do. And it's just very exciting for all three of us to be here at the studio again.

John (02:39):

Yeah, Owen, I am too. It's wonderful, and I'm just glad that we're able to be a part of this.

Owen (02:47):

Well, that's right! "Wonderful" doesn't cover it! (Chuckles.) But ... and I want to say something else too, John ... and to Shannon. I think these episodes about Constantine are some of the most valuable episodes we'll ever do. And I'll tell you why. Because if most of the people out there hearing us at this moment are like we were – and like I was – very few people know anything about Constantine. Maybe they've heard his name. But very few understand what he actually did to Early Christianity.

John (03:24):

Owen, I couldn't agree more! That's certainly my experience as well. And it's incredibly important for people to know the truth about Constantine. And actually to know what he did to Christianity. Because his story – we're going to see – is the key to knowing the cause of today's crisis in Christianity.

Owen (03:49):

Absolutely, absolutely. And it's a horrible thing ... and that's a word I choose carefully! But so why don't we – in this episode – try to talk about just five of the most damaging actions that Constantine took against the Early Christians in the Fourth Century. And you know, John, if our friends need to review – want to review – Episode 04, where we introduced Constantine last time. They know they can do that by going to www.CFOPODS.com on the Internet. That's C-F-O-P-O-D-S .com on the Internet. And that'll take them right to the correct page on our website to review all of those episodes.

Owen (04:37):

But let's settle down and think about the rest of Constantine's story. First of all, we know that he worked for 25 years – that was a long time in those days – to redesign Christianity. And frankly, "redesign" is a polite word. The truth is, he devastated the Spirituality of Christians so completely ... think about this a minute ... (that) Christian Spirituality is still rare today among today's Christians!

John (05:13):

Yeah, and when I hear you say that, Owen, and every time I think about that, I'm shocked by it, really. But I also know that it's true in all of my experiences down through the years. Well, moving along to get us started, we know that Constantine passed more than 300 ... that's right ... 300 laws to regulate and control the Early Christians. But I think it begs the question, which of those laws was the most harmful to them?

Owen (05:48):

Wow, John. That's a great question. That gets right to the heart of the problem! But let's answer it. Here's the answer: Our friends will remember that for the first three centuries of Early Christianity – that would be about the first eight generations of the Early Christians – all Christians worshiped informally in small groups in private homes. And let's repeat that. *All Christians worshiped informally in small groups in private homes.* That was what we call their Organizational Design or Organizational Structure. We're going to talk about that a lot in this episode. But that was the key to their amazing Spirituality.

Owen (06:39):

So since they had that design, here we go. The most harmful action that Constantine took was the one he took against Christian small groups. And another thing as a sidebar: Let's remember that the Christian Small groups were unique in the Roman Empire. None of the other religions in the empire met in small groups. How did *they* meet? *They* met in large groups in large temples. For example, the sun god religion, one of the official religions of Rome ... and the religion in which Constantine was the high priest ... *they* didn't worship in small groups. And neither did the several hundred other non-Christian religions in the empire.

John (07:33):

Ah, well, that's an amazing fact! And I just say to our listeners ... stay with us now ... as we move through each of these facts. And they are so, so important. So next, let's tell our friends why worshiping in small groups was so important.

Owen (07:53):

Well, as we said, these Christian small groups ... that was the *key* to their Spirituality. As I said, we call that their Organizational Design. And that's what created the amazing peace, and healing, and hope, and miracles, that the Early Christians enjoyed.

John (08:14):

Yeah, Owen, our listeners may or may not know that I've been a trained pastor for – in a traditional sense – for over 30, or right at, 30 years. And this is actually a revelation to me. As we've been embarked on this journey, this quest, as we started out ... that's true. And just like me, I have a feeling that our listeners may not know how small group meetings actually did that.

Owen (08:53):

Well ... there's a basic principle. If you stop and think about it, it's very logical. As we so often say, "God is a logical Person." The principle is this. Meeting in small groups in

private homes is: *quicker, easier, safer, cheaper, more confidential, more convenient, and more intimate, and – most importantly – more Spiritual than meeting in large audiences in large buildings.*

John (09:29):

And obviously, there are reasons for that! I bet a lot of people never thought about this fact from history.

Owen (09:37):

No, probably not. Well, let's try and explain it a little more completely then – by asking a question. Here's the question: "*Why* did the Early Christians meet in the first place?" What was the point? Have you ever thought about that? Why did they meet in those ancient times in their little stone homes. And what was the point of it? See, they *didn't* meet for the reasons that non-Christians met. Why did the non-Christians meet? To obey their priests. To make burnt offerings. To have drunken banquets. To have ceremonial parades. To have ritual orgies. But the Christians? They didn't meet for any of *those* reasons! They met to experience the power of peace, healing, and hope, from the Holy Spirit. They met to let the Holy Spirit work through them with supernatural guidance, miracles, and Spiritual growth. And none of the non-Christian religions met for any of those reasons.

John (10:45):

Wow, that is a very, very powerful fact of history.

Owen (10:52):

Well, I think it's the most powerful thing on earth. But here here's the point, John. The Holy Spirit – hold on! – is only free to act when Christians *don't* have ceremonies, and programs, and rituals, and all the things that the non-Christians had that "suppress" ... that's a careful word; it means to push down, to mash down ... that "suppress" His actions. In other words, Christians need to meet where they have complete freedom to experience the power of the Holy Spirit. And the Small Group Structure is the only Organizational Design that allows that kind of personal freedom.

John (11:42):

That explains a lot, Owen. And when you think about it ... as we started in our first podcast ... we were talking about how so many people have come away saying that Christianity is boring, and not relevant, and those types of things. And when you stop and think about it, how in the world – if the Holy Spirit was free to work and act – there's no way we would say something like that! So we can see the truth of what you're talking (about). We're actually saying that the informality and the intimacy of the small group are the structure and the design that creates Spiritual growth.

Owen (12:30):

Absolutely, John! And people don't think about it. I remember a guy used to say a funny thing to me. He used to say, "Don't you think God is bigger than what we see on Sunday morning?" And there's a lot of truth to that little saying.

John (12:46):

Isn't it, though! But on the other hand, Owen – right? – if we look at it in reverse, are we saying then, that the *formality* of large group meetings, with rigid ceremonies, programs, rituals, *et cetera*, are a design that ... I hate to even say this ... actually *suppresses* Spiritual growth?

Owen (13:09):

Well ... it is. I mean, "Yes." That's what we're saying. And here's something a lot of people don't think about, John. The *Small Group Design* that we'll be talking about a lot in this podcast is the design that the *Holy Spirit* gave Christians on the day that He founded Christianity. See – this came from God. It didn't come from Constantine. Or other people. And God has never changed it! And more importantly, Christians were never supposed to *stop* using that meeting design.

John (13:50):

Uh, you know, Owen. I'm thinking as you're saying that. Jesus Himself modeled this. He didn't choose 1,200 people. Initially, He chose 12. And He handpicked them. So we're saying that Constantine came along in the Fourth Century and changed the Organizational Design that was the only thing that made Christians different from non-Christians.

Owen (14:22):

That's true, as far as *design*. Of course, there are many other differences. But, precisely, that's true. The Small Group Structure was – as we said – the design that God gave Christians. And it was the only thing that made the Christian design different from the non-Christian design. So when Constantine *changed* that basic structure ... I'm answering your earlier question ... it was the most harmful action that he took against the Early Christians. And by the way, that's why our friends will be happy to know that we're going to describe, and explain, and give examples, and everything else, of how Christian small groups work in upcoming episodes.

John (15:09):

Right, Owen. And we are. And that is really, really important. It's something that we have spent countless hours talking about. But let's go back to Constantine a minute. I think it's important that we answer this question: "*What* did he do to Christian small groups? *How* did he change them?"

Owen (15:31):

Well, this is very, very interesting. He just gradually suppressed them with new *laws*. You mentioned the 300 laws earlier. And the result of that was that over a period of the 25 years that I mentioned, the small groups got weaker, and weaker in the empire – the entire Roman Empire. Worldwide, now remember, we're talking (about worldwide). But then finally, Constantine eventually died. And when he did, his followers ... the emperors that followed him ... small groups were permanently *outlawed* in the empire. And think about this: From that point forward – the late Four Century – Christians caught attending small groups were subject to arrest, imprisonment, torture, and even execution.

John (16:26):

So this is a benchmark. So the *key*, really, to Christian Spirituality, which is the essence of what we're all about – *the habit of meeting in small groups* – was terminated in the Fourth Century.

Owen (16:45):

Yeah, you know they had a movie – I think – some years ago called "The Terminator." Well ... if anybody was a "Terminator," it was *Constantine*! But look. That explains why so many Christians today (who) meet in small groups are so *few*. I should say, Christians today (who) meet in small groups as their main form of worship (are so *few*)! Think about this now. A lot of Christians meet in small groups for things like Bible study, and prayer, and Sunday school. But there are very *few* Christians who meet in a small group (of) six, eight, or ten people as their main form of Sunday worship!

John (17:27):

Yes, it's kind of been looked at as an "add-on." That's true from my experience. A lot of us never thought of that.

Owen (17:36):

Well, that's right. Because today's Christians ... their main form of worship is meeting in *large* groups in *large* buildings watching *large* ceremonies, programs, and rituals. But you know what? They're still obeying Constantine's *laws* from the Fourth Century!

John (17:56):

That's unbelievable when you think about it, really. But *how* was Constantine strategically able to change the worship habits of all the Christians, really, in the entire Roman Empire at once?

Owen (18:11):

Yeah! You think about that. How do you change something in the *entire* world? Well, that was one of the powers of the Roman Empire. It was centralized in Rome. And it was centralized under the emperor. But remember this too, he (Constantine) had the whole Roman army – the most powerful army on earth at the time – to enforce his laws. But he didn't use it very often. What he used is a technique that dictators still use today. It's called "gradualism." What he did (was) he gradually chipped away at Christians with little laws spread out over a period of 25 years. So you really didn't notice them that much ... until finally all of these little laws added up to a great big fat *change* in the entire Organizational Design of Christianity in the entire Roman Empire.

John (19:09):

What was the actual ... let's talk about what the *first* thing (was) that Constantine did to change the Christian small group meetings throughout the empire.

Owen (19:20):

Well, John. I think this is going to surprise (chuckles) a lot of people. But just a couple of years after Constantine came to power, he started construction of the *very first Christian buildings ever built*. You stop and think about it, John. It's sort of funny. A lot of people ride down the street of their hometown and they pass a lot of "church buildings." They assume that that's how it was *always* done. That Christians *always* had what a friend of mine calls "steeple houses." But that's not true. They didn't exist until the Fourth Century. And check this out. He named those buildings "churches," a word that he invented. It didn't exist until the Fourth Century. Then he passed a law requiring those buildings to be open on a day that he named – hang on! – "Sun Day." ("The Day of the Sun.") And that's another word that he invented. And finally, he now made it law for all Christians to – quotes – "Go to church on Sun Day." In other words, all Christians had to attend those buildings on that day if they wanted to worship without getting arrested. And that's why today, 1,700 years later, Christians still – quotes – "Go to church on Sun Day." Instead of worshiping and small groups in their homes.

John (21:02):

Yeah, Owen. I'm glad I'm already sitting down. (Laughter.) After hearing that again. It's incredible. I mean, it really is! You can actually begin to put the pieces together, and how things began to unravel. But I bet very few people know these historical facts. They're shocking.

Owen (21:24):

Well, they are! But as we promised our friends at the start of the podcast, the purpose of these episodes is to explain the root *cause* of today's Christian crisis. And to explain what to *do* about it. Well, now we know the root cause. And the root cause of today's crisis is *Constantine* coming to power 1,700 years ago and redesigning Christianity.

John (21:57):

Of course, he's the *counterfeiter* isn't he!

Owen (22:00):

(Chuckles.) Yeah. But listen, here's the Good News. Now that we know the root *cause*, we can talk about what to *do* about it.

John (22:09):

Yeah, that is desperately important. We've tried to make clear from the beginning that we're not just here to talk about *problems*. But we're here ultimately to talk about *solutions*. But in that context, I have a question. The title of this episode is, "The Courthouses." And we all have an image of that. But what does that title mean? What *were* the courthouses?

Owen (22:40):

That's a fascinating question, John! Let's summarize what we've said so far to put it in context. First, number one. We said that *before* Constantine, all Christians met in small groups in private homes. Number two. We said that those meetings of those small groups were the key to the peace, and healing, and hope, that the Early Christians enjoyed. And number three. We said that all of this was because the Small Group Structure gave Christians the *freedom* – I want to emphasize that word – the *freedom* to have Spiritual experiences.

John (23:22):

That's an excellent summary, Owen.

Owen (23:22):

Okay, so but as we said, Constantine comes along, and his plan for the empire was that every religion be controlled the same way. And if the non-Christians had temples, then Constantine said, okay, then Christians are going to have temples too. And so he designed, and planned, and built the *first Christian buildings*. And by the way, they still stand in Rome today. I've been in them. But let's say it again. It was the Emperor Constantine who designed, planned, and built the world's *first Christian buildings*. Before him, there were no buildings. None have ever been found. There are no ruins anywhere. Because there were only (Christian) small group meetings in private homes.

John (24:19):

That's unbelievable, isn't it? (Chuckles.) I wonder how many people realize that Christians haven't ... that is, have *not* ... always had buildings? Obviously that's such an emphasis (today). Or, that Christians never *wanted* to have buildings?

Owen (24:42):

Now you know, that's a neat fact, John. Because, think about it. In 300 years and eight generations, if the Christians had *wanted* to, they could have built buildings. They knew how! They came from temples, after all. Well no – but few people know these facts. And we've all heard the old saying that goes something like this, "Those who don't know the past are doomed to repeat it." So because so many Christians don't know who Constantine *was* ... or what he *did* ... they'll keep on meeting the way Constantine mandated until somebody tells them differently.

John (25:21):

And that's why we're producing this podcast! We're here with Good News, the Best News! News of a solution to tell them differently.

Owen (25:32):

Yeah, absolutely. I mean, I hope so! That's what keeps us up at night. But now let's answer your specific question. Let's get back to the title of this episode. *What* were the "courthouses"? Here's the answer: When Constantine designed his first Christian buildings, he designed them in a very special way. He designed them as – excuse me – as *Roman courthouses*.

John (26:02):

Wow, that is so interesting! And so what was his *motive* behind that?

Owen (26:08):

Well, look at it this way. As a frame of reference. In that day, non-Christian temples were designed either *round* or *square*. But Constantine designed his first Christian buildings in a *rectangular* shape. Think of a "shoe box" ... a long, narrow shape. They were *long* buildings. And you went up a flight of wide steps in front. And then you went into an entrance lobby. And then you went and opened big doors. And you went into a long, narrow room that had a center aisle. And then you went down that center aisle, and in the front of the room was a big platform. And on that platform were some tables, and chairs, and other equipment.

John (26:59):

You know, I think it was Churchill that said, "We shape our buildings, and then our buildings shape us." [Churchill said this in England in 1943.] That design sounds like a typical *church building* today. In fact, it sounds like the – quote, end quote – *church building* I grew up in.

Owen (27:16):

Absolutely, and me, too! And why? Because 1,700 years after the fact, Christians are *still* using Constantine's Fourth Century design for their buildings. And well – I think let's take a breath and slow down a second – and think about this. Notice that Constantine, as we said, did not design his buildings like the non-Christian temples. They weren't round. They weren't square. They were *rectangular*. And so we ask ourselves, *why* did he do that?

John (27:56):

I know he had a reason!

Owen (27:58):

Yes. And that was a very clear reason. As we already said, he did it because that's the shape of a *Roman courthouse*. Let me put it this way. He actually built *courthouses* for the Christians. And then he made it a *law* that they had to meet in those courthouses as their place of worship. Why do we think he did that?

John (28:24):

Owen, I can only think of one logical reason. *Courthouses* are intimidating to the average person. People tend to avoid them if possible. So, meeting in courthouses would have that effect. It would be *intimidating* to the Early Christians.

Owen (28:45):

Bingo! That's the reason, John. Remember that you asked earlier what was Constantine's *motive*? His motive, his goal, was to *suppress* Christian Spirituality. He wanted to bring it to heel the same way the non-Christian religions had been brought to heel. And so ... this is interesting ... his buildings were not even called "churches" until several years later. For the first few years – check this out – they were called *basilicas*. The word *basilica* is a Latin word. And guess what it means! It means "royal court"! So imagine how these Early Christians, remember now, some of them were illiterate. They were children. They were slaves. They were women. Imagine how they felt when they were told by the army and whoever that they had to start meeting in the *royal court*, instead of their home. We can feel the intimidation that they must have felt. And that was his (Constantine's) first big step toward *suppressing* the free and informal small group worship of the Early Christians.

John (30:06):

Ah, you can't make this stuff up! It's unbelievable. Constantine was clever in an evil sort of way. But we said that the buildings, the *basilicas* – is that right, Owen? – the *basilica* facility, was only his first step. Unfortunately, there are other things he did to suppress the Early Christians.

Owen (30:32):

Yeah. Bad news, John. Like we said, he did that (with) over 300 new laws over a 25-year period. So he did a lot. And his changes were many. And they were so deep, really, that we can't cover them in this brief podcast episode. But our friends need to remember that we explain all of this fully in Chapter 4 of the book, *Saving Christianity*. We can't get into that detail here. But let's do this. We promised at the start of the episode to talk about Constantine's *five* most harmful actions. And we've already talked about the first three. But let's list all five of them quickly. We'll add the other two at the bottom of the list. The first big change that he made was: To *build* the first Christian buildings – the *basilicas*. And he designed them like Roman courthouses. And made it the law that Christians had to go there for worship.

Owen (31:34):

Then secondly: He eventually created the name "church" and gave that name to the *buildings*. And that's why we use that word today. We'll come back to this, by the way John, in a later episode. Number three: He *named* the first day of the week, "The Day of the Sun." And what did that mean? He passed that as a *law* that Christians had to worship that day. The reason he did that? He wanted Christians – hang on – to be sun god worshipers. That was his motive. So, that was the day they had to worship. Well over the years, this long phrase, "The Day of the Sun" ... or originally it was, "The Venerable Day of the Sun" ... was shortened to "Sun Day. And today, we still call it "Sunday." Constantine was the high priest of the sun god religion. And he did his best – he failed but he came close – to make Christianity a *sun-god-worshiping-religion*.

Owen (32:40):

Fourth: Constantine created a new group of royal priests to run his new Christian buildings. But check this out. He gave them the legal authority of Roman judges. And he created a name for them. He called them the "clergy" ... another name that he invented. And so Christians had to obey those priests, because they had the power of *judges*. And that further intimidated them. Finally, we'll stop with this one: Constantine created the "cross" as the main Christian symbol. Think about it. The "cross" was not an original Christian symbol. We've mentioned symbology in earlier episodes. But just to cover the base, there's no evidence (that has) ever been discovered anywhere of a "cross" as a Christian symbol before the Middle of the Four Century. Researchers think that the "cross" originated from the mysterious *Plus Sign* that Constantine had in his dream. We mentioned that in an earlier episode, and he had that installed in the upraised hand of the giant statue that he put in the center of Rome. And people think that was the beginning of the "cross." We do remember from an earlier episode that the *original* Christian symbol was the "fish" ... a diagram of a fish.

John (34:16):

Owen, needless to say, these are deeply disturbing facts. They should shock and enrage, actually, the average Christian. But beyond that. *Where* do all these actions by Constantine leave us?

Owen (34:37):

Yeah. (Sighs.) Where do they leave us? Well, I think they leave us with a deed to *do* what we talk about in the book, *Saving Christianity*. And that is: "Get-Back-To-The-Basics!" We need to sidestep everything that has happened to Christians since the Fourth Century. And we need to mentally jump back over all of those centuries and get our heads back in the first three centuries of Christian history, and start *doing* what they did in those centuries. And that's what we call "Getting-Back-To-The-Basics."

John (35:19):

And that is actually extremely fascinating. But how ... let's let our friends know *how* we can do that.

Owen (35:29):

Huh! Well the first step I think, is to understand *how* the Early Christians really lived, and met, and worshiped. And that's why we're digging up all of these historical facts in what we're calling our "Time Capsule." We talked about that so much in Episode 01, and a little bit in Episode 02. But the second step is to start thinking, meeting, and worshiping the way the Early Christians did. Because, as we so often say, "If we do what they did, we'll have what they had." (Repeats.)

John (36:12):

Yeah. But *how* can we, today? How can Christians find out what the Early Christians did? I mean find it out in a way clear enough to start *doing* what they did?

Owen (36:29):

Well, obviously it takes a little time and a little commitment. People must *want* spiritual growth enough to pursue it. But then after that, John, anybody can do three things. First, they can read the book, *Saving Christianity*. Second, they can subscribe to ... and listen to ... this podcast. And third, they can read the true stories on my blog about the Christians who are living the Early Christian Lifestyle (today).

John (37:04):

Yes, I totally agree. And most importantly, all of us can start praying for the Holy Spirit to guide us each day.

Owen (37:15):

Each and every day! Absolutely. (Chuckles.) That's most important of all. Because the Holy Spirit – think about this – is the *same* today as he was in the First Century. Think about that. He hasn't *changed*. And that means that Christianity works exactly the same way today as it did in the First Century. So that leaves us with one big, fat question to answer, John, as we come toward the end of this episode: "Why is Christianity in crisis today?" And the answer's simple. Back in the Fourth Century, Christians were forced against their will to stop meeting in small groups in their homes, and to stop being guided by the Holy Spirit. They were forced to start meeting in large groups in large buildings, where they were forced to watch pre-planned ceremonies, programs, and rituals. And over time ... 25 years or more ... those changes eventually suppressed and basically killed Early Christian *Spirituality*.

John (38:36):

We're going to talk about this more. But it's almost overwhelming. It was turned from life into an Institution. And we have a lot of ground to make up today, don't we?

Owen (38:49):

Yeah. (Chuckles). We do. A lot of ground to make up. The Good News is, we're going to make it up! And however, John, I'm looking at the big clock on the wall now. And it's time to close Episode 05. In the next episode, we're going to start talking about how to make up this lost ground that Christians have lost since the Fourth Century. So I'm thinking that Episode 06 is going to be an exciting one.

John (39:17):

It certainly is! We desperately need to know how to overcome what Constantine did to Christianity.

Owen (39:26):

Yeah, absolutely. Well I'll tell you what let's do then, John. Right now, let's close this episode by summarizing Constantine's "legacy," if that's right word. I'm not sure that's a good word ... Constantine's "legacy" to Christianity. To do that, let me read a few sentences right at the end of Chapter 4 of the book, *Saving Christianity*.

John (39:51):

Yeah. That's perfect, Owen. Go and go for it!

Owen (39:54):

Okay. These lines are right at the end of Chapter 4. And we're summarizing here what happened in the Fourth Century after Constantine died. And I quote:

Owen (40:09):

"After Constantine's death in the late Fourth Century, the emperors who followed him developed choirs and chants. Incense and candles. "Mass" – quotes – ceremonies, in other words "communion" ceremonies. The use of sermons by professional speakers. The habit of letting the clergy make all congregational decisions behind closed doors. And most importantly ... we already mentioned this ... they outlawed small groups in private homes. And we'll see all about that more clearly in a later episode."

John (40:54):

So it's factually correct that about everything that we call "Christian" today actually came from *Constantine*. It didn't come from the Early Christians.

Owen (41:08):

Constantinus! ("Constantine," in Latin.) That's right. Well tragically – I mean, I use that word carefully – it's an absolute tragedy. Well John, probably by now our friends who are listening are probably asking themselves two questions: "How much of what I know about Christianity actually came from *Constantine* and not from the Early Christians"? And, "If a lot of what I know came from *Constantine* and not from the Early Christians, how much has that suppressed my Spiritual growth?"

John (41:51):

Right! And I think Owen, just from my own experience, it's going to take some openness and some courage to go there. But I can see that Episode 06 is going to be a big help to our friends in starting to grow Spiritually.

Owen (42:08):

Right! And let's just remind our friends as we leave, that this is Episode 05 in our podcast. And that a script and recording of it are at www.cfopods.com on the Internet. C-F-O-P-O-D-S .com on the Internet.

John (42:29):

Also, we hope that you will subscribe to this podcast. And that you'll read the book, *Saving Christianity*.

Owen (42:37):

That's right! But for now, this is Owen Allen ...

John (42:41):

... and this is John Shields, with our producer, Shannon Wolfe ...

Owen (42:44):

... saying: May the God of our fathers bless you, and keep you, and guide you, and protect you, until we meet again.

Owen and John (43:05):

Owen and John end the episode.