



Village Missions  
Contenders Discipleship Initiative

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## Church History

Ecclesiology

Church History

History of Christian Doctrine

Village Missions  
Contenders Discipleship Initiative

# Church History - Ecclesiology and the History of Christian Doctrine Student's Guide

TRAINING MODULE SUMMARY	
Course Name	Church History
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Contenders Bible School was a tuition-free two-year ministry equipping program started in 1995 by Pastor Ron Sallee at Machias Community Church, Snohomish, WA. It is now run as a tuition-free online equipping ministry by Village Missions. The full Contenders Discipleship Initiative program with pdf copies of this guide and corresponding videos can be found at [www.vmcontenders.org](http://www.vmcontenders.org). Copyright is retained by Village Missions with all rights reserved to protect the integrity of this material and the Village Missions Contenders Discipleship Initiative.

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LOCAL INSTRUCTORS using the CDI in a classroom setting are encouraged to fill in any gaps and add to the discussion of content provided by our ONLINE INSTRUCTORS.

At times content will be designed to provoke thoughtful discussion of various viewpoints. It is up to the LOCAL INSTRUCTOR to guide discussions in such way that students come to their own conclusions of what they believe and why they believe it from careful study of the Bible.

**Student Registration**

You must register as a student for the CDI to gain access to the video instruction. You will find the online registration link at the top of the page at [www.vmcontenders.org](http://www.vmcontenders.org)

You are encouraged to take these classes under the guidance of a Local Instructor/mentor. If a Local Instructor/mentor is not available in your area, you are welcome to take these classes on your own. If you take these courses as an independent distance learner download and use the Local Instructor guidebook in conjunction with the Student Guidebook as it has additional information.

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## CHURCH HISTORY

### ***This is the Fifth Course in the CDI Program***

*The core CDI courses are:*

1. Bibliology and How to Study the Bible
2. Doctrine
3. New Testament
4. Old Testament
- 5. Church History**
6. Evangelism, Teaching and Preaching

This **Church History** course gives students knowledge, perspective and resources to help them understand what the Bible teaches about The Church, as well as how The Church and Christian doctrine have developed through the years.

Upon completion of this course, you should have a solid foundation and understanding of God’s purpose for the Church, as well as how the Church should function. You should see that the Church has always needed reform and in the midst of our humanity and failure, Jesus Christ has and will continue to build His church. Matthew 16:18

As we see the struggles and the sacrifices made by those who contended for the faith and did the hard work involved in developing the doctrines into the form we have today; you will have a great appreciation for their work and for God’s sovereignty in preserving the truth for us.

There is a famous saying related to progress, reform and the study of history: “Progress, far from consisting in change, depends on retentiveness. When change is absolute, there remains no being to improve and no direction is set for possible improvement: and when experience is not retained... infancy is perpetual. **Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.**”

“The Life of Reason (1905-1906) - Vol. I. Reason in Common Sense” by George Santayana

## **REGISTRATION WITH THE CDI AS LOCAL INSTRUCTORS AND STUDENTS**

The CDI Learning Management System requires all Local Instructors and Students to register individually. Once registered with the CDI, access to all courses and videos are open to view and/or download. For those taking CDI courses in a classroom setting the Learning Management System will track student progress if they periodically log in and check off lessons completed.

## **STUDENT SELF EVALUATIONS**

Contenders Discipleship Initiative uses a narrative evaluation approach rather than issuing grades during a student’s course of study. An online form is completed after each course that indicates what a student has learned.

The complete Contenders Discipleship Initiative Narrative Evaluation consists of two written evaluations for each course: one from the Local Instructor for each student attending a course and one from the student giving a self-assessment.

Students who subsequently apply to Village Missions will need to have these evaluations recorded in the CDI Learning Management System for each course.

The online Local Instructor’s Student Evaluation can be found at:

[http://vmcontenders.org/pastor\\_assessment.html](http://vmcontenders.org/pastor_assessment.html)

The Student Self Evaluation form can be found at:

[http://vmcontenders.org/student\\_assessment.html](http://vmcontenders.org/student_assessment.html)

The student’s Self Evaluation summarizes his or her accomplishments while taking the course, any new understandings achieved, and the student’s goals for the future.

## **REPORTING ERRORS CONCERNING COURSE MATERIAL**

Every effort has been made to ensure the guide and videos are correct. However, if you do see something you believe is in error, please use the web form at:  
[www.vmcontenders.org/feedback.html](http://www.vmcontenders.org/feedback.html)

## COURSE TEXT BOOKS

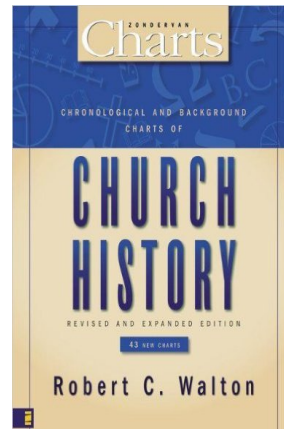
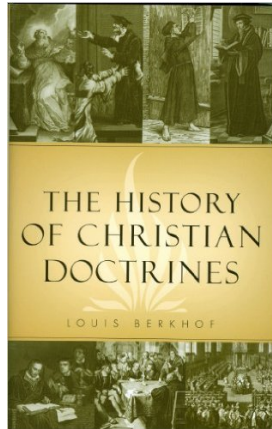
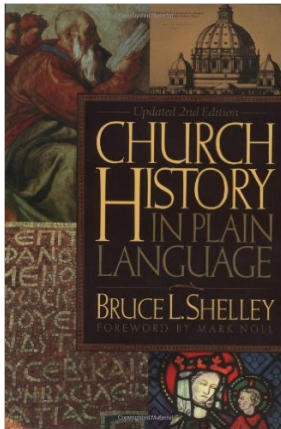
### Required Text Books:

*Church History in Plain Language* by Bruce Shelley (4<sup>th</sup> edition) / ISBN 978-1-4016-7631-5 (Note: other editions may have different page numbers than used in this course)

*The History of Christian Doctrine* - by Louis Berkhof (2009)  
ISBN 978-0-85151-0056-9

### Recommended Text Book:

*Chronological & Background Charts of Church History* - Robert Walton  
ISBN -978-0-310-25813-1



## **CHURCH HISTORY COURSE SYLLABUS**

### **Ecclesiology**

Introduction - Understanding the Church  
Pictures of The Church  
What is The Church to Do?  
The Church’s Organization

### **Church History**

The Age of the Apostles & Catholic Christianity – 6 BC-312 AD  
The Age of the Christian Roman Empire – 312 - 590 AD  
The Christian Middle Ages – 590 - 1517 AD  
The Age of the Reformation – 1517-1648 AD  
The Age of Reason and Revival – 1648-1789 AD  
The Age of Progress – 1789-1914 AD  
The Age of Ideologies -1914-1989 AD  
The Age of Global Expansion and Relocation 1900+ AD

### **History of Christian Doctrine**

Introduction and Preparatory Doctrinal Development  
The Doctrine of the Trinity and The Doctrine of Christ  
The Doctrine of Sin and Grace and Related Doctrines  
The Doctrine of the Atonement of The Work of Christ  
The Doctrine of the Application and Appropriation of Divine Grace  
The Doctrine of the Church/The Sacraments and of the Last Things

### **Classroom Sessions Involve:**

- Lectures
- Class Discussions
- Student Presentations

### **Outside Assignments**

- Scripture memorization.
- Outside reading with chapter summaries.
- A chart cataloging the seven churches in Revelation 2 & 3.
- The final assignment will be a paper, detailing your learning experience in this class: what you learned, what was especially beneficial to you and how this has affected your attitude and view of the Church.



## COURSE SCHEDULE

Session	Subject	Assignments
1	Ecclesiology Part 1 Introduction Part 2 Understanding the Church	What is your current view of the Church? Prepare a chart comparing the Churches in Revelation 2-3
2	Ecclesiology Part 1 Pictures of the Church	Work through the Scriptures that present the pictures of Christ and the Church (individually or in groups)
3	Ecclesiology Part 1 What is a Church to do?	Examine and discuss the Scriptures: - What is a church to do? ( Acts) - Where did the church gather? - “One Another” Passages. - Church Discipline.- Accountability
4	Ecclesiology Part 1 The Church as an Organization	Discuss the three main duties of the Church and the unifying principle. Discuss the various forms of Church government Discuss Church officers, qualifications and Ephesians 4:11-16
5	Church History Part 1 The Age of Jesus, The Apostles & Catholic Christianity	Read and write a summary of chapters 1-8 of Church History in Plain Language
6	Church History Part 1 The Age of the Christian Roman Empire	Read and write a summary of chapters 9-16 of Church History in Plain Language
7	Church History Part 1 The Christian Middle Ages	Read and write a summary of chapters 17-23 of Church History in Plain Language
8	Church History Part 1 The Age of the Reformation	Read and write a summary of chapters 24-31 of Church History in Plain Language

Session	Subject	Assisgnments
9	Church History Part 1 The Age of Reason and Revival	Read and write a summary of chapters 32-35 of Church History in Plain Language
10	Church History Part 1 The Age of Progress	Read and write a summary of chapters 36-41 of Church History in Plain Language
11	Church History Part 1 The Age of Ideologies & Global Expansion	Read and write a summary of chapters 42-48 of Church History in Plain Language
12	History of Doctrine Part 1 Introduction & Preparatory Doctrinal Development	Read and write summaries of the 11 Roman numeral subjects in pages 15-79 of The History of Christian Doctrines
13	History of Doctrine Part 1 The Trinity	Read and write summaries of the 4 Roman numeral subjects in pages 83-123 of The History of Christian Doctrines
14	History of Doctrine Part 1 Sin, Grace & Related Doctrines	Read and write summaries of the 5 Roman numeral subjects in pages 127-160 of The History of Christian Doctrines
15	History of Doctrine Part 1 The Atonement – to the Reformation Part 2 The Atonement – from the Reformation	Read and write summaries of the 4 Roman numeral subjects in pages 165-198 of The History of Christian Doctrines
16	History of Doctrine Part 1 The Application & Appropriation of Divine Grace	Read and write summaries of the 3 Roman numeral subjects in pages 203-223 of The History of Christian Doctrines
17	History of Doctrine Part 1 The Doctrine of the Church Part 2 The Doctrine of the Sacraments Part 3 The Doctrine of the Last Things	Read and write summaries of the 6 Roman numeral subjects in pages 227-269 of The History of Christian Doctrines

### How the Guide is Organized

This guide is broken into sessions that follow along with the course videos. Also in this guide are learning objectives, reviews, and a glossary of terms. The curriculum is designed to be presented in Session and Part sequence.

### Special Note

In an effort to keep down printing costs this book is being published without excessive blank spaces for note taking or writing answers to the questions in the assignment sections. It is recommended that students bring a separate notebook for note taking and responding to questions.

## **SESSION 1, PART 1 – INTRODUCTION/DOCTRINE OF INSPIRATION**

*It is best to discuss the objectives prior to starting the video, so you can focus on the key points of each session.*

After this session, you will:

- Know the importance of the study of Church History.
- Identify three lessons that will help keep you from repeating the mistakes of the past. (Keep Balanced; Not this way among you = not the way of the Gentiles. Mark 10:43; Contend for the faith = not our culture or traditions.)

You will KNOW:

- How Martin Luther defended his teachings about the Church.

You will be ABLE TO:

- Understand the blessings that come as you gain knowledge and understanding about God’s Word, will and Church.

You will THINK ABOUT:

- Why the study of church history is necessary?

**Begin video.**

### **Introduction**

- Course title; “Church History, Ecclesiology and the History of Christian Doctrine.”
- Goal in this course is NOT to memorize dates, names and events.
- You will gain knowledge, perspective and resources to help you understand what the Bible teaches about the Church, as well as, the how and why the Christian Church and Christian doctrine developed through the years.

### **Ecclesiology: The Study of the Church**

- You will look at what the Church is, what the Church is like, where the Church met, how the Church is to function and what the Church is to do.

### **Church History and History of Christian Doctrine**

You will:

- See the struggles and the sacrifices made by those who contended for the faith and did the hard work involved in developing the doctrines into today’s form.
- Gain a great appreciation for their work and for God’s sovereignty in preserving the truth for us.

### **Upon Course Completion**

You will have:

- A solid foundation for further study of these subjects.
- An understanding of God’s purpose for the Church.
- An understanding of how the Church should function.

You will develop:

- Develop a deep and lasting love for “the Church of God, which He purchased with His own blood.” Acts 20:28

You will understand:

- The Church has always needed reform and that amid our humanity and failure, Jesus Christ has and will continue to build His Church. Matthew 16:18

### **Progress, Reform and Study of History**

“Progress, far from consisting in change, depends on retentiveness. When change is absolute, there remains no being to improve and no direction is set for possible improvement: and when experience is not retained... infancy is perpetual. Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to **repeat it.**” *The Life of Reason (1905-1906) - Vol. I. Reason in Common Sense – George Santayana*

### **Why is it Important to Study Church History?**

- Study Church History so that we are not condemned to repeat the failures of others.
- Remember the toil, sacrifice and prayers of those who have led the way in the past.
- Follow them as they followed Christ, in the paths of humility, service and victory – even at the cost of their lives.

### **Course Structure**

- Rigorous, challenging and profitable.
- Reading, writing and memorization.
- Memorize Ephesians 4:11-16.
- Pray daily that the Lord will sustain you and teach you.
- Apply your heart to discipline and your ears to words of knowledge. Pro 23:12

### **Knowledge**

- Blessings that come as we gain knowledge and understanding about God’s Word, will and Church.
- Be on guard against pride or arrogance because of our knowledge.
- Scripture warns us that knowledge can “puff us up.”

- Be aware that knowing and doing are, far too often, separate things in our experience.
- We are called to be those who hear (who learn) and those who do as well.
- Consider the times, conditions, limitations and challenges that those in the past faced in this battle for truth.
- So much of what we have – they did not have.

### **Consider Your Own Growth**

- Consider your own history and growth in Christ.
- We all have made great changes from our early days of following Jesus and might be a little embarrassed if everyone knew what we were like then.

### **Three Key Points**

- First - Keep Balanced:
  - There are balancing truths throughout Scripture.
  - It will become increasingly apparent that the hardest thing to do is to keep balanced; in doctrine, in practice, in lifestyle – in fact, in any and every area of our lives.
- Second - Not This Way Among You:
  - Mark 10:41-45, Jesus points His disciples to the way that the Gentiles build kingdoms and then tells them, "But it is not this way among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant;" Mark 10:43 (NASB).
  - The church has often ignored this command and has failed to build His kingdom or bring glory to our Lord and Savior.
  - Even today, we have forgotten our Lord’s command and have sought to build His kingdom (or more accurately – our own kingdoms) the way Gentiles build kingdoms: by force, by abusive authority, by self-promotion and by laws; rather than by changed lives through the power of God’s Spirit and God’s Word.
  - Matthew 13:24-30 and 36-43.
- Third - Contend for the Faith:
  - The churches, individually and collectively, have often failed to “contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints.” Jude 1:3
  - Too many times, we have contended for our culture, our unbalanced teaching or for our positions of authority and influence, rather than for the truth entrusted to us.
  - When the Church faced challenges to her authority or teachings, from those inside or outside of the Church, we generally played the authority card. We responded by saying: “Because I said so!”

- What was needed was a consistent, well-reasoned and biblical response.
- There were significant times when the Church did just that, to our great benefit today.
- However, we see the Church repeatedly using its power to try to crush any opposition or reform.

### **Martin Luther**

- Quote from Martin Luther shows the Church the proper response.
- In April 1521, he appeared before Emperor Charles V to defend what he had taught and written.
- “My conscience is captive to the word of God. Unless I am convinced by proofs from Scriptures or by plain and clear reasons and arguments, I cannot and will not retract, for it is neither safe nor wise to do anything against conscience. Here I stand. I can do no other. God help me. Amen.”
- Luther also said, “Peace if possible, truth at all costs.”

### **Review**

- We looked at the importance of the study of Church History.
- We discussed the balancing truths throughout Scripture.
- We found the church has often failed to build His kingdom or bring glory to our Lord and Savior.
- We saw that churches, individually and collectively, have often failed to “contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints.” Jude 1:3.

### **In the Next Session**

- We will look at the use and meaning of the words: ekklesia and church.

## ASSIGNMENT: SEVEN CHURCHES CHART

Review the schedule and the assignments for this course.

Write a summary of your current ideas, attitudes and understanding of the Church, so that, later you can compare them to your views at the end of this course. You need to be prepared to discuss how these views may have changed by the end of the sessions on Ecclesiology (at the instructor’s discretion) and in your final paper.

Using the chart on the next page of this guidebook, fill in the information comparing the seven churches in Revelation 2-3. The purpose of the exercise is to realize that the Church has always needed reformation.

Note:

- How Jesus Christ is pictured.
- What does He know about each church?
- What commendation and/or rebuke is given to the churches?
- What are they commanded to do?
- What is the warning and/or promised blessing, and
- What is the one thing that is said to all the churches.

By the end of the course: Memorize Ephesians 4:11-16 and recite it for 3 separate individuals or groups, on 3 separate occasions.

Reading assignments: **Begin work on these assignments right away.**

In “Church History in Plain Language,” you need to come to class having read the chapters to be covered and having written a summary of each chapter in the section.

In “The History of Christian Doctrines,” you need to come to class having read the sections to be covered and having written a summary of each Roman numeral subject in the section(s).

The lengths of the summaries are at your own discretion and you need to be ready to share your summaries in the class discussion.

### Comparing the Seven Churches in Revelation 2-3 Chart

Use the next page if you need more room for chart.

	EPHESUS	SMYRNA	PERGAMUM	THYATIRA	SARDIS	PHILADELPHIA	LAODICEA
<b>List Verses in Revelation</b>							
<b>How Jesus Christ is portrayed</b>							
<b>What Jesus knows about the Church</b>							
<b>Condemnation or Rebuke</b>							
<b>Command</b>							
<b>Warning and/or promised blessing</b>							
<b>Said to all the Churches</b>							



Intentionally left blank for notes

## **SESSION 1, PART 2 – UNDERSTANDING THE CHURCH**

After this session, you will:

- Know the use and meaning of the words: ekklesia and church.

You will KNOW:

- That the Church is an assembly of Christians gathered for worship in a religious meeting.

You will BE ABLE TO:

- Discuss that the concept of the Church began with Jesus Christ.

You will THINK ABOUT:

- Why the term ekklesia is used by Jesus in only two passages of Matthew? Matthew 16:18; 18:17

### **In the Last Session**

- We looked at the importance of the study of Church History is so that we will not be condemned to repeat the past.
- You also learned the three lessons that will help keep you from repeating the mistakes of the past.
  - Keep Balanced
  - Not this way among you = not the way of the Gentiles. Mark 10:43
  - Contend for the faith = not our culture or traditions.

### **Begin video.**

### **Understanding the Church**

- Church - The Greek word that is translated “church” or “churches” is: (Strong’s Number G1577). Ecclesia – ekklésia (ek-klay-see’-ah) a gathering of citizens called out from their homes into some public place, an assembly.

### **The Church in the New Testament**

- Church in the New Testament describes:
  - An assembly of the people convened at the public place of the council for the purpose of deliberating.
  - The assembly of the Israelites.
  - Any gathering or throng of men assembled by chance, tumultuously.

- In a Christian sense, church is used to signify:
  - An assembly of Christians gathered for worship in a religious meeting.
  - A company of Christians hoping for eternal salvation through Jesus Christ, to observe their own religious rites, to hold their own religious meetings, and to manage their own affairs, according to regulations prescribed for the body for order's sake.
  - Those who anywhere, (in a city or village), constitute such a company and are united into one body.
  - The whole body of Christians scattered throughout the earth.
  - The assembly of faithful Christians already dead and received into heaven.

### **Ekklesia Was a Political Term**

- In classical usage ekklesia was a political term, meaning “an assembly of duly summoned citizens.”
- In the Greek city-state, the trumpet of the herald summoned the citizens to the ekklesia (assembly) to hear of and deal with the business of the city.
- Ekklesia is often seen as an exclusive term, connecting its meaning with the fact that only citizens were being called to the meeting.
- In common usage, ekklesia was an inclusive word. Comes from the verb, “to call out or call forth.”
- Herald calling the people living in a certain place, to come to a meeting. The “assembly of duly summoned citizens” eventually became just “an assembly.”

### **The Jewish Background**

- The use of ekklesia in the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament, can be instructive.
- Occurs about 80 times in the Septuagint, translating the Hebrew word qahal (kha-hale) or words from the same root.
- Qahal is one of the primary words for a gathering or assembly.
- The assembly gained meaning from the context, from the people or purpose of the meeting. It is rarely, if ever translated by the Greek word: “synagogue.” `Edah (ay-daw) is the word most often translated by synagogue in the Septuagint.
- When applied to Israel, `edah came to indicate the society itself, whether assembled or not.
- It is used of the children of Israel, during their journey from Egypt to Canaan.
- `Edah assumes a sort of technical status as the People of God, but qahal continues to denote only the actual assembly or meeting.

- By the first century, the word synagogue had assumed too much of a technical status, to use among the Christians, since it most often identified the religious assemblies of the Jews, the Jews themselves and the places where they assembled.

### **Ekklesia in the New Testament**

- The pre-Christian history of the ekklesia presented the new institution of Jesus Christ with an easily adaptable word to describe that institution.
- A neutral term, devoid of any special doctrinal significance.
- This word that meant “assembly” now included the people who assembled, whether in an assembly or not.
- This assembly was something real; the first and most common usage was of a local church, e.g., where there was an assembling of the people.
- This usage is typical of the New Testament and of many of the passages in the Apostolic Fathers.
- It had become in most of these passages the technical term to designate this new institution.
- There developed a wider, non-local use. The church, after spreading out from Jerusalem, was still in all these places the same institution of Jesus Christ. The word ekklesia did not lend itself to this non-local usage.
- To emphasize the oneness of these churches, the singular was used and so the idea of assembly was no longer exclusive.
- The concept of the Church began with Jesus Christ. The word ekklesia became what it was because of Jesus Christ; for it became the technical term of that institution which assembled in His name, and which was composed of people who sustained a certain relationship to Him, e.g., people “in Christ.”
- Jesus taught about and preached the Kingdom of God.
- *When the modern conflict between The Kingdom and The Church is removed, the ekklesia is a realization of this teaching.*
- Church does not exhaust the meaning of the Kingdom of God (the sovereignty or reign of God).
- One anonymous author stated it this way: “The Kingdom creates a community, and uses a community as an instrument. Those who enter the Kingdom are in the Church; the Church lives beneath the Kingly Rule of God, acknowledges it, proclaims it, and looks for its final manifestation; but the Church is not itself the Kingdom.”

### **Where Did We Get the Word Church?**

- The English word “church” comes from the Greek adjective: “kyriakos” (kooi-ah-`khaus) which means: “the Lord’s” (e.g., belonging to or related to the Lord.)
- It may refer to the Lord’s people in general or to any group of the Lord’s people.
- From the third century, it began to be used to refer to the building in which the Lord’s people worship.
- This word does not appear in the New Testament in any context in which it can be translated church.
- It occurs only twice: 1 Corinthians 11:20 – “The Lord’s supper” and in Revelation 1:10 – “the Lord’s day.”
- It is easy to see that those in an assembly would want to clarify and distinguish themselves from a political rally or some generic gathering of a crowd – “we are the ekklesia Kyriakos” = the gathering of the Lord’s people.
- It may have been the intention of the early church to use “the Lord’s” to designate the Church as “those who belong to Jesus Christ” and even to emphasize that our “citizenship is in heaven.” Phil 3:20
- Words tend to adjust or adapt over time and the original meaning changes into something more generic or functional; so that now – for many people – “church” means a building, a worship service, or a religious group of any kind.
- Pastor Ken Ainsworth gave us a simple definition of the Church in our Christian Doctrine class.
- Use his definition of the local church for our baseline. Other definitions are included with your notes.
- “The local Church (visible) is a group of believers called to assemble, to worship and to minister (serve) in a single community.”
- This simple foundation is a good place to begin building our understanding of the Church.

**Review**

- The “Ekklesia” are citizens who are called together to deal with the business of the kingdom and is used to describe those called together by Christ to take care of His business.
- The “Church” are those who are identified as “belonging to the Lord.”

**In the Next Session**

- We will look at the descriptions or pictures of the Church in the New Testament.
- We will look at some word pictures used in the New Testament that describe the relationship between Christ and His church.
- We will also be able to explain the significance of those pictures.

## **ASSIGNMENT: UNDERSTANDING THE CHURCH**

Finish the chart of the Seven Churches in Revelation 2-3 (part of the purpose of the assignment is to reinforce the idea, that the Church is always in need of reformation and course correction.)

Discuss the following questions in class. (Or answer outside of class, if assigned by your pastor.)

*If you are studying on your own, you will need to find a study partner to share what you have learned and discuss these questions.*

### **1. What is the use and meaning of the words: Ekklesia and Church?**

**2. Read these definitions and be prepared to discuss. What are the common elements used and what are the differences? What, if any, are the elements that you believe are neglected? Unnecessary?**

David Hocking: The church is a universal body of believers, which manifests itself through various local assemblies of believers. (*The World’s Greatest Church* – page 97)

John MacArthur: The Church is an assembly of called out ones. Those who love Jesus Christ constitute the true church, the Body of Christ. We belong to the collective Body of Christ, whether we are alive or in glory. The church is made up of people called by God to be His children. We have become united with all other believers by faith in Christ. – The world cannot detect the invisible church of real Christians. They see only the visible church, which includes those who only profess to be Christians. The Lord intended to establish a visible church for a testimony to the world. In the book of Acts, the invisible church became more visible.  
(*The Master’s Plan for the Church* - pages 81-82)

Charles Ryrie: Taking together the features of local churches we see in the New Testament, we might propose the following definition: A local church is an assembly of professing believers in Christ who have been baptized and who are organized to do God’s will. (*A Survey of Bible Doctrine* – page 141)

The universal church is that spiritual organism of which Christ is the Head and believers from Pentecost to the rapture are the members.  
(*A Survey of Bible Doctrine* – page 154-155)



J. Oliver Buswell: - “The visible church, which is also catholic or universal...consists of all those throughout the world that profess the true religion together with their children; and is the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ, the house and family of God out of which there is no ordinary possibility of salvation.”

“The catholic or universal church which is invisible consists of the whole number of the elect that have been, are, or shall be gathered into one, under Christ the Head thereof; and is the spouse, the body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all.”

(Both taken from the Westminster Confession of Faith XXV) (“A Systematic Theology of the Christian Religion Vol.1 Chapter 6” – page 418 & Vol.2 Chapter 8 page 216)

**3. In the Gospels, Ekklesia is found only in Matthew, and in only two passages in that gospel (16:18; 18:17). What did Jesus say about the Ekklesia in Matthew 16:18?**

**4. Why is it used only twice in the gospels?**

**5. Where is the word *ekklesia* used most often in the New Testament?  
Review the information on the use of the word *ekklesia* in the rest of  
the New Testament and discuss how this should affect our view of the  
Church.**

**6. Read the paragraphs below and discuss the benefits or problems of using the word Kyriakos, which we translate as: Church.**

The English word: “church” comes from the Greek adjective: “kyriakos” (koo-ri-ah-`khaus) which means: “the Lord’s” (e.g., belonging to or related to the Lord.) It may refer to the Lord’s people in general or to any group of the Lord’s people. From the third century, at least, it began to be used to refer to the building in which the Lord’s people worship. This word does not appear in the New Testament in any context in which it can be translated “church.” It occurs only twice: 1 Corinthians 11:20 – “The Lord’s supper” and in Revelation 1:10 – “the Lord’s day.”

It is easy to see that those in an assembly would want to clarify and distinguish themselves from a political rally or some generic gathering of a crowd – thus, “we are the ekklesia Kyriakos” = the gathering of the Lord’s people.

It may have been the intention of the early church to use “the Lord’s” to designate the Church as “those who belong to Jesus Christ” and even to emphasize that our “citizenship is in heaven.” Philippians 3:20

However, words tend to adjust or adapt over time and the original meaning changes into something more generic or functional; so that now – for many people – church means a building, a worship service, or a religious group of any kind.

## **SESSION 2 – PICTURES OF THE CHURCH**

At the end of this session you will:

- Know some of the word pictures used in the New Testament to describe the church.
- Be able to explain the significance of those pictures.

You will KNOW:

- New Testament word pictures tell us much about our Savior and about ourselves.

You will BE ABLE TO:

- Understand that things that are true about the individual disciple are generally true about the Church.

You will THINK ABOUT:

- The relationship the church has with our Savior.

### **In the Last Session**

- The “Ekklesia” are citizens who are called together to deal with the business of the kingdom and is used to describe those called together by Christ to take care of His business.
- The “Church” are those who are identified as “belonging to the Lord.”

### **Begin video.**

### **New Testament Word Pictures**

- New Testament word pictures tell us much about our Savior and about ourselves.
- They focus on our relationship with Jesus Christ and of our role in this world.
- Perhaps you have seen some of these pictures in the past and have thought of them only on a personal level, of your own relationship to Jesus.
- The things that are true about the individual disciple are generally true about the Church.

### **Eleven Pictures into Four Groups**

- We will look at eleven of the word pictures in the New Testament that relate to the Church. (There are certainly more) I have separated these eleven pictures into four groups.
- The first group speaks of the Connection to our Savior. Here, the Church is pictured as:
  - A Flock of Sheep with a Shepherd
  - Branches on a Vine
  - A New Creature/Creation with the Last Adam
- The second group speaks of the Intimacy with our Savior. Here, the Church is pictured as:
  - A body with a Head
  - A bride with a Bridegroom
  - A household or family with a Father
- The third group speaks of the Influence we have through our Savior. Here, the Church is pictured as:
  - Citizens of a Kingdom
  - Salt of the earth
  - Light in the world
- The fourth group speaks of the Worship we give to our Savior. Here, the Church is pictured as:
  - A building or temple for worship
  - A group of priests serving God
- We will start by looking at the first of the three pictures that speak of the Connection to our Savior.

### **The Shepherd and the Flock of Sheep**

- John 10:1-18, 25-30; Acts 20:28-31; 1 Peter 5:1-4
- The BIG picture here is of our Savior’s protection and of our following the Lord, as a Shepherd. This is a consistent theme throughout the Scriptures.
- In John 10 for instance, Jesus declares Himself “the Good Shepherd” and the true Shepherd who enters the sheepfold by the door.
- Jesus changes the picture for a moment and declares that He Himself is the door. Then He returns to the original picture, where the doorkeeper grants Him entry.
- There is further evidence of His legitimacy as He calls His own sheep by name, they know His voice and they follow Him as He leads them out to find pasture.
- He protects them, keeping them alive forever.
- He also tells this flock that there are other sheep (referring to Gentiles) who are not of this fold (referring to the Jews) who will be gathered into one flock (referring to the Church).

- The sheep face great danger, since they are not known for their:
  - Fierceness
  - Sharp teeth
  - Dangerous hooves
  - Blinding speed
- They are in danger of:
  - Thieves and robbers breaking into the sheepfold to take them away.
  - Listening to the voice of another shepherd, not their own, and being deceived, they willingly follow him (or her) into the wilderness.
  - Wolves doing what wolves do – snatching some and scattering others, because the one who is supposed to be guarding them is not their owner, he is just a hired hand who did not sign up to do battle with wolves.
- The Sheep are not known for their street smarts, so they have two very simple jobs.
  - The first is to know Christ, their Shepherd, listening to Him so that they can recognize His voice.
  - The second is, to follow Christ, their Shepherd, following Him wherever He leads.
- This seems simple enough. However, knowing and doing are too often, different things in our experience.

### **Trilogy Regarding the Shepherd**

- There is a trilogy regarding the Shepherd found in the Psalms and in the New Testament.
- In Ps 22, we see The Shepherd’s death, the suffering and anguish of the Messiah.
- In John 10:11 Jesus declares Himself to be the Good Shepherd who lays down His life for the sheep.
- In Psalm 23, we see the Shepherd’s on-going care for His flock. In Hebrews 13:20-21, Jesus is called the Great Shepherd risen from the dead who equips believers to do God’s will.
- In Psalm 24, we see the Shepherd-King returning to claim, that which is rightfully His.
- In 1 Peter 5:4 Jesus is called the Chief Shepherd who is returning in triumph to reward His servants.
- Good Shepherd - John 10:11 - His death (Psalm 22)
- Great Shepherd - Hebrews 13:20 - His resurrection and present ministry (Psalm 23)
- Chief Shepherd - 1 Peter 5:4 - His second coming (Psalm 24)



*Those taking this course as independent distant learners will need to examine the other ten pictures and then gather a few friends to discuss and share your insights.*

### **Review**

- The first group speaks of the Connection to our Savior.
- Here, the Church is pictured as:
  - A Flock of Sheep with a shepherd
  - Branches on a vine
  - A New creature/creation with the last Adam
- The second group speaks of the Intimacy with our Savior.
- Here, the Church is pictured as:
  - A body with a head
  - A bride with a bridegroom
  - A household or family with a father
- The third group speaks of the Influence we have through our Savior.
- Here, the Church is pictured as:
  - Citizens of a kingdom
  - Salt of the earth
  - Light in the world
- The fourth group speaks of the Worship we give to our Savior.
- Here, the Church is pictured as:
  - A building or temple for worship
  - A group of priests serving God

### **In the Next Session**

- We will answer the question: What is a church to do?

**ASSIGNMENT: PICTURES OF THE CHURCH**

Examine the other ten pictures and see what they tell us about our Savior, about ourselves as the Church and about our responsibilities. Divide into groups as assigned to you by your instructor, and work on one of the four groups, or on one picture. Participate in class discussion to talk about your findings. By the end of the discussion list the four groups and the pictures below.

<b>Group 1</b>	
<b>Picture 1</b>	
<b>Picture 2</b>	
<b>Picture 3</b>	
<b>Group 2</b>	
<b>Picture 4</b>	
<b>Picture 5</b>	
<b>Picture 6</b>	
<b>Group 3</b>	
<b>Picture 7</b>	
<b>Picture 8</b>	
<b>Picture 9</b>	
<b>Group 4</b>	
<b>Picture 10</b>	
<b>Picture 11</b>	

## **SESSION 3 – WHAT IS A CHURCH TO DO?**

After this session, you will:

- Be able to explain the main duties of the church as well as the unifying principle that binds them together.
- Understand why it is important for believers to meet regularly.

You will KNOW:

- That the church met in a variety of locations, had a variety of activities in those meetings and a variety of responsibilities to one another.

You will BE ABLE TO:

- Discuss the three main duties of the church.

You will THINK ABOUT:

- Where to find the answer to the question by looking at what the churches did in the New Testament.

### **In the Last Session**

- You studied eleven of the word pictures used in the New Testament to describe the Church.
- You are now able to explain the significance of those pictures.

### **Begin video.**

### **What is a Church to Do?**

- One of the ways for us to answer the question of what a church is supposed to do is to look and see what churches did in the New Testament.
- The Church was born on the Day of Pentecost, as recorded in Acts 2. Peter had preached to the crowd that had gathered, explaining what was happening.
- About 3,000 men who believed in Jesus, were baptized and added to the Church that day. Acts 2:42 tells us about the activities and commitment of those early disciples.
- They were continually devoting themselves to:
  - The Apostles’ teaching
  - Fellowship
  - The breaking of bread
  - Prayer

- Day by day, they faithfully met together in larger, public gatherings as well as in smaller groups from house to house:
  - They met with a common focus as they were devoting themselves to the instruction of God’s Word and the teachings of Jesus, by the Apostles.
  - They continually shared meals and resources, remembered the Lord’s sacrifice through the Lord’s Supper and they prayed together.
  - They were also fruitful in their witness, in their love and in their gathering for instruction, fellowship, worship and prayer.
- These were not the only things the Christians in the New Testament did, or were instructed to do, as they met together. Later in this session, you will spend some time looking at the variety of activities the Church was involved in, the places the Church met and their responsibilities to one another.

### **Three Main Duties of the Church**

- The focus on the three main duties of the Church and of each individual Christian.
- **First –To Glorify God** – Romans 11:36, 1 Corinthians 6:20
  - 1 Corinthians 10:31– “Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.”
  - In the Westminster Shorter Catechism, the first question is - “What is the chief end of man?”
  - The answer we are to give is - “Man’s chief end is to glorify God and fully to enjoy Him forever.”
- We are to glorify God in:
  - Our worship – individual and corporate praise and thanksgiving
  - Our witness – individual and corporate proclamations of the excellencies of Christ
  - Our work – individual and corporate faithfulness in that which He has given us to do
- **Second – To Evangelize** – Mark 16:15; 2 Timothy 4:5
  - Acts 1:8 – “but you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.”
  - Individually and corporately, we are to proclaim or preach the good news to others.
  - We are to be messengers of the gospel, the good news about Jesus Christ, His death and resurrection, the forgiveness of sins and the hope of eternal life.
  - This is the command of our risen Lord who has all authority in heaven and on earth.

- In another CDI class, Evangelism, Teaching and Preaching, Pastor Rob Dore will help equip you in these skills so that you will be able to glorify God through your obedience to evangelize.
- Third – **To Edify the Saints** (fellow believers) – Ephesians 4:11-16 is the passage of Scripture that you are memorizing for this class and that gives us the clearest understanding of how we are to build up one another in our faith.
  - Individually and corporately, we share in this responsibility to build up the body of Christ.
  - The provision is made by the gifts given to each believer.
  - The process involves equipping each believer for the work of serving others.
  - The purpose is the building up of the body of Christ in love.
  - The product would be maturity and stability for all in doctrine, life and love.

### **One Unifying Principle**

- We can combine these three duties, which describe how we can glorify God, into one unifying principle – Make Disciples.
- The key passage for this principle is Matthew 28:18-20, where Jesus commands His original disciples to make more disciples.
- The main verb here is “make disciples” (the KJV translates it as “teach”) and the participles that describe this process are:
  - “go” (literally- as you are going)
  - “baptizing”
  - “teaching”
- We know that this applies to all believers because the original disciples were to make disciples, who would follow Jesus and obey all that He has commanded them.
- If those original disciples were faithful and fruitful, then they produced disciples who would do the same thing – they would make disciples.
- We also know that this command applies to all followers of Christ, in all places and throughout all time because disciples are to be made, of all nations and Jesus promises His personal involvement to the end of the age.
- It is easy to see that the three main duties of the Church are summed up in this simple command to make disciples.

### **The Process of Making Disciples**

- Starts with evangelization or proclamation of the good news. We must tell others about Jesus.
- Then, as they put their faith in Jesus, we baptize them as a symbol of their new life and commitment to follow Christ.

- Then we begin to edify or build them up as we teach them to observe, or obey, all that He has commanded us.
- The result is that God is glorified when we produce fruit and prove that we are disciples of Jesus Christ (John 15:8).

### **Discipleship is not a Program**

- We need to understand that disciple making, or discipleship is not a program – though there needs to be accountability and purpose.
- Being a disciple is a life-long experience, not a class that we complete after so many lessons.
- The curriculum is God’s Word – teaching them to obey all the things that Jesus has commanded us.
- Finally, the process involves a mutual life on life connection as we disciple one another. There will be those who lead us and set the example for us to follow, but in each of our relationships there will be – or should be – mutual, loving accountability.
- Included in this guide under “For Further Study,” you will find notes that may help you.

Now I’d like you to spend some time surveying New Testament Scriptures included in your guide book that will help us expand our understanding of the life of the Church.

### **Review**

- Three Main Duties of the Church:
  - Glorify God
  - Evangelize
  - Edify saints
- One Unifying Principle
  - Make disciples

### **In the Next Session**

- We will see there is a need for organization in the local church.
- We will see there is a clear Biblical structure, which also includes clear instructions as to the qualifications for those who should lead the Church.
- We will know God has blessed churches regardless of their form of government.

## ASSIGNMENT: WHAT IS A CHURCH TO DO?

There are a series of questions or assignments numbered and in bold letters. Because of time constraints, your pastor will either lead a discussion in class or assign you to work on questions alone or in groups.

- 1. Compare these two passages from Acts and note the words that describe the obedience, the intensity, the unity, the focus, the fruitfulness and the camaraderie of the believers.**

Acts 2:41-42 – “So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and that day there were added about three thousand souls. They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.”

Acts 2:46-47 – “Day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved.”

**2. Using the book of Acts, list the places where the Church gathered.**



**3. Using the book of Acts, state what the Church did and how they lived and served.**

**4. Take turns reading (aloud) through the “ONE ANOTHERS” in the New Testament (below) and discuss what impressed you as you read and listened.**

Mark 9:50 – “Salt is good; but if the salt becomes unsalty, with what will you make it salty *again*? Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with one another.”

John 13:34-35 - “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”

Romans 12:10 – “Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor;”

Romans 12:16 – “Be of the same mind toward one another; do not be haughty in mind, but associate with the lowly. Do not be wise in your own estimation.”

Romans 13:8 – “Owe nothing to anyone except to love one another; for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law.”

Romans 14:13 – “Therefore let us not judge one another anymore, but rather determine this--not to put an obstacle or a stumbling block in a brother's way.”

Romans 14:19 – “So then we pursue the things which make for peace and the building up of one another.”

Romans 15:5 – “Now may the God who gives perseverance and encouragement grant you to be of the same mind with one another according to Christ Jesus,”

Romans 15:7 – “Therefore, accept one another, just as Christ also accepted us to the glory of God.”

Romans 15:14 – “And concerning you, my brethren, I myself also am convinced that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge and able also to admonish one another.”

Romans 16:16 – “Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the churches of Christ greet you.” See also: 1 Corinthians 16:20; 2 Corinthians 13:12; 1 Peter 5:14

1 Corinthians 12:25 – “so that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another.”

Galatians 5:13 – “For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.”

Galatians 5:26 – “Let us not become boastful, challenging one another, envying one another.”

Ephesians 4:2 – “with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love,”

Ephesians 4:25 – “Therefore, laying aside falsehood, SPEAK TRUTH EACH ONE of you WITH HIS NEIGHBOR, for we are members of one another.”

Ephesians 4:32 – “Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.”

Ephesians 5:19 – “speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord;”

Ephesians 5:21 – “and be subject to one another in the fear of Christ.”

Philippians 2:3 – “Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves;”

Colossians 3:9 – “Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its evil practices,”

Colossians 3:13 – “bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you.”

Colossians 3:16 – “Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.”

1 Thessalonians 4:18 – “Therefore comfort one another with these words.”

1 Thessalonians 5:11 - Therefore encourage one another and build up one another, just as you also are doing.

1 Thessalonians 5:15 – “See that no one repays another with evil for evil, but always seek after that which is good for one another and for all people.”

Hebrews 3:13 – “But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called ‘Today,’ so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.”

Hebrews 10:24-25 – “and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.”

James 4:11 – “Do not speak against one another, brethren. He who speaks against a brother or judges his brother, speaks against the law and judges the law; but if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge of it.”

James 5:9 – “Do not complain, brethren, against one another, so that you yourselves may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing right at the door.”

James 5:16 – “Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.”

1 Peter 4:9-10 – “Be hospitable to one another without complaint. As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.”

1 Peter 5:5 – “You younger men, likewise, be subject to your elders; and all of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE.”

**5. How does the idea of church discipline (see Scriptures below) fit with the duties and unifying principle of making disciples? Is there danger if we do not follow these scriptures? Are there potential problems if we do follow these scriptures?**

Matthew 18:15-20

Acts 5:1-11

1 Corinthians 5 & 2 Corinthians 2:5-11

Galatians 6:1

1 Timothy 1:20, 5:1-2, 19-22

2 Timothy 2:20-26

Titus 3:9-11

**6. What are the three main duties of the Church?**

**7. What is the chief and highest end of man?**

## FOR FURTHER STUDY

### Three Main Duties of the Church

1. To glorify God - (Ephesians 1:5-6, 12, 13-14, 3:8-10; 1 Corinthians 10:31; John 15:8)

In worship -- individual and corporate praise & thanksgiving.

In witness -- individual and corporate proclamations of the excellences of Christ.

2. To evangelize (Matt 28:19-20; Mark 16:15; Acts 1:8) Individual & Corporate Authority: The risen Lord has all authority in Heaven and on earth. Christians have authority to evangelize. The essence is, to make disciples. The main verb is, "make disciples" and the infinitives are, go, "baptize" and "teach."

3. To edify the saints (Matt 28:19-20; Ephesians 4:11-16)

### Individual & Corporate

Provision: gifts to each one / all believers (1 Corinthians 12:4-7; Ephesians 4:7, 11)

Process: to equip the saints for the work of service for building the body (Ephesians 4:12, 16 – by what every joint supplies)

Purpose: until we all attain to (Ephesians 4:13-16):

- the unity of the faith (doctrine)
- the knowledge of the Son of God
- maturity equals the fullness of Christ is the standard

Product:

- stability in doctrine & life
- speaking the truth in love
- functioning in love – the whole body

The Unifying Principle “Make Disciples”:

- Strongs G3101 - mathētēs - a learner, pupil, disciple – translated: disciple or disciples 268 times in 258 verses in the New Testament – vast majority referring to disciples of Jesus

Discipleship is:

- A process not a program – though there needs to be structure & purpose
- Life-long not a class – though there are phases & goals
- Life on life not just a curriculum – though there must be clear content



Our purpose is to glorify God by observing the command of Jesus Christ to make disciples through worship, instruction, obedience to God’s Word, fellowship and evangelism.

**Come and See - Spiritual Seekers to Growing Believers**

To become a disciple, a person must understand who Christ is, why He came, what He accomplished and gain assurance of salvation by putting their faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. Then as a disciple, one begins to walk by faith and is willing to seek spiritual growth through God’s Word.

John 1:35-39 – vs. 39 – “He said to them, “Come, and you will see.” So, they came and saw where He was staying; and they stayed with Him that day, for it was about the tenth hour.”

**Follow Me - Growing Believers to Faithful Followers**

As a disciple, one is trained by developing spiritual disciplines in the areas of prayer, study of God’s Word, faithful service and loving accountability. Then as a disciple, one will be equipped for the ministry of disciple-making.

Matthew 4:18-22 – vs. 19 – “And He said to them, Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.”

**Be With Me - Faithful Followers to Motivated Ministers**

As a disciple-maker, one will take an active role in the ministry of disciple-making - through ministry and service and/or leadership, by apprenticeship and training, continuing to grow in spiritual discipline and character.

Mark 3:13-14 - And He went up on the mountain and summoned those whom He Himself wanted, and they came to Him. And He appointed twelve, so that they would be with Him and that He could send them out to preach.

**Remain (Abide) In Me - Motivated Ministers to Lifelong Disciple-Makers**

A lifelong disciple-maker will pursue a deeper understanding of God’s character and God’s Word, through spiritual disciplines and ministry, enabling disciples and disciple-makers.

John 15:4 – “Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me.”

## SESSION 4 – THE CHURCH AS AN ORGANIZATION

After this session, you will:

- Know the basic structures of, and reasons for, church organization and government.

You will KNOW:

- The basic structures used for church organization and government.

You will BE ABLE TO:

- Explain the reasons why church organization and government are needed.

You will THINK ABOUT:

- The scriptures that relate to church organization and government.

### **In the Last Session**

- You learned where the Church met and what the Church did.
- You are now able to explain the three main duties of the Church and the unifying principle that binds them together.
- You learned why it is important to meet together regularly.

### **Begin video.**

### **Definition of the Local Church**

- Remember the definition Pastor Ken Ainsworth established for us in the Christian Doctrine class:
- “The local Church (visible) is a group of believers called to assemble, worship and minister (serve) in a single community.”
- The usage of the word "ecclesia." In reference to a local church, carries with it the idea of organization for:
  - fellowship
  - worship
  - united effort, and
  - edification.
- Disciples were not meant to be disjointed, isolated individual particles but those who would meet in common faith and effort to carry out the great commission and strengthen one another.
- Paul writes to the Church at Corinth, in 1 Corinthians 14:40 – “But all things must be done properly and in an orderly manner.” (see also Judges 17:6, 21:25; Deuteronomy 12:8)

### **The Basic Systems of Organization**

- How were the churches in the New Testament organized to make disciples, to glorify God and fully enjoy Him forever?
- Before we try to answer that question, we need to look at the basic systems of organization that we have today.
- The present forms of church polity or government come from various interpretations of the New Testament’s teaching regarding the Church’s officers and their functions, as well as from tradition and culture.
- Much of what developed over the years has come, at least partly, through the confusion generated by designating the terms “elder” and “overseer” (or “bishop”) as two different offices rather than seeing “elder” as the title and “overseer” as the function.

### **Different Forms of Church Government - By Dr. Erwin W. Lutzer**

- Biblically, we can describe the Church in numerous ways.
  - On one hand, we observe that the local church is a living organism—an expression of the body of Christ.
  - On the other, we know that the Church is an organization set up by Christ and regulated by the guidelines commanded throughout the Scriptures.
- As a divinely commissioned organization, God has ordained leadership to spur on:
  - growth,
  - purity,
  - outreach, and
  - holiness.
- Throughout history, these primary systems of church government have dominated the ideological spectrum of Christian leadership.

### **Episcopal Government**

- As early as the Apostolic Father Ignatius (the Bishop of Antioch until the beginning of the 2nd century AD), solitary leadership structures flourished, and bishop-oriented churches spread throughout the Christian world.
- The church has frequently mimicked the political constructs of the presiding culture, with its strengths and flaws.
- Evidenced by the numerous writings of the Church fathers, solitary church leadership (also known as Episcopal Church government) strongly correlated with the Roman Empire’s leadership.
- As the emperor was supreme over the physical, the bishop/elder/pastor was supreme concerning the spiritual, presiding over all others (deacons and members).

- Episcopal-style churches still abound today, primarily throughout the Roman Catholic Church.
- While this form of government does prove efficient, corruption is always a danger, and the hierarchy and territorial aspects of this polity can be troublesome.

### **Congregational Government**

- With a renewed emphasis on the priesthood of every believer, congregational church government has dominated the Protestant church.
- This form of church government, most often found in Baptist churches, usually maintains the presence and title of elders/pastors and deacons/trustees, but the power resides with the members of the congregation, who vote concerning yearly budgets, church programs, and leadership appointments.
- Divisiveness can be a negative result of this format, but the added accountability can stave off blatant corruption.
- (An interesting side note - is that we have many examples in the Bible to show us that the majority is often wrong. That is something to consider.)

### **Presbyterian Government**

- One other popular system is the Presbyterian Church government.
- This simply means that the Church is led by the eldership (supported by the deacons).
- The church body may have limited say into the major decisions of the Church, but those who meet the biblical qualifications for leadership share the weight of power and responsibility.
- Though this system can foster a “them and us” attitude between the congregation and the elders, it produces a balanced level of efficiency and accountability.
- The church government described and commissioned in the early church was marked by a plurality of elders.
- Many churches maintain a system somewhat like a Presbyterian-style of church leadership because they believe that this structure is biblically preferable.
- They limit the structure to the local church only, using the terms elder and bishop interchangeably.

## **Biblical Eldership**

- Another writer, Alexander Strauch, in his book: “Biblical Eldership” has some strong words about the problems he sees, that some forms of church polity have generated.
- “Some of the worst havoc wrought to the Christian faith has been a direct result of unscriptural forms of church structure.

Only a few centuries after the apostles’ deaths, for example, Christian churches began to assimilate both Roman and Jewish concepts of status, power, and priesthood. As a result, church government was clericalized and sacralized. (this means priests and ceremonies began to dominate church life)

Under Christ’s name, an elaborately structured institution emerged that corrupted the simple, family structure of the apostolic churches, robbed God’s people of their lofty position and ministry in Christ, and exchanged Christ’s supremacy over His people for the supremacy of the institutional church.”

“Biblical Eldership” – Alexander Strauch – page 101

## **The Need for Reformation**

The Church has always been, and in this world will always be, in need of reformation.

- The struggles with the world, the flesh and the devil put constant pressure on us, seeking to distract or discourage us from fulfilling our Lord’s commission. I am certain you saw that in your study of the seven churches of Revelation.
- There has never been a perfect church. However, one day the Lord will “present to Himself the Church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless” (Ephesians 5:27). Oh, what a day that will be!
- It is one of the most amazing things in history, to see that the Lord Jesus Christ has:
  - built His church through all of these years,
  - rescued fallen people and preserved His truth,
  - despite the failures of His followers, and
  - regardless of the form of the governmental structure.
- Make no mistake about this, He will continue to build, purify and reform His Church until He returns to take us to His Father’s house.
- Should we just abandon the idea of church government?
- Should we forget about trying to determine and implement a biblical structure of church government?
  - The answer to both questions is “NO!”

- In God’s Word we have, what I believe, are very clear principles for the structure and government of the local church.
  - Our thinking should be about long-term reform versus short-term fixes.
  - Our focus needs to be on making disciples and growing in maturity before we focus on structure.
  - If we do not have qualified leaders who are mature disciples of Jesus Christ, it will not matter how “correct” our form of government might be.
- We need to heed the words of our Lord:
- Mark 10:42-45 - Calling them to Himself, Jesus said to them, "You know that those who are recognized as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them; and their great men exercise authority over them. **But it is not this way among you,** but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant; and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."

For the rest of this session, you will spend time examining the passages in God’s Word that talk about who should lead in the Church, as well as what they should be doing.

### **Review**

- There is a need for organization in the local church.
- There is a clear biblical structure, which also includes clear instructions as to the qualifications for those who should lead the Church.
- God has blessed churches regardless of their form of government.

### **In the Next Session**

- Next time we will begin our study of the History of the Church called Introduction, Jesus and the Apostles and The Age of Catholic Christianity.
- We will begin to understand the great challenges the Church faced in its early years.

## **ASSIGNMENT: THE CHURCH AS AN ORGANIZATION**

Continue to read in the Church History book (or History of Christian Doctrines book) according to the reading schedule and keep writing your chapter (or section) summaries.

Memorize Ephesians 4:11-16.

For the rest of this session you will spend time examining the passages in God’s Word that talk about who should lead in the Church, as well as what they should be doing.

There are a series of questions or assignments numbered and in bold letters.

### **Classroom Discussion: Who Should Lead in The Church? The Church as an Organization (The Local Church)**

Definition:

A local church is an assembly of professing believers in Christ who have been baptized and who are organized to do God's will. "A Survey of Bible Doctrine" - Ryrie p. 141, 142

The very idea of the local usage of the word "ecclesia" carries the idea of organization: for fellowship, worship, united effort, and edification. They were not to be disjointed, isolated individual particles but meeting together in common faith and effort to carry out the great commission and to strengthen one another.



**1. Consider the need for structure and leadership from the following passages of Scripture:**

Judges 17:6, 21:25

Deuteronomy 12:8

1 Corinthians 11:17-19

- 2. After reading about the various forms of Church Government (on the following pages), discuss the forms that you have experienced. What were the strengths and weaknesses that you have seen in the Church government you have experienced?**

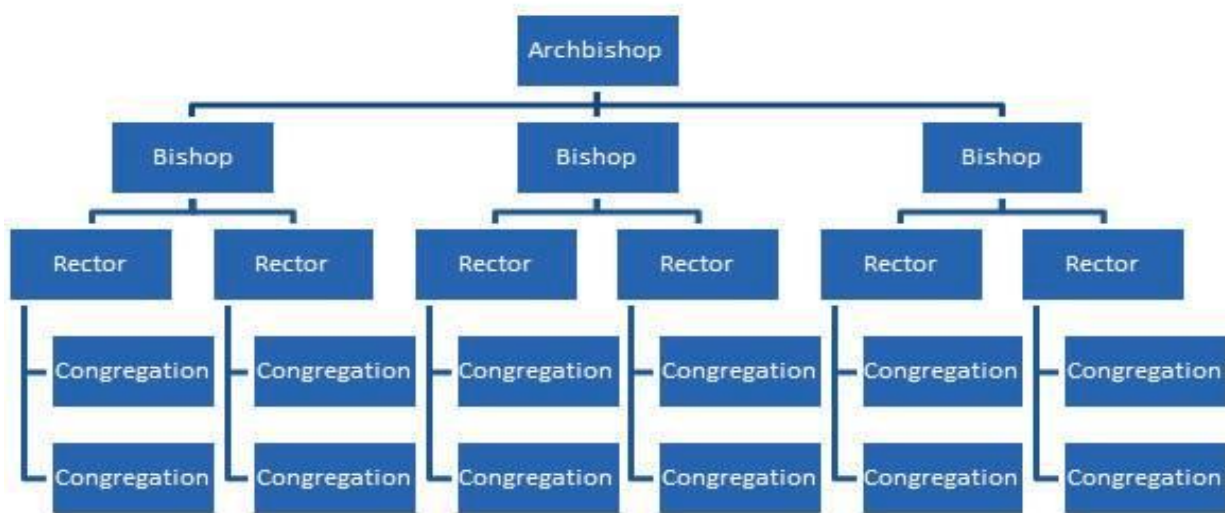
### **Organization: Church Polity (Government)**

The present forms come from various interpretations of the officers and their functions in the New Testament (plus traditions & culture).

### **Hierarchical or Episcopal**

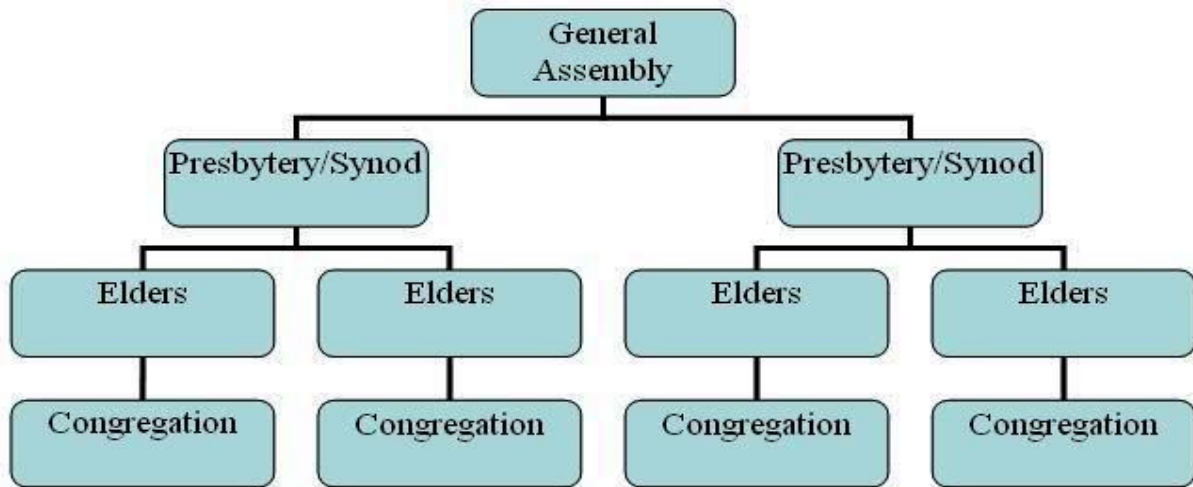
From the Greek " episkopē" – bishop or “overseer” - Hence, from or of the bishop; a government by bishops. In the Episcopalian form of church government, the archbishop (and there are several) has authority over the bishop who in turn presides over a diocese, e.g., several churches, which are cared for by the rector or vicar (pastor). The archbishop, bishop, and rectors are all ordained priests within the Episcopal system of church government. This form of government can be seen in the Methodist, Anglican, and in its most hierarchical form (i.e., many levels of bishops), in the Catholic church. Historically, there was no distinguishing between New Testament bishops and elders until Ignatius did so in the early second century.

Clearly, the hierarchical church is a post-biblical development.



**Federal or Representative – Presbyterian & Reformed Churches**

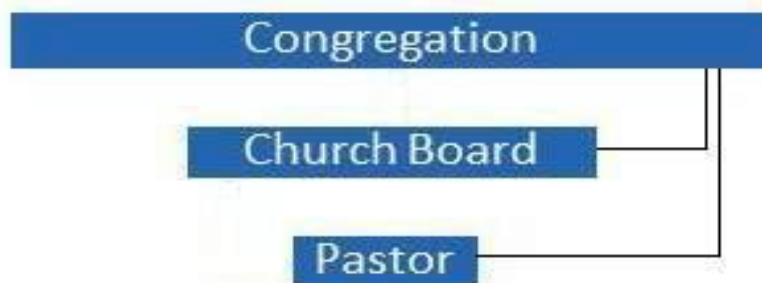
Various denominations employ the Presbyterian form of church government where the local church elects certain elders to the “session,” (Presbyterian) or “consistory” (Reformed Church), some (or all) of whom are members of a higher governing body called the “presbytery” (Presbyterian) or “classis” (Reformed). Some of the members of the presbytery or classis are chosen by the presbytery or classis to form a synod. There is yet a higher governing body in the Presbyterian Church, referred to as the General Assembly which itself is composed of lay and clergy representatives from the presbyteries. The General Assembly may be responsible for churches in a region or country.



**Congregational - Baptists, Evangelical Free, Disciples, independent churches**

In the Congregational form of church government, both the autonomy of the local church (under Christ, however) and the rights of its members are stressed, through a democratic form of government. The conviction in this system is that there is no evidence in the NT that churches were controlled by other individuals or other churches. In fact, Paul told Titus to establish leaders in the churches from among the people in Crete (Titus 1:5). There is no mention that these leaders were responsible to outsiders for their budget or day-to-day practical considerations. The priesthood of believers is held in high regard in this system, though in most forms of this government, a leader or leaders are chosen (in extreme cases they are not), but they must in no way replace the ministry and involvement of the members.

Parenthetically, a distinction needs to be made here between modern day congregationalism and the form of congregationalism taught in the Savoy Declaration (1658) and the London Baptist Confession (1689). The framers of these Confessions held to a Presbyterian form of individual church government without the necessity of a broader court system.



### **Benevolent Dictator**

There is another form of church polity, which is not official but is sadly too common. The (not so) “Benevolent Dictator” model. This can be seen in just about any form of Church government. The “benevolent” dictator can be the pastor/bishop or it can be just about any other person in the Church, including a group or family that is not “officially” in charge but is in reality. Sadly, they are rarely benevolent and they inoculate many against Christianity and the Church.

### **Different Forms of Church Government** - by Dr. Erwin W. Lutzern (Reprinted with permission.)

Biblically, the Church is described in numerous ways. On one hand, we observe that the local church is a living organism—an expression of the body of Christ. On the other, we know that the Church is an organization set up by Christ and regulated by the guidelines commanded throughout the Scriptures. As a divinely commissioned organization, God has ordained leadership to spur on growth, purity, outreach, and holiness. Throughout history, three primary systems of church government have dominated the ideological spectrum of Christian leadership.

### **Episcopal Government**

As early as the Apostolic Father Ignatius (the bishop of Antioch until the beginning of the 2nd century AD), solitary leadership structures flourished, and bishop-oriented churches spread throughout the Christian world. The church has frequently mimicked the political constructs of the presiding culture, with its strengths and flaws.

Evidenced by the numerous writings of the Church fathers, solitary church leadership (also known as episcopal church government\*) strongly correlated with the Roman Empire’s leadership. As the emperor was supreme over the physical, the bishop/elder/pastor was supreme concerning the spiritual, presiding over all others (deacons and members). Episcopal-style churches still abound today, primarily throughout the Roman Catholic Church. While this form of government does prove efficient, corruption is always a danger, and the hierarchical and territorial aspects of the polity can be troublesome.

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With a renewed emphasis on the priesthood of every believer, congregational church government has dominated the Protestant church. This form of church government, most often found in Baptist churches, usually maintains the presence and title of elders/pastors and deacons/trustees, but the power resides with the members of the congregation, who vote concerning yearly budgets, church programs, and leadership appointments. Divisiveness can be a negative result of this format, but the added accountability can stave off blatant corruption.

### **Presbyterian Government**

One other popular system is the Presbyterian church government. \*\* As indicated below, this simply means that the Church is led by the eldership (who are supported by the deacons). The church body may have limited say into the major decisions of the Church, but those who meet the biblical qualifications for leadership share the weight of power. Though this system can foster a “them and us” attitude between the congregation and the elders, it produces a balanced level of efficiency and accountability.

At the Moody Church, we maintain a system somewhat like a Presbyterian-style of church leadership because we believe that this structure is biblically preferable. Using the terms elder and bishop interchangeably, the Church government described and commissioned in the early church was marked by a plurality of elders (Titus 1:5-7; Acts 11:30; 14:23; 20:17-18; Phil 1:1). However, we must not insist that all other churches be like ours, but rather acknowledge the rich history and continuing value of churches which adhere to other systems of leadership.

\* The word “episcopal” is a derivative of the Greek word that translates into English as “bishop.” The use of this term should not be confused with the Episcopal denomination, a particular branch of Protestant Christianity that employs an Episcopal Church government.

\*\* “Presbyterian” is a derivative of the Greek word for “elder.” Many churches, other than the Presbyterian denominations, employ a Presbyterian Church government.  
Scripture: Acts 11:30; Acts 14:23; Acts 20:17-18; Phil 1:1; Titus 1:5-7

- 3. What are the qualifications for those who would lead the Church? Compare the lists in 1 Timothy 3:1-13 & Titus 1:5-9 (see qualifications on the following page) and discuss the barriers to becoming a qualified leader?**

## **Qualifications**

Consider the thought that the qualifications are not as much about an attainment and maintaining of a status but about direction, a goal for which you strive. Does that change your expectations of yourself or others?

1 Corinthians 11:1; 1 Thessalonians 1:5-7

“How many churches openly sin by not intentionally developing leaders? How many objectively select leaders?

Paul solemnly tells us to develop leaders, because it guards the Church and makes ministry more effective.

Without a clear objective, a training program, and an impartial screening program that measures objective character and skill qualities, the Church has not taken seriously the charge to develop leaders.

All that is left is the “good ol’ boy” system, filled with favoritism and partiality. Real leadership development requires that we follow Paul’s instructions.”

Bill Hull in “The Disciple Making Church,” pages 183-184



**4. For further study and discussion, see the material below for information about church leadership.**

Officers (local) mentioned in the New Testament (Elder, Deacon, Deaconess)

Elder (central passages 1 Timothy 3 & Titus 1)

Titles - 1 Timothy 3

- Overseer (“bishop”) - office and duty (Episcopos) overseer (Acts 20:28)
- Elder - office and dignity (Presbuteros) (Acts 20:17; Titus 1:5)
- Shepherd (pastor-teacher) - duty and concern and title (Poimaino) (Acts 20:28; Ephesians 4:11; 1 Peter 5:1-4)

Qualifications (Summary term: blameless or above reproach)

- Personal (1 Timothy 3:2-3; Titus 1:7-8)
- Family (1 Timothy 3:4-5; Titus 1:6)
- Social (1 Timothy 3:6-7)
- Doctrinal (Titus 1:9)

Number -- difficult to determine, sometimes, whether its usage is singular or plural. There was more than one elder in each city and possibly more than one in each church.

- 1 Timothy 3:1-7 "Bishop/Elder" is singular
- 1 Timothy 3:8-13 "deacons" is plural
- Acts 20:17 implies that there was more than one elder at each church (also James 5:17).

Duties: Acts 20:28-31; Ephesians 4:11-12; Titus 1:9-11; 1 Timothy 3:1-7; 4:14; 5:17-22; Hebrews 13:7,17; 1 Peter 5:1-4

- Shepherd (1 Peter 5:2; Acts 20:28; Ephesians 4:11)
- Preach & Teach (1 Timothy 5:17; 1 Peter 5:2)
- Preside, guide (1 Timothy 3:5; 5:17; "rule"; Hebrews 13:17)
- Protect (Titus 1:9-11; Acts 20:28-31)
- Be examples (1 Peter 5:3)
- Pray for sick, etc. (James 5:14)
- Handling of finances (Acts 11:30)

Deacon (central passage 1 Timothy 3:8-13)

Title -- Acts 6:1-7; 1 Timothy 3:8 - Helpers of elders; deacon – servant --"diakonia" - minister, service, and most of the time when without specific designation - servant. Qualifications -- 1 Timothy 3:8-13 - Like elders with addition of not being a gossip.

Duties:

- They are helpers to rulers and teachers -- Acts 6
- No reference to teaching as a duty
- No reference to ruling in church

Deaconess - Two possible passages for support.

Romans 16:2 -- Phoebe – “a servant of the Church” possibly means a servant in an unofficial sense.

1 Timothy 3:11 – “wives” or simply “women” possibly a “deacon's wife.”

Though there are “qualifications” for something; some think it is doubtful that such an office existed in the N.T.

Maybe the widows, not less than 60 years old, of 1 Timothy 5:9-10.

The New Testament seems to support most fully the idea of a plurality of elders at any one location (Acts 14:23; 20:17; 1 Timothy 4:14; Titus 1:5; James 5:14; Hebrews 13:17; 1 Peter 5:1-2), but not the idea of a developed hierarchical structure beyond this. In Acts 20:28 the same men are called “episkopos” (overseers) who were in Acts 20:17 called “presbuteros” (elders).

The idea of leaders from various churches gathering in council to work out difficulties and doctrine is modeled in Acts 15 and is seen in church history with varying degrees of success.

The very lack of any clear, rigid, complete outline of government is an indication that the Church was not to be a stereotyped legalistic body; but rather a spiritual body ruled as the Head sees fit. Most of the Doctrine we can build of church government in the New Testament must be illustrative rather than legislative.

We may deduce how they organized but can also have room for much charity towards those who differ.

**Ephesians 4:11-12**

There were three general officers serving the whole church, and not of any local appointment or election. They carried divine credentials, and were separated first by the Holy Spirit to their office. These were “first” apostles, “secondarily” prophets, then evangelists, lastly to these, may be added a fourth - the “teaching shepherds” who were given to the whole church, and not just locally since they could be called of Christ to change their field of labor. This list is given in Ephesians 4:11. The “He” is very emphatic in the Greek - “He, Himself, and no other” is the one who gives these officers to the Church.

### **The Apostles - Personal delegates of Christ, Galatians 1:1**

The word Apostle means a “personal delegate,” or “sent one.” There is absolutely no record of any succession of this office to others. The two prime credentials of the office seem to have been: "signs of an Apostle" (special miracles) 2 Corinthians 12:12; and having seen Christ in the flesh - so a personal commission from Christ in the flesh.

- Both are linked in Hebrews 2:3-4.
- 1 Corinthians 9:1 "Am I not an Apostle, have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord?"
- Revelation 2:2 shows Ephesus had tried those who said they were Apostles and were not.
- Others called apostles:
  - Barnabas (Acts 14:14) Andronicus and Junias (Romans 16:7).

Along with the prophets they formed the "foundation of the Church," (Ephesians 2:20), and are ranked first by Paul in every catalogue. From the many inferences, they carried the gift of inspiration in the utterance of God's message and the writing of the New Testament. Since they were the chief part of the foundation, they were responsible for:

- The care of the churches (2 Corinthians 11:28)
- Personal superintendence and the authority of Christ (1 Corinthians 5:4-5)
- Founding and organizing of the churches (Acts 14:23)
- Formulating of the doctrine for the Church (Acts 2:42)
- Carrying the same inspiration as the rest of the Scriptures (2 Peter 3:16.)

### **Prophets**

Like the Apostles, there is no reference anywhere of their having been elected; they were called of God and given to the Church by Christ.

Ephesians 4:11. In the book of Acts an ability to foretell the future marked many of the prophets (Acts 11:27, 21:7-14; 23:10).

Silas and Judas were prophets (Acts 15:32).

They were (it was) a gift of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:28, Romans 12:6). It seems more of a gift than an office, and covered more exhortation, edification and comfort than foretelling of the future (1 Corinthians 14:3). As a gift, it was temporary in nature – along with the gift of tongues & knowledge (1 Corinthians 13:8).

## **Evangelists**

Among the most prominent in the New Testament was Philip (along with four daughters who were prophetesses) (Acts 21:8-9) and Timothy was instructed to do the work of an evangelist (1 Timothy 4:5). They were distinctly given to the Church by Christ (Ephesians 4:11). We could, in reading of 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy, arrive at a concept of an evangelist as:

- A delegate of the Apostle
- Carrying His authority
- As they carried His message and ministry
- Where He could not be

## **Pastor-Teacher - Ephesians 4:11-12**

The Greek here is shepherds **and** teachers--equals "Teaching Shepherds."

- The words of Christ to Peter, "Feed my sheep," John 21:16.
- Linked with the admonition of Peter himself in his 1 Peter 2:2.
- "Desire the sincere milk of the Word that ye might grow thereby."
- Paul's charge to Timothy, 2 Timothy 4:2 - "Preach the Word."

These words for the pastor-teacher, give us the idea that there is but one food for the New Man - that is the Word of God. Therefore, it is necessary, for those who shepherd a flock, to see to it that the sheep get the right diet from the Word of God.

It is evident that in the early church, this pastor-teacher came from among the elders and there were a chosen number in each church. However, in any number of associated people, there must be a leader to take charge and keep order.

**5. Consider the implications, for our leaders and ourselves, of the word pictures in 2 Timothy 2.**

In 2 Timothy 2 Paul uses seven different metaphors to describe the rigors of leadership. He pictures the minister as:

A Teacher – vs. 2

A Soldier – vs. 3

An Athlete – vs. 5

A Farmer – vs. 6

A Workman – vs. 15

A Vessel – vs. 20-21

A Slave – vs. 24

“Each of these images evokes ideas of sacrifice, labor, service and hardship. They speak eloquently of the complex and varied responsibilities of spiritual leadership. Not one of them makes out leadership to be glamorous.”

**“The Master’s Plan for the Church” – John MacArthur, Jr. page 15**

“Some of the worst havoc wrought to the Christian faith has been a direct result of unscriptural forms of church structure. Only a few centuries after the apostles’ deaths, for example, Christian churches began to assimilate both Roman and Jewish concepts of status, power, and priesthood. As a result, church government was clericalized and sacralized. Under Christ’s name an elaborately structured institution emerged that corrupted the simple, family structure of the apostolic churches, robbed God’s people of their lofty position and ministry in Christ, and exchanged Christ’s supremacy over His people for the supremacy of the institutional church.”

**“Biblical Eldership” – Alexander Strauch – page 101**

Mark 10:42-45 - Calling them to Himself, Jesus said to them, "You know that those who are recognized as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them; and their great men exercise authority over them. **But it is not this way among you**, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant; and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”

**6. Write a summary of your current ideas, attitudes and understanding of the Church.**

## **SESSION 5 – JESUS, APOSTLES & AGE OF CATHOLIC CHRISTIANITY**

After this session, you will:

- Understand the great challenges the Church faced in its early years.
- Be able to explain the extraordinary spread of the Gospel in the age of Catholic Christianity.

You will KNOW:

- The value of studying church history.

You will BE ABLE TO:

- Explain the extraordinary spread of the Gospel in the age of catholic (universal) Christianity.

You will THINK ABOUT:

- The benefits and challenges in studying church history.

### **In the Last Session**

- You gained an understanding of the basic structures used for Church organization and government.
- You examined the Scriptures that relate to church organization and government. Are now able to explain the need for Church organization

### **Begin video.**

### **Historical Amnesia**

- Bruce Shelley asserts, in the prologue of our text, “Church History in Plain Language” – “Many Christians today suffer from historical amnesia.”
  - I would ask, “Is it amnesia or ignorance?”
- Let me refresh your memory of a statement I shared with you at the beginning of this course.
  - “Progress, far from consisting in change, depends on retentiveness. When change is absolute, there remains no being to improve and no direction is set for possible improvement: and when experience is not retained... infancy is perpetual. Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.”
- The good news is that you do not have to remember every person and every date to remember the past. You just need to gain a foundation and a perspective that is provided by the study of Church history.



## **Benefits from the Study of Church History**

- One benefit could be described as – an explanation of the present.
  - We gain an answer to the question: How did we get here?
  - History gives us context and context is king – not only in our study of the Scriptures, but in all of life.
  - When we learn of the sacrifices and struggles of our fellow believers through the ages, we gain an appreciation of their efforts.
  - In humility realize that we are where we are because of their work and their prayers.
  - We stand on their shoulders to see what we see.
- When we study Church history or any history, we gain a confirmation of God’s presence throughout history.
  - If we are not considering the work of God in the affairs of men, then we are missing the point.
  - Perhaps you have heard this true saying, “History is really His Story.”
- An ability to recognize and correct reoccurring error comes to us when we study history.
  - I can think of nothing we face today, in relation to error and truth that the Church has not already faced in the past.
  - Solomon said it well: Eccl 1:9 – “That which has been is that which will be, and that which has been done is that which will be done. So, there is nothing new under the sun.”
  - The question we must ask is – What did the Church do or say about that?
- There is an encouraging edification as we discover how God has worked in the lives of believers throughout history.
  - God did that for them and He did, or will do, the same kind of thing for us.
  - When we see God’s power, grace and work in others, we are encouraged and hopeful.
- The church has had an amazing influence on this world. We have not always done what we should but it is not hard to imagine what this world and our culture would be like without the Church – without salt and light.
- In our next section, on the development of Christian doctrine, the foundation of the history of the Church will be invaluable to our understanding of the process and the pressures that helped the Church wrestle with the truth and deliver it to our generation.
- Anytime we study history, we have the benefit of compressing time.
  - In today’s session, we are going to cover 300 years of history.
  - Consider what has happened in our country over the past 300 years.
  - The complexity and volume of information is overwhelming but as we gain understanding, we can summarize the essentials and learn the lessons of history.

- As we learn from the failures and successes of others, we gain the opportunity to correct our own course, get ourselves back on track, not only as an individual but hopefully also, as a church.

### **Several Branches of Church History**

There are also several branches of church history that would yield good fruit.

- The branch of Politics would show us how the relationship between Church and State has played out over the years and make us aware of the dangers involved.
- The branch of Polity, the study of the structures of church government will reveal many lessons that would help us govern the Church today.
- The branch of Propagation, the when, where and how of the spread of Christianity would be a treasure trove of lessons and of gratitude that it spread to us.
- The branch of Persecution, the history of Christian martyrs – that continues to this day – produces a fruit that seems bitter but eventually becomes sweet and gives us strength.
- The branch of Polemics produces a fruit that strengthens our faith as we relish the development of doctrine and the answers given to combat heresies.
- The Praxis (practical or practice) branch of history helps us move forward as we see how the Church has influenced each culture and the world over all. The example of good works and sacrificial love stimulate us to follow their example.
- The branch of Presentation shows us the old ways and fresh ways to express our worship, which should result in a church filled with those who worship in spirit and in truth.

### **Questions**

- Our interpretation of church history should consider the geography and political situation of each area. We must also answer several questions.
  - Who are the people who were prominent during any era?
  - What was the society or culture like?
  - What was the availability and level of education of the people?
  - What was the financial status of the people, the state, and the Church?
  - Were the Scriptures readily available?
  - Was the Bible in a language that people could easily understand?

## Issues

- In any study of history, we should address a few problem areas, or issues, as well.
- There is the issue of what material do you consider.
- The subjective selection of authors to read, events to cover and people to highlight all come into play.
  - When I taught this class the first time, one of the students had just finished a church history class at a local Christian college. The people and events that we covered were not the ones she covered in her class. We cannot cover everything.
- There is also the issue of information degradation.
- There is a constant re-writing and re-interpreting of historical events, which can clarify the truth or muddy the waters.
- There is the mixture of tradition with reality.
- Tradition is not necessarily wrong, it is just not certain.
- The only history that we can have complete confidence in is the history recorded in the Bible.
- Only God knows absolute objective history.
- We also should realize that all of us take the information we learn and then filter it through our background and experiences and sometimes come to some very subjective conclusions.
- One of the benefits of discussing what we have learned in our study is that it tends to sharpen our perspective and understanding.
- Proverbs 27:17, “As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another.”

## Three Negative Factors

Finally, I want us to consider Three Factors that have affected the Church in a negative way.

- First - the Secularization of the Church:
  - The union of the Church and the State under Constantine was thought to be a great opportunity for the Church but the subjugation of the Church to the State turned out to be disastrous.
  - When multitudes of citizens were baptized as Christians, without the work of the Holy Spirit, true Christianity and the Church were seriously compromised.

- Second - the Paganization of the Church:
  - The term often used is: “syncretism.”
  - Syncretism refers to the attempted reconciliation or union of different or opposing principles, practices, or parties, as in philosophy or religion.
  - One example was the Church’s accommodation of these new, non-Christian church members by taking their pagan “holy” days and dressing them up as Christian holidays. Perhaps most damaging was the introduction of idols, icons and relics.
- Third – the Sacramentalization of the Church:
  - The church adopted ceremonies and sacred acts that they taught would confer grace to the Church member, when administered by the duly ordained priest.
  - These were considered efficacious or powerful in and of themselves and some were considered necessary for salvation.

For the rest of this session, you will spend time discussing what you’ve learned and what you’ve written in your summaries of each of the eight chapters in the Age of Jesus and the Apostles and the Age of Catholic Christianity.

You will not only have the opportunity to share your insights, but you will also gain from the insights of your classmates.

### **Review**

- Do we face historical amnesia or ignorance? The benefits of studying history:
  - Understanding the Present
  - Seeing God’s Presence
  - Recognition of Error
  - Encouragement
  - Perspective

### **In the Next Session**

- Next time we will be discussing the eight chapters in The Age of The Christian Roman Empire.

## ASSIGNMENT: AGE OF CATHOLIC CHRISTIANITY

Share your summaries with the class. This will give you the experience of “being up front” or at least speaking in public.

Included are a few questions connected with certain chapters. They are intended to advance discussion and help us make application to our own lives and ministries.

These summaries help with the learning process. You will have read the chapters before class. Then come to class having written your own summaries.

In the video, I will review the section to be covered in each class. You will be asked to review and discuss the summaries that you have written.

Repetition with variety is essential to learning. Four times: reading, writing, hearing and discussing should give you a good grasp of the information available. If you get through the discussion early, that is acceptable – as long as the material is covered.

*Distance Learners Note: It is obvious that you will not be able to have much discussion with your classmates. You will need to gather some friends (very helpful friends) who would be willing to meet with you when you have your class time (most of the video sessions do not take up very much of the class time).*

*Your assignment will be to share your summaries and lead your friends in a discussion of the questions included in the notes. You will become the teacher, teaching them what you have learned. It would also be advisable that you allow your friends to ask their own questions they might have.*

Continue reading the Church History book (or History of Christian Doctrines book) and writing chapter (or section) summaries.

These pages will illustrate how often that has happened.

**1. Discuss the dangers we face by not knowing the history of the Church and the benefits we gain from studying Church history.**

Reasons for The Gospel’s Spread

- A burning conviction re: the redemption of mankind by the Christians
- A felt need in the hearts of people (Stoicism (self-control) with Grace)
- The practical expression of Christian love – for their own & for others
- Persecution – martyrdoms (see chart 20)

**2. Discuss the implications of the reasons presented (above) for the spread of the gospel. How should this affect our service and ministry?**

C.S. Lewis: “There is no good trying to be more spiritual than God.”

**3. Discuss the C.S. Lewis quote above and the balance between seeking to live as a Christian and avoiding legalism.**

**4. Discuss the work of Origen & Clement as they wrestled with the tension of separation from and penetration of the world. What did they do that we should be doing? What did they do that we should not be doing? (pages 86-93)**

## **SESSION 6 – AGE OF THE CHRISTIAN ROMAN EMPIRE 312-590 AD**

After this session, you will:

- Understand the benefits and consequences of the union between Church and State in the Roman Empire.

You will KNOW:

- The benefits and consequences of the union between Church and State in the Roman Empire.

You will BE ABLE TO:

- Discuss the pull and the peril of the Monastic Ideal.

You will THINK ABOUT:

- The importance and the challenges of the Church councils in establishing orthodoxy.

**Begin video.**

### **In the Last Session**

- You learned the value of studying church history.
- You are now able to explain the extraordinary spread of the gospel in the age of catholic Christianity.
- You thought about and discussed the benefits and challenges in studying church history.

### **Persecuted Minority to State Church**

- The movement that started the 4th century as a persecuted minority; ended the century as the established religion of the empire.
- Thus, the Christian Church was joined to the power of the state and assumed a moral responsibility for the whole society.
- Before we can understand the Church’s willing union with the State, we must look back at the Church’s rejection and persecution by the State.
- The intense persecution by Diocletian and Galerius ended when Constantine gained control of the empire by what he believed was the intervention of the Christian’s God through a dream.
- His victory was proof of the power of Jesus Christ and the superiority of the Christian religion.
- The move from persecuted, to favored, to official was gradual.
- Constantine ruled Christian bishops as though they were civil servants and pushed church leaders to resolve doctrinal controversies and maintain unity.

- Before Constantine’s conversion, the Church consisted of convinced believers who were willing to bear the risk of being identified as Christians, even at the cost of their lives.
- Now, many came who were politically ambitious, religiously disinterested and still half-rooted in paganism.
- This produced shallowness and pagan superstition, along with the secularization and misuse of Christianity for political purposes.
- By 380, the rewards for being a Christian gave way to penalties for non-Christians. Emperor Theodosius made belief in Christianity a matter of imperial command.
- Perhaps we should heed the words the English poet Samuel Butler – 1612-1680: “By this the fool commands the wise, the noble with the base complies ...He that complies against his will, is of his own opinion still.”
- Better still, we should pay attention to Jesus’ instructions to His disciples in Mark 10:41-45.
- Jesus points His disciples to the way that the Gentiles build kingdoms and then tells them, in verse 43 - "But it is not this way among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant;"

### **Church Councils**

- During this era and under the urging of Constantine, and other emperors, the Church met in Council to wrestle with the great doctrines of The Trinity and The Nature of Jesus Christ.
- The great merit of the creeds is that they left the mystery intact.
- Fifteen hundred years after the event we may wish for more understandable terms but we dare not say less than the Church said then.
- It is also important for us to remember Dt 29:29 - “The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our sons forever, that we may observe all the words of this law.”



### **The Monastic Ideal**

- The Monastic Ideal was a natural development that echoes a Jewish saying: “If you seek wisdom, go to the wilderness.”
- There is a longing, born from our frustration with our own failure and the failure of those who are members of the Church to be truly committed, truly spiritual.
- In that longing for holiness and practical sanctification, we look for a path that will lead us to a “more spiritual” life.
- C.S. Lewis said, “There is no good trying to be more spiritual than God.”
- Luther, and others, condemned the Monastic Ideal because it encouraged the idea of two roads to God, a higher and a lower.
- This concept has plagued the Church in every generation.
- Why would we try to discourage a sold-out commitment to Jesus Christ?
- Because too often it is not a commitment to Jesus Christ; but a commitment to a false shepherd and a set of rules that are at best misunderstood and at worst distortions of the truth that lead to spiritual pride and alienation from the very people Jesus has sent us to bear witness to.
- It is an unnatural concept of the Christian life. There is only one way to God and that is through faith in Jesus Christ.

### **Review**

- There is danger in being persecuted.
- There is danger in being the “State Church.”
- There is danger in “trying to be more spiritual than God.”
- God, in His sovereignty, used the Emperors to push the Church to deal with doctrinal differences.

### **In the Next Session**

- Next time we will be discussing the seven chapters in The Christian Middle Ages.

## **ASSIGNMENT: THE CHRISTIAN ROMAN EMPIRE**

For the rest of this session you will spend time discussing what you have learned and what you have written in your summary of each of the eight chapters in “The Christian Empire.” You will not only share your insights, but you will also gain from the insights of your classmates.

There are a series of questions or assignments numbered and in bold letters. Be prepared to share your summary as you cover each of the chapters.

**1. Discuss the parallels between the situation that Christians faced in Rome and those that we face in our culture today. See “Care for the Dying” (page 101). What were the advantages and disadvantages of Christianity becoming the State Church?**

**2. Read and Discuss briefly: Rejected Trinitarian Schemes (Pages 106-107) and Why is the Trinity Important? (Pages 111-112) (See also chart 28 and page 123 in textbook.)**

J.S. Whale: “A deep instinct has always told the Church that our safest eloquence concerning the mystery of Christ is in our praise. A living Church is a worshipping, singing Church; not a school of people holding all the correct doctrines.”

**3. Is it “Either/Or?” Or “Both/And?”**

**4. Discuss the major heresies about Christ – page 123 in textbook & Chart 26.**

**5. What are some ways that the church today may be exiles from life? What are our motivations? What do we hope to gain? What are the pitfalls?**

**6. Read “Important Events in Early Orthodoxy” (page 151) to refresh your understanding of the Orthodox Church.**

## **SESSION 7 – THE CHRISTIAN MIDDLE AGES 590-1517 AD**

After this session, you will:

- Gain an appreciation for those who stood for the truth of God’s Word, at the cost of their lives.
- Why the popes gained their power.
- Understand the motivations for the Crusades.

You will KNOW:

- How and why the popes gained so much power during the Middle Ages.

You will BE ABLE TO:

- Explain the motivations for the Crusades, as well as their scope and sequence.

You will THINK ABOUT:

- The challenges faced by the Church during the Middle Ages.

### **In the Last Session**

- We discussed the benefits and consequences of the union between Church and State.
- Learned the importance and the challenges of the Church councils in establishing orthodoxy.
- Talked about the pull and peril of the monastic ideal.

### **Begin video.**

### **The Christian Middle Ages**

- Often referred to as “The Dark Ages,” covered nearly 1,000 years of church history.
  - *Though this section in our textbook has only seven chapters and 72 pages of reading, many of my students have expressed the sense that it seemed to be extremely long – they thought they would never get to the end. It created in them a great appreciation for the Reformation that followed.*
- The Middle Ages began as a time of great turmoil, instability and change.
- The Church sought to establish order and security in the West – to reestablish the Roman Empire as the “Holy Roman Empire.”
- Students of the history of the Church in the Middle Ages are not the only ones who felt the darkness.
- Before the Reformation gained strength and acceptance, there were many voices crying out to God and calling upon the Church for change.

- Europe, along with the rest of western civilization, owes more to the Christian faith than most people realize.

### **Christendom (the Kingdom of God on Earth)**

- When the barbarians destroyed the Roman Empire in the West, it was the Christian church that put together a new order called Europe.
- The church took the lead in rule by law, the pursuit of knowledge and the expressions of culture.
- The underlying concept was Christendom (the Kingdom of God on earth), which united empire and church.
- It began under Charlemagne in the 8th century, but the popes slowly assumed more and more power until Pope Innocent III, at the beginning of the 13th century, taught Europe to think of the popes as world rulers.
- In later centuries, we see the popes corrupted by power and false teaching.
- We also see increasingly militant reformers cry out for change.
- The popes, as the leaders of the Church, were facing a time of chaos.
- With no central government in place, things were changing and we all know how much the Church resists change – even in our day!
- There was a longing for the “good old days” and for the unity of the Roman Empire, which had a powerful appeal to most people.

### **What Did Christianity Bring to the Devastation?**

- What did Christianity bring to the devastation, to bring order out of the chaos and help erect a new order called Christian Europe?
- Well, the Church was the only surviving vestige of organized civilization in the West; it was the anchor for the empire.

### **Gregory, The Reluctant**

- Into this turmoil, an unlikely monk named Gregory was elected as pope in 590 AD.
- Gregory “the Reluctant” eventually became Gregory “the Great.”
- His gifts for administration were invaluable in stabilizing the Church and the region, but his practical approach to the “defense of orthodoxy” led him to include unbiblical teachings, even crude, superstitious and pagan notions of the illiterate populace in what he would declare to be “the faith.”

### **Charles the Great – Charlemagne**

- One hundred sixty years later, Charles the Great – Charlemagne – became the emperor and restored the Christian Empire to the West.
- He had three goals:
  - military power to crush his enemies
  - religious power to direct his people’s souls
  - intellectual power to instruct both souls and minds
- This reunion of Church and State affected the course of European politics and Christianity for centuries.

### **Islamic Conquest**

- About this same time the Muslim prophet, Muhammad died and the Islamic conquest began of the Middle East, North Africa, present day Turkey and Spain.
- This eventually caused problems for pilgrims visiting the Holy Land and raised fears that Muslims might even conquer Europe.
- *This contributed to the creation of the Crusades.*
- By the 8th century, 50% of all Christians lived under Islamic rule.
- Charts 38 and 39 in our Charts book provide a good summary of the scope and sequence of the crusades and the Muslim conquests.
- Unfortunately, the popes never held two basic truths:
  - First, Christianity’s highest satisfactions are not guaranteed by possession of special places or things (relics).
  - Second, the sword is never the way God extends Christ’s church. (See Mark 10:42-45)

### **The Scholars and Scholasticism**

- As the Church entered the second millennium, the Church also entered the era of Scholasticism.
- The schools in the cathedrals (initiated by Charles the Great) gave birth to medieval universities, with the supreme task of understanding and explaining the light of revealed truth.
- Scholasticism was a distinctive method of scholarship combined with the unique theology of the Middle Ages.
- The purpose was to reconcile Christian doctrine with human reason and arrange the teachings of the Church in an orderly system.
- However, the free search for truth was never in view, since the chief doctrines of the Christian faith were regarded as fixed.
- The purpose of the discussion was to show the reasonableness of the doctrines and to explain their implications.

- Living religiously in a studious manner was a hallmark of medieval education.
- The curriculum of the cathedral school was limited to the seven liberal arts:
  - Grammar
  - Rhetoric
  - Logic
  - Arithmetic
  - Geometry
  - Music
  - Astronomy
- They were called the “liberal” arts because they were originally reserved for men who were liberal, that is, liberated, free, not slaves.
- Scholasticism came to stand for painstaking arrival at logical conclusions through:
  - Questioning
  - Examining
  - Arranging details into a system of logic.
- As students learned to think, unquestioning acceptance of traditional authorities was no longer assured but the conclusions had to agree with Christian doctrine.
- That which had been put forward as the truth of God was now being tested by fire, with the wood, hay and stubble starting to burn.

### **An Opportunity**

- Here was an opportunity to provide a biblical, reasoned response to just about any issue.
- It was also an opportunity to sort through what was truly Christian doctrine and what were the doctrines of men.
- There were a growing number of teachers, monks and others who were responding to the abuses and excesses of the Church with new movements and teachings towards a renewal, a reform for the Church.
- The medieval poverty movement, for one example, is a timeless reminder that political Christianity is, at best, only partial Christianity – and some might justly say, “Is not Christianity!”
- Some of these movements were indeed misguided, even heretical in their theology and practices – but not all.

### **Weapons of War?**

- What were weapons the Catholic Church could use, to deal with these renewal and reform movements?
- There were three solutions:
  - Preach the word to return to the truth.
  - Lead a crusade to crush all hardened resistance.
  - Establish the Inquisition to uproot heresy completely.
- The Inquisition was their primary response.

### **An Unstable Foundation**

- The philosophical framework supporting a papal monarchy was built on an unstable foundation of canon law and a systematic statement of Christian theology that had very little Scriptural support.
- “Canon law” simply refers to “Church law.”
- The rules, regulations and practices established by the Church. We could compare it to the by-laws in our church constitutions.
- The craving to control, the zeal to reach every aspect of life disguised the fatal flaw in Christianity by law.
- It tried to reduce human freedom to a miserable minimum and forgot that God designed freedom as the forerunner for the coming of true faith.
- Like the crusades, scholastic theology reached too far and claimed too much for itself and the Church.
- The reformers were soon to become protestors – Protestants.

### **Review**

- The Middle Ages were the Dark Ages because of the chaos in the Empire and the chaos in the Church.
- The Church was trying to restore the stability of the Empire and maintain power for itself.
- The unstable foundations and the indefensible teachings were being tested and exposed for what they were – man’s work and ideas, not God’s.

### **In the Next Session**

- Next time we will be discussing the eight chapters in “The Age of The Reformation.”

## **ASSIGNMENT: THE CHRISTIAN MIDDLE AGES**

For the rest of this session you will spend time discussing what you have learned and what you have written in their summary of each of the eight chapters in “The Christian Empire.”

There are a series of questions or assignments numbered and in bold letters.

**1. What did Christianity bring to the devastation, to bring order out of the chaos, to erect a new order called Christian Europe?**

**2. How could/did the kingdom that Jesus said was “not of the world” become so much a part of worldly power?**

**3. Should the church rule the state, or the state control the church? What is your opinion?**

**4. Discuss the Crusades and consider what our answers should be to those who challenge Christianity’s hypocrisy because of the Crusades.**

**5. What was missing from the cathedral school curriculum of grammar, rhetoric, logic, arithmetic, geometry, music, and astronomy?**

**6. Discuss the difference between “Christianity by law” (Legalism or State Religion would be Christianity by law) and “Human freedom as the forerunner for the coming of true faith.”**



**7. The Medieval Poverty Movement is a timeless reminder that political Christianity is only partial Christianity. This movement remains as a challenge to the Church (any church) that is characterized by wealth and power.**

**What does the church do with its wealth and with its power?**

**In what sense, is political Christianity only partial Christianity?**

**Does this mean that Christians should not be involved in politics, or serve in positions of government?**

**Does it mean that we should not strive for “righteous” laws?  
Consider Mark 10:42-45 (Keep Balanced)**

**8. Consider the examples of Wyclif and Hus. What keeps us from this kind of boldness and righteous defiance? Our rights? Our fear of what? Discuss the things for which Christians are persecuted in the West and in the rest of the world.**

## **SESSION 8 – THE AGE OF THE REFORMATION 1517-1698 AD**

After this session, you will:

- Gain an appreciation for the religious freedom we enjoy and the denominational system.
- Know the four major traditions of early Protestantism and their leaders.
- Understand the dangers of taking the gospel to those in our own culture, as well as to other cultures.

You will KNOW:

- The four major movements marked by early Protestantism. (Lutheran, Reformed, Anabaptist, and Anglican)

You will BE ABLE TO:

- Identify the leaders of the Reformation.

You will THINK ABOUT:

- Different solutions to Catholic problems.

### **In the Last Session**

- You saw how and why the popes gained so much power during the Middle Ages.
- You gained understanding of the motivations for the Crusades, as well as their scope and sequence.
- You gain appreciation for the challenges faced by the Church during the Middle Ages.

### **Begin video.**

### **The Age of the Reformation**

- The spirit of reform broke out with surprising intensity in the 16th century, giving birth to Protestantism and shattering the papal leadership of western Christendom.
- Four major traditions marked early Protestantism:
  - Lutheran
  - Reformed
  - Anabaptist
  - Anglican
- After a generation, the Church of Rome itself, led by the Jesuits, recovered its moral fervor.
- Bloody struggles between Catholics and Protestants followed, and Europe was ravaged by war before it became obvious that western Christendom was

permanently divided and a few pioneers pointed toward a new way: the denominational concept.

### **Different Solutions to Catholic Problems**

- One writer describes Protestantism as “a modification of Catholicism in which Catholic problems remain, but different solutions are given.”
- The four questions that Protestantism answered in a new way are:
  - How is a person saved?
    - Protestants say that a person is saved, not by works, but by faith alone.
  - Where does religious authority lie?
    - Protestants say that religious authority does not reside in the visible institution called the Roman church but in the Word of God found in the Bible.
  - What is the Church?
    - Protestants would say that the Church is the whole community of Christian believers, since all are priests before God.
  - What is the essence of Christian living?
    - Protestants would answer that the essence of Christian living is serving God in any useful calling, whether you are “ordained” or a “layman.”

### **Leader of The Reformation?**

- Many see Martin Luther as the leader of the Reformation. However, the fuel piled up for years before Luther merely lit the spark that ignited it (see chart 48).
- His conversion came at the end of a long spiritual struggle when he read Galatians 3:11, where Paul quoted Hab. 2:4 – “The righteous man shall live by faith.”
- Later, on October 31, 1517, he posted his 95 Theses (95 propositions for theological debate) on the Castle Church door in Wittenberg. And so, it began.
- Three and a half years later, in April 1521, Luther appeared before Emperor Charles V to defend what he had taught and written. Before he was declared a heretic, expelled from the Church and condemned to death, he was offered the opportunity to recant his writings. His response is a perfect example of submissive defiance.
- He said, “My conscience is captive to the Word of God. Unless I am convinced by proofs from Scriptures or by plain and clear reasons and arguments, I cannot and will not retract, for it is neither safe nor wise to do anything against conscience. Here I stand. I can do no other. God help me. Amen.”

- Luther’s original intention was to reform the Catholic Church, not start a new one, but Lutheranism was the response to the Catholic Church’s rejection of this call.

### **John Calvin**

- John Calvin’s leadership shaped the third reformation tradition.
- Today we call this tradition Reformed or Calvinistic Christianity.
- Luther’s central doctrine was justification by faith, and Calvin’s focus was the sovereignty of God.

### **Ulrich Zwingli**

- Ulrich Zwingli led the Anabaptist movement.
- Their central focus was true discipleship and their opposition to infant baptism, insisting that baptism should be the act of obedience of one who has placed their faith in Jesus Christ.
- Anabaptist: The prefix “ana” means “do-over” – the Anabaptist taught that those who were baptized as infants needed to “do it over” as believing adults.
- They preferred the name Baptists to Anabaptists.
- They came out of the Reformed tradition and felt called of God to reform the reformation!
- They demonstrated that those who live most devoutly for the world to come are often in the best position to change the present.
- It is interesting how people often turn that around, declaring that some Christians are “so heavenly minded that they are of no earthly good.” I am convinced that if we are truly heavenly minded, we will be and do earthly good.
- Where Luther would allow whatever the Bible did not prohibit, Zwingli rejected whatever the Bible did not prescribe. In England, this approach was called “puritanism.”
- If the Lutheran reformation began in a monastic cell, the Anabaptist reformation in a prayer meeting and the Calvinistic reformation at a scholar’s desk, then the English reformation began in the affairs of state, specifically with the problem of succession to the royal throne.

### **Henry VIII**

- The English or Anglican reformation was primarily a revolt against the Pope as the head of the Church.
- The Pope was unwilling to grant Henry the VIII an annulment of his marriage and approval to marry another woman.
- Protestantism had led the way for other kings and countries to avoid excommunication and “the ban” by establishing their own “state church.”

- The Anglican Church has been described as “the most Catholic a church can be and still be protestant.”
- Henry the VIII wanted a son as an heir to the throne and a new wife to help provide him that son.
- He changed the Church **IN** England to the Church **OF** England, establishing himself as the head of the Church and the defender of the Faith.
- Henry VIII suppressed the monasteries and published the English Bible for use in the churches.
- His son, Edward VI allowed priests to marry and replaced the old Latin service with “Crammer’s Book of Common Prayer” in English.
- John Foxe’s “Book of Christian Martyrs,” published in 1571, helped reinforce England’s break with Catholicism as he recounted the stories of the martyrs of Christianity – including the horrific persecution of Protestants by the Catholic Church during the Inquisition.
- During the reign of Elizabeth I the Anglican Church assumed its distinctive character, neither Roman nor Protestant. This certainly did not set well with the reformers returning from exile – the Puritans.

#### **Four Movements**

- These four movements faced different needs and emphasized different Christian solutions, all built on the same foundation with different structures of doctrine and practice. (See charts 70, 71 & 72)

#### **The Counter Reformation**

- Meanwhile, back in Rome, it did not take long for the Catholic Church to respond to the Reformation movement.
- Ignatius Loyola founded the Jesuits in 1534, which became both a Counter Reformation movement and a Catholic Reformation movement.
- Loyola is the author of a well-known statement: “Pray as if everything depended on God alone; but act as though it depended on you alone whether you will be saved.” (We usually drop that last line.)

#### **Religious Wars**

- From 1524-1648 there were several religious wars in various countries featuring Catholic vs. Protestant and Protestant vs. Catholic. (See chart 69)
- As the Church expands, Protestant and Catholic, it has always been in danger of identifying the Gospel with cultural norms and then insisting upon the expression of the faith in that cultural norm. Style of music would be one example of a cultural norm becoming attached to the Gospel.
- Do we establish Christianity by law or by love?
- Do we establish Christianity by force or by words and deeds?

- It is sad to say, that conquest and evangelization slowly intertwined and too few recognized the difference, whether Catholic or Protestant.
- What was it that Jesus said? Mark 10:42-43 "...You know that those who are recognized as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them; and their great men exercise authority over them. But it is not this way among you..."
- One of the lessons learned from the 30 Years War was that the price of enforced religious conformity is excessively high.
- A lesson that should have been learned from God’s Word is that enforced religious conformity is non-Christian.
- Eventually, the goal of building a holy city that nurtures holy men was amended to, building a city where people could be holy.
- In America:
  - the waves of newcomers
  - the indifference of the second generation
  - the wide-open frontier all weighed against a religious uniformity

### **The Denominational Theory**

- The Reformers had planted the seeds of the denominational theory of the Church, insisting that the identity of the true church could never be exclusively with a particular institution.
- The denominational theory looked for Christian unity in some inward religious experience and allowed diversity in the outward expressions of that personal faith.
- This tolerant attitude was not born of doctrinal indifference but was extended to those who shared a common understanding of the core doctrines of the Christian faith.
- In the end, the denominational form of the Church, though not ideal, is better than any alternative the years have offered.

### **Review**

- The Reformation was remarkably swift.
- The Religious wars were certainly a black mark on the Reformation.
- The Reformation was somewhat side-tracked by holding on to the idea of a marriage between Church and State.

### **In the Next Session**

- We will be discussing the four chapters in The Age of Reason and Revival.

## **ASSIGNMENT: THE AGE OF THE REFORMATION**

For the rest of this session, spend time discussing what you have learned and what you have written in your summary of each of the eight chapters in “The Age of the Reformation.” Share your insights in class.

There are a series of questions or assignments numbered and in bold letters. Be prepared to discuss.

Also see Class and Assignment Schedule. Continue reading your Church History book and writing your chapter summaries.

**1. Discuss the significance of the answers to these four questions. Would you want to expand the answers to any of these questions? Would you want to add any other questions, to clarify the differences between Catholic and Protestant? Would you eliminate any of these questions?**

**2. Consider the “Important Theological Themes for Luther” pages 251-253 in the textbook. He was contending for these things. What are the things for which you contend? Considering other information you have learned about Luther, do you see any molehills made into mountains or any mountains made into molehills?**

**3. What are some pitfalls that come with Luther’s and Zwingli’s positions:**

- **Allowing whatever the Bible does not expressly prohibit**
- **Rejecting whatever the Bible does not expressly prescribe**

**4. Calvin, and others, sought to establish the Kingdom of God by political means, by establishing laws and some even by the violent overthrow of existing governments. What influenced this thinking? Is it a biblical approach? Do we see this concept used in our present day? Is there a balanced approach?**

**5. Read: Facets of the Counter Reformation (page 283 in textbook) discuss briefly: what was positive in this movement and what was negative.**

**6. Should the natives be won to the “holy faith” by love or by force? HOW IS THIS EVEN A QUESTION? What is the answer?**

### **The Gospel and Culture**

The church is often in danger of identifying the gospel with some cultural form in which the faith has found a home. They felt constrained to insist upon the expression of the faith in only one way.

**7. Is this a danger that we also face in our culture? What cultural forms have been or currently are attached to the proper expression of faith?**

### **The People of the Book**

The Puritans were certainly influenced by John Foxe’s “Book of Christian Martyrs.” However, the book they were most passionate about was the Bible. They were especially passionate about the English version of the Geneva Bible. They also had a new style of preaching – a message that aimed at the heart, not at the head.

**8. Does it have to be one or the other? Can it be both?**

**9. A group of pastors from a variety of denominations and independent churches who prayed together regularly, described their differences as flavors of Christianity – like Baskin-Robins 31 flavors of ice cream. Is this a fair comparison? Discuss the information above regarding denominations. What are some of your agreements or disagreements with this approach? Does your Church Doctrinal Statement reflect the core beliefs of Christianity? Are there distinctive doctrines in your church doctrinal statement, that might not appear in those of other churches?**



## **SESSION 9 – THE AGE OF REASON AND REVIVAL 1698-1789 AD**

At the end of this lesson, you should:

- Know the fundamental differences between the Reformation and the Renaissance.
- Be able to understand the importance of a humble, reasoned and biblical response, to attacks against Christian teaching and practice.
- Think about the impact of the Great Awakening on the United States – the Church and the society.
- Understand the motto of Village Missions: Preach the Word and Love the People (OR) Love the People and Preach the Word.

You will KNOW:

- The Age of Reformation was marked by debate among Christians about the way of salvation

You will BE ABLE TO:

- Understand the biblical responses to attacks against Christian teaching.

You will THINK ABOUT:

- How the Age of Reason was the birth of secularism

### **In the Last Session**

- You learned the four major movements of early Protestantism and their leaders.
- You learned the dangers the Church has faced from the beginning as we sought to take the Gospel to those in our own culture, as well as to other cultures.
- You gained an appreciation for and the ability to explain the denominational form of the Church that dominates Christianity even today.

**Begin video.**

### **The Age of Reason and Revival**

- The Age of Reformation was marked by debate among Christians about the way of salvation.
- The Age of Reason and Revival was highlighted by the denial of any supernatural religion.
- Respect for science and human reason replaced the Christian faith as the cornerstone of Western culture. Many Protestants met this crisis of faith, not by arguments, but by the experience of supernatural conversion. Faith was less dogma and more experience.

- This evangelical Christianity spread rapidly by the power of preaching alone.

### **Religious Freedom**

- Many Christians came to see that state support was no longer essential for Christianity’s survival.
- Modern Christians could accept religious freedom.

### **The Age of Reason**

- The Age of Reason was the birth of secularism.
- Secularism is a social and political philosophy that seeks to separate the Church from the State. In fact, it rejects any influence of religion, faith and worship. Ultimately it seeks to destroy all influence of Christianity.
- This is the foundation for the idea that anything except religion, especially Christianity, is tolerated, promoted and glorified.
- Religion, however, must be banned from the public square.
- Some showed high regard for the religion of Jesus but had profound contempt for Christianity’s social failures.
- Questions of dogma seemed unimportant, hardly worth fretting about.
- What was immensely more important was behavior.
- Even the age of the Reformation had proved again that faith and power are a potent brew. If Christians had access to power, they used it to compel conformity to their version of the truth: Catholic, Lutheran or Reformed.

### **Difference Between the Renaissance and Reformation**

- The Enlightenment or Renaissance – was seen as a rebirth.
- This was a philosophical movement, characterized by belief in the power of human reason and by innovations in political, religious, and educational doctrine.
- The seeds of this movement probably lie in the Reformation era itself.
- It involved the rebirth or recovery of the values of classical Greek and Roman civilization expressed in literature, politics and the arts.
- Many of the Reformers, Luther in particular, had cautioned against traveling down this path because it could lead to the imbalance of a humanistic focus.
- The differences in the Reformation and the Renaissance lie in their view of man:
  - The Reformers preached of the original sin of man and looked upon the world as “fallen” from God’s intended place.
  - The Renaissance had a positive estimate of human nature and the universe itself; that they are basically good.
- The English Civil War, the persecution of the French Huguenots and the Thirty Years War in Germany caused people to cry out against the power of fanatical clerics.

- Religious prejudice seemed like a far greater danger than atheism.
- There was also a new faith in law and order – particularly in modern science.
- It is ironic, that most of those early scientists were men of faith who believed that the God of the Bible was the God of creation.

### **The Church’s Failure**

- The Church’s mishandling of Scripture and over reaction to what they perceived as danger and heresy caused the Church to abandon one of the more powerful evidences of the existence and nature of God – His glory declared by all of creation.
- In this era, Christianity was certainly on trial.
- The most powerful charges leveled against the Church were the thousands upon thousands of victims of Christianity’s intolerance.
- Christianity’s critics measured Christian behavior by standards that were actually the legacy of Christian teaching.
- These attacks upon Christian convictions demanded that the Church respond with:
  - a humble confession of wrong
  - genuine repentance
  - a vigorous and well-reasoned response from orthodox Christians – proclaiming the truth.
- The response was woefully inadequate.
- The first response was to appeal to secular authorities to censor the dangerous books, without regard to the primary issues the scoffers raised.
- One writer that did respond reasonably, with a great impact upon the debate, was Bishop Joseph Butler of England, who wrote his monumental work “The Analogy of Religion.”
- Butler was able to settle the fundamental issues with this book, though skirmishes continue to this day.
- Deism, the belief in a God who created the world but has since remained indifferent to it, ultimately collapsed from its own weaknesses; but the negative work of the Age of Reason endured.
- Men made a deliberate attempt to organize a religiously neutral civilization, where faith had to be confined to the home and the heart.

## **The Thirst of the Soul**

- Even in the Age of Reason, the thirst of the soul could not be ignored.
- An important new movement called Pietism arose as a reminder of that fact.
- Three men Philip Jacob Spener, August Hermann Francke and Count Nikolaus von Zinzendorf highlight the history of Pietism.
- Any religion that becomes the religion of the majority and slowly turns into a social habit tends to grow humdrum and flat, regardless of its original glow of enthusiasm.
- The Christian life, in German Lutheranism, was less a personal relation to Christ and more a matter of membership in the state church.
- Pietism arose as a response with a twofold aim:
  - First, was the importance of personal faith – a personal experience of God’s grace in the believer’s heart.
  - Second, was to shift the center of the Christian life from the state churches, to intimate fellowships of those with a living faith in God.
- Pietism made an enormous contribution to Christianity worldwide.
- Pietists were those who brought a disciplined and emotional devotion in their practice of Christianity:
  - They shifted the emphasis from avid controversy to the care of souls.
  - They established preaching and pastoral visitation as central concerns of the Protestant ministry.
  - They enriched Christian music, bringing an experiential and personal flavor to their hymns.
  - Their dominate theme of regeneration made Pietism the fountain of all modern revivals.
- As Evangelicals, we inherited two important traits from Pietism:
  - Emotion as the major response to the mysteries of faith, sometimes to the endangerment of reason and
  - The shift from the traditional state churches to intimate fellowship groups or voluntary associations of believers.
- The evangelical movement saw three geographic regions significantly changed:
  - Germany by the rise of Pietism,
  - The British Isles by the preaching of the Methodists, and
  - The American Colonies by the impact of the Great Awakening.

### **The Great Awakening**

- We could find most of the basic beliefs of the evangelicals in Puritanism.
- The Puritans were a group of Protestants that arose in the 16<sup>th</sup> century within the Church of England. They demanded the simplification of the doctrine and worship. They also called for greater strictness in religious discipline.
- During part of the 17th century, the Puritans became a powerful political party. They were more concerned with politics, trying to create the holy commonwealth, the true Bible society first in England and then in America.
- Their attempt to legislate Christianity is one of the reasons that Americans tended to hate, or at least have a low opinion of, the Puritans.
- The evangelicals were not detached from politics, as the Pietists were, but their controlling passion was the conversion of the lost.
- No event marked the new order for Christianity more clearly than the religious explosion, we call the Great Awakening, the first in the long history of American Revivals.

### **Whitefield and Wesley**

- George Whitefield and John Wesley were instrumental in spreading revival and turning many to Christ in America and England, as they preached in churches, jails, inns, on ships and in the open air.
- John had a gift for administration and established the Methodist structure of Societies divided into smaller groups of twelve members, called classes, to share testimonies, prayer and spiritual encouragement.
- It is interesting to note that God greatly blessed and used both these men though George Whitefield was a strong supporter of Calvinism and John Wesley was staunchly Arminian in his theology.
- What do you think that tells us? This would be a good question to discuss later.

### **Isaac Backus**

- As an advocate of religious freedom, Isaac Backus played a significant role in American history.
- He helped formulate and publicize the evangelical position of church and state that was ultimately to prevail throughout America.
- His fundamental assumption was that “God has appointed two different kinds of government in the world which are different in their nature and ought never to be confounded; one is civil the other ecclesiastical.”
- Backus said, “Religion is a voluntary obedience unto God which force cannot promote.”
- Thomas Jefferson agreed, “Coercion of opinion by the state in the interest of uniformity, has served only to make one half the world fools, and the other half hypocrites”

### **The Kingdom of God in America**

- The Kingdom of God would come to America if a majority of the citizens could be persuaded to submit voluntarily to the laws of God.
- Revivals were God’s means to that end.
- The American view of church and state is rooted in the conception of the Church as a spiritual body existing for spiritual purposes and moving along spiritual paths.
- It never occurred to the average American that there is any reason why state churches should exist.
- Compulsion of any kind is contrary to the nature of such a body. It desires no state help. It does not seek for exclusive privileges. Nothing in the new order of the ages was newer than that!

### **Review**

- The Church faced a new challenge because of the loss of “political power.” However, the power of the gospel to change lives came to the forefront in times of revival.
- The pursuit of our own hearts and ways never satisfy the soul. This is important for us to remember.
- Proclaim the gospel – speak the truth of God’s Word. Not just with our voice but especially with our lives and our character.

### **In the Next Session**

- Next time we will be discussing the chapters in The Age of Progress.

## **ASSIGNMENT: THE AGE OF REASON**

For the rest of this session you will spend time discussing what you have learned and what you have written in your summary of each of the four chapters in “The Age of Reason and Revival.” You will not only can share your insights, but you will also gain from the insights of your classmates.

There are a series of questions or assignments numbered and in bold letters.

See the class reading assignment schedule.

Continue reading your Church History book and writing your chapter summaries.

**1. There is a need for balance. Is Christianity rational and reasonable? Is there mystery and emotion in Christianity? Are they mutually exclusive?**

**2. Consider Mt 5:13-16. I believe that the Church is often rejected, not because of our failures, but because we refuse to humble ourselves, acknowledge our failures and repent. What keeps us from doing this? Consider Josh 7:19.**

**3. Review: “Mental Reservation and Probabilism” on page 336 in textbook.**

**4. Review and discuss “Protestant Scholasticism” on page 340 in textbook. What does this tell us about how we should approach Scripture?**

**5. Discuss the influence of Pietism on the Church today. Are their practices and ideas that we, perhaps take for granted in our churches?**

**6. What are the implications of the fact that God used both Whitefield and Wesley and blessed their ministries greatly – though they held firmly opposing doctrines? What does their example of friendship and ministry tell us?**

**7. “A spiritual body, existing for spiritual purposes and moving along spiritual paths.” Does this idea preclude or exclude practical involvement in the culture or society? Does this concept exclude churches from proclaiming God’s Word outside of churches?**

## **SESSION 10 – THE AGE OF PROGRESS 1789-1914 AD**

At the end of this lesson, you will:

- Know the impact of the French Revolution on the Church and the West.
- Be able to understand how the Protestant Church was able to experience a great era of worldwide expansion.
- Think about and discuss the problems caused by having a fortress mentality rather than an invasion mentality.
- See again the marriage between good works and the good news.
- Be encouraged to make the proper response to the dangers, challenges and opposition that confront the church in every generation and in every culture.

You will KNOW:

- Without the traditional support of the State, many Protestants turned to voluntary societies to minister to the poor and the oppressed, as well as to carry the gospel to foreign lands.

You will BE ABLE TO:

- Articulate how 10,000 people telling a lie does not turn the lie into truth.

You will THINK ABOUT:

- How 10,000 people telling a lie does not turn the lie into truth.

### **In the Last Session**

- You learned the fundamental differences between the Reformation and the Renaissance.
- You gained an understanding of the importance of a humble, reasoned and biblical response, to attacks against Christian teaching and practice.
- You also thought about the impact of the Great Awakening on the United States – the Church and the society.
- You also gained an appreciation of how the Lord was building His Church even in the midst of the Age of Reason.

**Begin video.**



### **The Challenges of the Age of Progress – 1789-1914 AD**

- The French Revolution unleashed new hopes for the common person, just as science raised new questions for traditional Christians.
- Power seemed to be within the reach of the masses.
- For Christianity, this meant that new social unrest was added to the challenge of intellectual doubts.
- How are Christians supposed to meet the needs of the urban masses?
- Was man simply a product of evolutionary forces?
- Christians were seriously divided over ways to face these problems.
- Without the traditional support of the State, many Protestants turned to voluntary societies to minister to the poor and the oppressed, as well as to carry the gospel to foreign lands.

### **The French Revolution**

- The supposedly firm ground of popular belief in the new era was the doctrine of human progress.
- The human race was getting better and growing happier – that was the new creed.
- The democratic gospel of the French Revolution rested upon the glorification of man rather than God.
- The Catholic Church recognized this and struck back at the heresy – as she had always done, trying to use her power. She saw more clearly than did most Protestant churches that the devil, when it is to his advantage, is democratic.
- Ten thousand people telling a lie do not turn the lie into truth.
- This is an important lesson from the Age of Progress for Christians of every generation.
- The Bible clearly teaches us, that the majority is often wrong.
- Inspired by the American Revolution, the sordid facts of what happened on July 14, 1789, were speedily transformed into the heroic deeds of the French Revolution.

### **Liberty, Equality and Fraternity**

- Liberty, equality and fraternity were not only the call of the French Revolution; it was the spirit of the age.
- Augustine had taught, more than 1000 years before, that liberty comes by grace and not grace by liberty.
- Christianity understands that to be properly free man must be in a state of salvation, so throughout these centuries Christians had little enthusiasm for the idea of man’s improper, unchecked freedom. Here is another example of our need to keep balanced.

- The idea that everyone ought to be as free as possible was summed up in the statement: “The liberty of each is limited by the liberty of all.”
- In practice, this meant a constitutional government that guaranteed civil liberties to all, including the freedom to worship according to personal choice.
- This meant resistance to a return to monarchies (including a “pope-king”).
- By 1848 the liberal revolution had triumphed, at least temporarily, in almost every capital in Europe.
- Ironically, the year 1870 not only marked the end of the Papal States after 1,000 years; it also signified the declaration of the supreme authority of the Bishop of Rome and the doctrine of papal infallibility.

### **The Fortress Mentality**

- One of the lessons the Church should learn from our history is the danger of a “fortress mentality.”
- Fortresses have a decided disadvantage.
- They grow stuff. They allow no enlargement of thinking and after a time you begin to imagine that the only world of any importance lies within the walls.
- Luther’s hymn is entitled: “A Mighty Fortress Is Our God,” not “A Mighty Fortress is the Church.” That is not a Biblical picture of the Church.

### **Into the World**

- The evangelical movement in England, sparked by Whitefield and the Wesleys, moved the Church to fulfill our two-fold commission.
- God has sent His people INTO the world to proclaim salvation and to serve the needy.
- God has called his own FROM the world to worship and learn of Him.
- Mission without worship can produce empty service, just as worship without mission can lead to careless religion.

### **Voluntary Religious Societies**

- Because of their freedom, Christians could form a variety of religious societies that were not churches in the traditional sense but involved Christians from various churches working together for some specific objective.
- Some Evangelicals were from “High Churches” with an emphasis on sacraments and the styles of rituals.
- Others were from “Low Churches” who considered the preaching of the gospel as most important.
- Each was loyal to their church but willing to work together for the fulfillment of the twofold commission.

- The Clapham Community, with William Wilberforce as their leader, is an example of one of these groups that tackled many issues by setting up organizations to work on a variety of causes. Among them were:
  - The Church Missionary Society.
  - The British and Foreign Bible Society.
  - The Society for Bettering the Condition of the Poor.
  - The Society for the Reformation of Prison Discipline.
  - Their most famous effort was the elimination of slavery and the slave trade in England and its territories.

### **The Era of Christian Expansion**

- At the beginning of the nineteenth century, Protestant Christianity scarcely existed outside of Europe and America, but the century proved to be a great era of Christian expansion.
- The Church Historian, Kenneth Scott Latourette said, “Never had any other set of ideas, religious or secular, been propagated over so wide an area by so many professional agents maintained by the unconstrained donations of so many millions of individuals.”
- William Carey was a most unlikely candidate to be considered “The Father of Modern Missions.”
- However, he was typical of those God chooses to accomplish His work, “so that no man may boast before God.” (1 Corinthians 1:29)
- He firmly believed that the foreign missionary can never make more than a small contribution to the accomplishment of the work to be done, and that therefore the development of the local ministry (the Church) is the first and greatest of all missionary considerations.
- Above all, he saw that Christianity must be firmly rooted in the culture and traditions of the land in which it is planted.
- Carey is included with a long list of missionary pioneers who gave their lives to cut the path for others to follow.
- This new passion to preach the gospel to the “heathen” sprang from those portions of Protestantism deeply influenced by the eighteenth-century evangelical revivals in England and America; which revolutionized preaching and its objectives.
- Christianity in this era, especially Protestant Christianity, had several characteristics that highlighted its expansion.
- First, the worldwide expansion usually came by choice not by compulsion. They advanced without state support or control and only by the power of persuasion.
- Second, the support for this movement came from the wealth and the talents of ordinary Protestants.

- Third, there was a wide variety of humanitarian ministries accompanying the widespread preaching of the gospel. Mission agencies established schools, hospitals and orphanages along with churches.

### **Counter Attack**

- It is not surprising to see a counter-attack from the enemy as the Church advanced.
- In America, the Civil War and the moral issue of slavery along with the political issue of states’ rights consumed lives, wealth and energy.
- Before the nation could get back on its feet, Charles Darwin’s *The Origin of the Species* challenged the Church and the accuracy of the Bible.
- On a broader scale, the Church in England and America had to face a direct assault on the Scriptures in the form of higher criticism of the Bible, much of it from Germany.
- Higher criticism of the Bible involves the use of scientific techniques of literary criticism to establish the sources of the books of the Bible. Mostly its purpose was to discredit any idea supernatural revelation.
- Friedrich Schleiermacher and Albert Ritschl were the two most influential representatives for Liberalism – we will see them too often in our study of the History of Christian Doctrine.
- Then there was a cultural shift of increasing industrialization and a rush to the cities.
- Small towns became big cities almost overnight and the rural communities lost many of their young people and their workforce.

### **The Industrial Revolution**

- With the Industrial Revolution, there was a rising tide of problems related to the crowding of cities, the influx of immigrants and the abuse of workers.
- Into this sea of misery two individuals waded – Karl Marx and William Booth. Marx offered a political solution (Communism) and Booth offered a spiritual solution (The Salvation Army) with a very practical application of compassion and help.
- It is always possible to concentrate on the next life so much that Christians appear insensitive to the pain of the present.
- The various Christian movements for social concerns always faced the danger of losing the Church’s true mission.

- However, Christians cannot show their concern for people’s eternal destiny unless they also demonstrate their concern for people’s earthly needs.
- I am sure you have heard the saying: “People do not care how much you know, until they know how much you care.”
- May we be faithful to present the love of God in our words and in our deeds.

### **Review**

- The Church faced another set of new challenges in the Age of Progress:
  - The imbalance of the spirit of the French Revolution.
  - The temptation to retreat to our fortresses and bar the gates.
  - The challenge to fulfill the Great Commission and take the Gospel message and the demonstration of God’s love to the whole world.

### **In the Next Session**

- We will discuss the seven chapters in The Age of Ideologies and the Age of Global Expansion and Relocation.

## **ASSIGNMENT: THE AGE OF PROGRESS**

For the rest of this session you will spend time discussing what you have learned and what you have written in your summary of each of the six chapters in “The Age of Progress.” You will not only have the opportunity to share your insights, but you will also gain from the insights of your classmates.

There are a series of questions or assignments numbered and in bold letters.

**1. Read and discuss “Liberty in an Ancient Sense” on pages 374-375. How is this ancient sense of liberty in conflict with Christianity and how is it in harmony with Biblical teaching?**

**2. Is there a sense in which the Church, we the followers of Christ, must reconcile ourselves to reality and reach agreement with modern civilization? What are the dangers we face in becoming more “tolerant” (forbearing) and what dangers do we face by not being more “tolerant”? Consider: Martin Luther wrote: “A Mighty Fortress is our God” not, “A Mighty Fortress is the church.” Also 2 Timothy 2:22-26.**

**3. Take note of the definitions of “High Church” and “Low Church” above. Though they are connected with the Anglican Church originally, they are often used, in a general sense, to describe other denominations or churches. How would you describe your church? High or Low? Do you have certain ceremonies, traditions or rituals that must be done in your services?**

**4. Discuss the maintaining of balance in our mission with our worship, our devotion with our service. How easy is it to focus on one and neglect the other? How do we confuse the two? Should we consider them two separate issues?**

**5. Why should we agree with William Carey’s philosophy, that the development of the local ministry (church) is the first and greatest of all missionary considerations? What other things do we sometimes make the priority? How do we reconcile this idea (of the local church as the priority) with the need to learn the language and culture, the need to translate the Bible and the need to provide for other needs?**

**6. Discuss the objections raised against missions to heathen lands, as well as William Carey’s response. How does this challenge relate to us? How does it relate to “home” missions, as well as “foreign” missions?**

**7. Question: How much of our Christianity is cultural?**

Evangelical Liberalism and Modernistic Liberalism are like two ends of a suspension bridge; with the footing of one tower planted upon “modern thought” and the foundation of the other rests on “Christian experience.” The ground around both towers is shifting soil.

**8. Which is the safer side? It may seem like a dumb question, but it needs to be asked and it needs to be answered.**

**9. Everything not obviously spiritual was left free from criticism, which means anything obviously spiritual was open to criticism. Why would that be the case? Because it wasn’t practical? It was not objective truth? It could not be “proven”? Are religious ideas the only ideas that should be open to criticism, questioned? Is this still true in our culture today?**

**10. Are we in danger of being “so wed to the past” that we are unable to minister in the midst of a social crisis? Do we have answers that are relevant, biblical and compassionate? What issues should we as the Church be addressing?**

## **SESSION 11 – AGE OF IDEOLOGIES & GLOBAL EXPANSION 1900S ON**

After this session, you will:

- Know the distinctions and connections between Fundamentalists, Conventional Protestants, and Pentecostals-Charismatics.
- Be able to understand the challenges the church has faced over the past century and continues to face today.
- Think about and discuss the Lord’s sovereign work in bringing many to faith in Christ
- Be encouraged by the growth of Christianity in the Global South and East.

You will KNOW:

- That the 20th century brought with it great political and military struggles.

You will BE ABLE TO:

- Understand the challenges the Church has face.

You will THINK ABOUT:

- By the 20th century, more than 200 denominations crowded the landscape in the United States alone

### **In the Last Session**

- You learned the impact of the French Revolution on the Church and the West.
- You gained an understanding of how the Protestant Church was able to experience a great era of worldwide expansion.
- You also were able to think about and discuss the problems caused by having a fortress mentality rather than an invasion mentality.

**Begin video.**

### **The Age of Ideologies & Global Expansion**

- The 20th century brought great political and military struggles involving:
  - Imperialism
  - Communism
  - Nazism
  - Democracy
- The Church faced dangers from:
  - Persecution
  - Compromise
  - Secularization
- Protestants cautiously reached out to each other in movements of unity.
- Roman Catholics struggled to update their Church.



- In addition, the “new” Christianity in the Third World and Global South emerged and expanded at an astounding rate.
- The Global South describes the countries in the Southern Hemisphere. Everything from the equator south.
- More people have become Christians in the last one hundred years than at any other time.
- The great missionary push of the late 1800’s and early 1900’s has contributed to this explosive growth largely south of the Equator.
- Yet the new growth seems to have its own distinctive character and Spirit-given initiative.

### **“Post-Christian North America”**

- Ironically, one-time strongholds of Christian mission in Europe and North America are seeing dormancy and decline.
- History will record if the new centers of Christianity in the Global South and beyond can maintain a faithful Christian character and give witness to this unprecedented work of the Spirit.
- Time will tell if signs of Spiritual stirring will revive a faithful witness in the West.
- Without the Spirit’s stirring the label “post-Christian” will become more fitting with time.

### **The 20th Century**

- The 20th Century began with revival from Wales to South Africa, to China, to Korea and to North America.
- The First World War arrived and dampened the fire somewhat.
- According to President Woodrow Wilson, this was to be the war to end all wars and make the world safe for democracy.
- However, by the wars end, the Russian war effort had collapsed, along with its government and the Paris Peace Conference became an exercise in vindictiveness, effectively crippling Germany and setting the stage for the rise of Nazism.
- In Germany, the post-war Protestant clergy were monarchists, with no sympathy for socialism or democracy.
- However, the people were through with the monarchy and ready for someone to make Germany great again.
- The industrial workers came to hate a socially and politically reactionary church.

### **The Nazis Rise to Power**

- As the Nazi’s rose to power, there was no organized campaign of resistance, by any of the major Church movements in Germany. Hitler courted Christian support by emphasizing national pride and pretending to favor the Churches’ role in the state.
- He blamed the Jews for destroying culture through capitalism, Marxism and even the Christian faith:
  - “The heaviest blow that ever-struck humanity was the coming of Christianity. Bolshevism is Christianity’s illegitimate child. Both are inventions of the Jew.”
  - It became clear that the dedicated Christian’s place in the Nazi world was no more secure than that of the Jew.

### **The Communist Revolution**

- Meanwhile, the Communist Revolution in Russia was the other side of the totalitarian coin, Nazism being the right-wing version.
- Communism being the left-wing version.
- Marxism viewed institutional religion (the Church) as a reactionary social force.
- That only impedes progress toward the classless society.
- It is something that must be smashed.
- The Russian Orthodox Church replied with defiance, declaring war on the state.
- In the first six years of the revolution, the State killed twenty-eight bishops and over one thousand priests.

### **The Second World War**

- During the Second World War, Stalin realized the value of the Church’s contribution to public morale and granted them a measure of freedom to minister, primarily to women and children.
- Resistance to Hitler, by the German churches, was amazingly meager.
- They were almost exclusively concerned with individualistic personal faith.
- Traditional submission to the state.
- A conservative outlook that rejected all left-wing proposals for social and political reform.
- This enabled them to accept the Nazis’ claim to be the only alternative to Communism.

- Overall, World War II had a devastating impact on Christianity, both physically and morally.
- Thousands of churches were destroyed.
- Thousands of clergymen killed.
- Thousands of faithful believers persecuted or uprooted from their homes.

### **The Evangelical Dilemma**

- The evangelical dilemma, in the age of ideologies, revolved around the fact that they offered millions of people a consoling, personal faith in the face of apocalyptic fears.
- But could they also lead America in another great awakening of social ideals?
- Evangelicals represented no single approach to America’s problems.
- The movement included:
  - Fundamentalists
  - Pentecostals
  - Charismatics
  - Conventional Conservative Protestants
- Many conservative Christians expressed dissatisfaction with the drift of fundamentalism between the two world wars.
- Most had no criticism of the doctrines of the movement, but they felt it had stumbled into the mire of anger, arrogance, negativity, legalism and especially a failure to apply basic Christian truths to crucial problems confronting modern man.
- In the 16th century, only four major divisions separated the churches of the Reformation:
  - Lutheran
  - Reformed
  - Anabaptist
  - Anglican
- By the 20th century, more than 200 denominations crowded the landscape in the United States alone.
- The Church had moved further and further away from centralization.

### **The Ecumenical Movement**

- However, there was a movement in the 20th century toward a cooperative merger in unity and action.
- The biggest barrier to this Ecumenical movement was the issue of truth and doctrine.

### **The Catholic Renewal**

- The Catholic Church also went through quite a change in the 20th Century with Vatican Council II.
- It was the first council not called to combat heresy, pronounce new dogmas or marshal the Church against hostile forces.
- Its purpose would be to “bring the Church up-to-date.” It was to be a pastoral council, not a doctrinal one.
- They introduced new liturgy, using the language of the people. They discussed but did not fully answer the question:
- Were some truths of the faith found only in tradition or were all truths of the faith found in Scripture?
- The final session renewed the debate on freedom of religion. By accepting the decree, Roman Catholicism solemnly renounced in principle any use of external force against the voice of conscience; marking a radical break with a fifteen-hundred-year-old practice.
- Amid this upheaval, the Catholic Church experienced a major exodus of priests, brothers and nuns.
- From 1962-1974 there was a 31% decrease in the number of those preparing for the priesthood along with nearly 8,000 American priests leaving public ministry.

### **The Church Today**

- Today after two thousand years, Christianity is the faith, at least nominally, of one-third of the world’s population.
- From a handful of early disciples, the faith has spread over the globe to claim the loyalty of nearly a thousand million inhabitants of our planet.
- In 1900, only 10% of the world’s Christians lived in the continents of the south and east, but a century later at least 70% of the world’s Christians lived there.
- More Christians worshiped in Anglican churches in Nigeria each week than in all the Episcopal and Anglican churches of Britain, Europe and North America combined.
- There were ten times more Assembly of God members in Latin America than in the United States.
- There were more Baptists in Congo than in Great Britain.
- More people in church every Sunday in communist China than in all Western Europe or North America.
- Surely, one of the more remarkable aspects of Christianity today is how few of these professed believers have ever seriously studied the history of their religion.

- The movement toward separation of church and state has all but removed religion from public education.
- However, even Christian education in many denominations has done little to give members any sort of adult understanding of the faith.
- Should we really be surprised, when today’s Christian so frequently blends gross errors with orthodox confession or defends some pagan practice as Christian conduct?
- In the past, torrid persecutions served to purge the household of faith.
- Heresy’s spread clarified the Church’s basic beliefs.
- In addition, the sudden appearance of barbarian hordes opened doors for further expansion.
- This ability to face new challenges and to tap the sources of renewal is one of the secrets of Christianity’s growth.

### **Summary**

- The way forward usually meant a studied look backward.
- Baptized masses meant baptized pagans.
- Power corrupts; the Church gained the world but lost its soul.
- Jesus said it very clearly: It is not to be this way among you!
- We need to give a reasoned, biblical and humble response!
- In the midst of it all, we need to keep balanced!

### **Review**

- The Lord is building His Church and the gates of hell will not stop Him.
- The Church has been through it all in the past sometimes responding well and sometimes not. We need to learn from the mistakes and wise choices of others.
- May we not find ourselves living in a “post-Christian” society.

### **In the Next Session**

- Next time we will begin our study of The History of Christian Doctrines. We will begin with The Preface, The Prolegomena (proh-li-gom-uh-nuh) a prologue in text book or preliminary statements) and the Preparatory Doctrinal Development.

## **ASSIGNMENT: AGE OF IDEOLOGIES & GLOBAL EXPANSION**

For the rest of this session you will spend time discussing what you have learned and what you have written in your summary of each chapter in the Age of Global Expansion and Relocation. You will not only have the opportunity to share your insights, but you will also gain from the insights of your classmates.

There are a series of questions or assignments numbered and in bold letters.

- 1. What is the difference between being “reactionary” and being “responsive”?**
- 2. Do you think that the belief in Christ’s imminent return and that society would inevitably get worse before it occurred, is a source of our failure to have a positive influence on our culture? If so, why would that idea be adopted? Is it a proper response, or is it a reaction?**
- 3. There are doctrines that we must defend and doctrines for which we must be willing to die. In any expression of unity, those doctrines that require our defense or death, must be part of that unity. What are those doctrines?**
- 4. The conservative view of the future often sees it as a threat to the past and the progressive view sees the future as the promise of the future. When we are dealing with the truth of God’s Word and the mission of the Church, which view should be ours?**
- 5. Which is more disturbing: our culture’s hostility to the Christian faith, its indifference to Christianity or the indifference to Christianity (& the Church) by those who claim Christ? How many people do you know, who claim Christ but not His Church?**
- 6. What are some of the things from our “Christian” culture that we might need to strip away before we pass it on to others? Style of music, clothing, schedule for church, etc.?**

The Church has used three major approaches to understand what Jesus did for the human family to accomplish salvation:

- Evangelicals typically see Christ as our representative or substitute who died on the cross to accomplish salvation.
- Liberal Christians see the cross as a dramatic demonstration of God’s love, that when understood, overwhelms our reluctance to believe God loves us and awakens a response of love to God.
- The Eastern Church sees the atoning work of Jesus as addressing the bondage we experience as we face the oppressive evil of Satan and his demons, which we cannot defeat in our own strength.

**7. Which of these three approaches are true? Which of these three approaches should affect how we seek to reach people?**

**8. Have you had any experience with the Church, or Christians, in (from) other countries? What did you see as their strengths and their needs?**

## SESSION 12 – PREPARATORY DOCTRINAL DEVELOPMENTS

### **Disclaimer:**

*We will be discussing doctrinal controversies as they occurred historically. Many differing doctrinal positions and opposing ideas will be presented. Often Christians were put into opposition toward one another by these differences, sometimes, bitterly so. As we present these historical, doctrinal positions, please bear in mind that Christian doctrine was developing and solidifying into dogma. Also bear in mind, that the positions and doctrinal views shared are historical, and not necessarily those of either the presenter or of Village Missions. Some of the doctrinal positions were manifestly in error, while others are still a matter of divergence within the bounds of orthodoxy.*

At the end of this lesson, you should:

- Know the methodology used in this course to study the history of Christian Doctrine.
- Be able to understand the difference between doctrine and dogma.
- Think about the monumental task of taking the doctrine of the Bible and translating it into the dogma or doctrinal statements we have today.

You will KNOW:

- We need to hold to the truth of God’s Word, live it and proclaim it with accuracy, confidence, perseverance, gentleness, love and humility.

You will BE ABLE TO:

- Understand the difference between doctrine and dogma. Doctrines are the teachings of Scripture. Dogma is the organization of those teachings into a statement of belief.

You will THINK ABOUT:

- Ancient heresies, long since condemned by the Church, are being constantly repeated and represented as new discoveries.

### **In the Last Session**

- You learned the distinctions and connections between Fundamentalists, Conventional Protestants, and Pentecostals-Charismatics.
- You are now able to understand the challenges the Church has faced over the past century and continues to face today.
- You thought about and discussed the Lord’s sovereign work in bringing many to faith in Christ.

**Begin video.**



### **Preparatory Doctrinal Development**

- Please note, in our textbook we are using the vertical method of study, which picks up each doctrine as it becomes the center of attention in a particular period and traces its development until it reaches its final form.
- The study of doctrinal truth, apart from its historical background, leads to a truncated theology (a theology cut off on one end).
- There has been too much of this in the past and there is a great deal of it even in the present day.
- The result has been the lack of a sound understanding and a proper evaluation of the truth.
- There was little or no appreciation of the fact that the Holy Spirit guided the Church in the interpretation and development of the truth as revealed in the Word of God.
- The checks and the road signs of the past were often ignored.
- Ancient heresies, long since condemned by the Church, are being constantly repeated and represented as new discoveries.

### **Doctrines and Dogmas**

- We find religious doctrines in Scripture, though not in their finished form.
- Then we take the doctrines and form them into Dogmas.
- They are the fruit of human study and reflection, often occasioned or intensified by theological controversies.
- Paul tells us that these kinds of conflicts are necessary and beneficial to the Church.
- 1 Corinthians 11:19 – “For there must also be factions among you, so that those who are approved may become evident among you.”
- Our textbook uses the word dogma to describe officially formulated religious tenets.
- Our culture usually sees those who are dogmatic as people who assert opinions or doctrines in an arrogant manner.
- Words do matter, especially concerning the truth. We need to hold to the truth of God’s Word, live it and proclaim it with accuracy, confidence, perseverance, gentleness, love and humility.

### **Doctrinal Development**

- The Catholic development of dogma involved the clergy (with the infallible pope), as they carefully examined the doctrines taught in Scripture or by tradition.
- The Reformers development of dogma involved the Church, represented by the clergy, deriving its material content from Scripture and from Scripture only.

- A modern idea, a wrong one I might add, of the way dogma should develop is to derive our dogma from Christian experience. Therefore, our dogma would be formed by our individual or collective experiences, sentiments and beliefs.
- Catholic theology sees the Christian religion as unchangeable in all its revealed doctrines, in all its precepts and institutions, which are intended for all men.
- The Church cannot make new dogmas but only hand down the sacred deposit that was entrusted to her.
- Protestant theology has always maintained that the dogma of the Church has a high degree of stability but is subject to change and has been enriched, re-stated and transformed - being built upon the unchanging Bible.
- Dogma is changeable and has changed.

### **Its Starting Point**

- It would be a mistake to assume that the history of dogma can begin with the Council of Nicaea and end with the adoption of the last of the historical Confessions.
- It must take its starting point at the close of the period of special revelation, in the study of the Apostolic Fathers.
- The doctrinal controversies of the Church were the birth pangs of new dogmas.
- Though not edifying, it is essential that we gain a proper understanding of the beginnings of ecclesiastical dogmas.

### **The Apostolic Fathers**

- The Apostolic Fathers were those who lived before the last of the apostles died, some having been disciples of the Apostles.
- The main benefits of their writings are found in their witness to the canonicity and integrity of the New Testament Books and
- They form a doctrinal link between the New Testament and the more speculative writings of the Apologists – in the 2nd century.

### **The 2nd Century**

- In the 2nd century, the Church, as usual, had to guard against dangers from within and without.
- It had to justify its existence and had to maintain the purity of doctrine in the face of subtle and obvious error.
- The Roman government launched a series of persecutions, which threatened the very existence of the Christian Church.
- At the same time, the Church suffered a great deal from the written attacks of some of the keenest minds of the age

- Their arguments are typical of the opposition to Christianity throughout the centuries.
- The greatest dangers came from within through a variety of Jewish and Gentile perversions of the Gospel.
- The 2nd century also brought several reform movements, which gave rise to the Apologists, who helped the Church in three ways.
  - Defensively they showed that there was no evidence for the charges brought against Christianity’s adherents.
  - Offensively they showed the blindness in legalism and the absurd, immoral character of paganism.
  - Constructively they sought to establish Christianity as a positive revelation of God, relying primarily on the fulfillment of prophecy, miracles and the changed character of the followers of Christ.
  - Gnosticism was the thought and practice of various cults of late pre-Christian and early Christian centuries.
  - Gnosticism is distinguished by the conviction that matter is evil and that emancipation comes through gnosis – or a special, secret knowing.

### **The Anti-Gnostic Fathers**

- The Anti-Gnostic Fathers included three men of note, from the late 2nd and early 3rd century:
  - Irenaeus
  - Hippolytus
  - Tertullian
- They saw the separation of the true God and the Creator as the fundamental error of the Gnostics.
- Tertullian was the first to assert the tri-personality of God and to use the word “trinity.”
- He stressed the fact that the three persons in the Godhead are of one substance.
- Did not succeed in reaching the full Trinitarian statement.
- He also planted the seeds for the doctrine of original sin.
  - Irenaeus was averse to speculations about the Logos.
- He gives the fullest description of the work of redemption but it is not completely consistent.
- John uses the Greek word “logos” in his Gospel intentionally, as an intentional counter to the Gnostics.
- John uses “logos” to designate Jesus as the Word of God, the full revelation of God and the second person of the Trinity.
- The Greeks used it to identify the controlling principle in the universe.

- Generally, the anti-Gnostic fathers were not clear in their doctrine of salvation and tended toward moralism, where the sinner earns his salvation through penance.
- They also represented the idea of the Church as a visible organization and the channel of divine grace, with participation in the blessing of salvation dependent on membership in the visible Church.
- Their teaching re: the future generally followed current evangelical teaching. Believing that Jesus was coming again.

### **Alexandrian Theology**

- In the 2nd & 3rd centuries Hellenistic, or Greek philosophy, and the truths of the Gospel combined into Alexandrian theology.
- Clement of Alexandria and Origen represent the theology of the East, which was more speculative than that of the West.
- Clement was not completely orthodox, but followed the path of the Apologists in seeking to wed the philosophy of the day to the Christian tradition and thus build bridges between Gentile learning and the Gospel.
- Orthodox, or orthodoxy, refers to that teaching which is accepted as true or correct. The traditional beliefs and customs of a religion.
- Origen was born of Christian parents and received a Christian education, with Clement as his teacher.
- He battled Gnosticism and struck a decisive blow to Monarchianism.
- He sought to construct a systematic theology of Christian doctrine.
- He also claimed to take his stand squarely on the Word of God and the Rule of Faith, but his allegorical approach to the Scriptures, which he learned from Clement, opened the way for all kinds of speculation and arbitrary interpretation.
- His teachings, later in life, were condemned as heresy.

### **Monarchianism**

- The great heresy of the 3rd century was Monarchianism.
- Emphasizing the unity of God by maintaining that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are three manifestations or aspects of God.
- It took two forms.
- Dynamic Monarchianism was mainly interested in maintaining the unity of God teaching that Jesus was consubstantial (of one substance, essence or nature) with the Father but was not a distinct person in the Godhead.
- The Logos was merely an impersonal power that was especially active in Jesus.

- Modalistic Monarchianism was more influential. It too was interested in maintaining the unity of God.
- Primarily intent on maintaining the full deity of Christ.
- It was called “Modalistic” because it conceived of the three Persons in the Godhead as so many modes (forms or ways) in which God manifested Himself.
- The conflict was, in a large part, due to the teaching that the Father Himself had become incarnate in Christ and therefore suffered in and with Him.
- The names: Father, Son and Holy Spirit were simply designations of three different phases under which the One Divine Essence manifests itself.
- It taught that God reveals Himself as the Father in creation and in the giving of the law, as the Son in the incarnation and as the Holy Spirit in regeneration and sanctification.

### **To Consider**

- The doctrinal controversies of the Church were the birth pangs of new dogmas. Though not edifying, it is essential that we gain a proper understanding of the beginnings of ecclesiastical dogmas.
- We find religious doctrines in Scripture, though not in their finished form.
- Then we take the doctrines and form them into Dogmas.
- They are the fruit of human study and reflection, often occasioned or intensified by theological controversies.

### **Review**

- You learned that we are using the Vertical method in this course to study the history of Christian Doctrine. We are studying each doctrine individually through the various ages.
- You were able to explain the difference between doctrine (the teachings in the Scriptures) and dogma (the organization of those teachings into statements).
- You also thought about the important and monumental task of taking the doctrines of the Bible and translating them into the dogmas or the doctrinal statements we have today.

### **In the Next Session**

- Understand that the doctrines of the Trinity and of Christ are great mysteries with glimpses of light that require our humility and submission.

## **ASSIGNMENT: PREPARATORY DOCTRINAL DEVELOPMENTS**

For the rest of this session you will spend time discussing what you have learned and what you have written in your summary of the Preface, Introduction and Preparatory Doctrinal Development sections of your textbook. You will not only have the opportunity to share your insights but you will also gain from the insights of your classmates.

There are a series of questions or assignments numbered and in bold letters.

**1. Consider the balance we see in 2 Tim 2:14-17, 23-26 (using various forms of the word “macho” for “wrangle” or “quarrels” or “quarrelsome”) and Jude vs 3 (using a form of the word “agonize” for “to contend.” The need to “agonize” and “contend” is because words do matter. However, we do not need to get all “macho” and wrangle or quarrel. How do we keep contending separate from quarreling?**

**2. Consider 1 Corinthians 11:19 - For there must also be factions among you, so that those who are approved may become evident among you. What does it mean, “so that those who are approved may become evident among you?” What is the benefit gained from dealing with factions or divisions?**

**3. What is the problem of taking the stand that our Dogma, or Doctrinal Statements, cannot and should not ever change? Are we declaring that we absolutely know all there is to know about a certain doctrine and that we have expressed it in the clearest and most understandable way? Is there a legitimate reason for us to make it difficult to change the doctrinal statements in our Church constitutions?**

**4. This (the vertical method) is the method used in this book – See Chart 2 in Charts book. Discuss your understanding of this method.**

**5. What is Paul’s warning to the Ephesian elders in Acts 20:28-30?**

**6. Remember that all of this is preparatory doctrinal development and that the New Testament Canon of Scripture had not yet been established. Just because some of the “Church Fathers,” in whatever era, taught certain doctrines, that does not necessarily validate the teaching. Discuss this after reading 1 Corinthians 4:6; 2 Corinthians 10:3-5 and Col 2:8.**

## **SESSION 13 – DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY AND DIETY OF CHRIST**

After this session, you will:

- Know that words matter, especially when it comes to stating our beliefs.
- Be able to explain the importance of the doctrines of the Trinity and of Christ.
- Think about the struggle, and those who have fought the good fight for the doctrines of the Trinity and of Christ.
- Understand that the doctrines of the Trinity and of Christ are great mysteries with glimpses of light that require our humility and submission.
- Be in awe of our great and glorious and mysterious God.

You will KNOW:

- That words matter.

You will BE ABLE TO:

- See that the Doctrine of Christ and the Christological Controversies are essential to our understanding of the Trinity.

You will THINK ABOUT:

- The early Church Fathers did not have, or at least did not present, a clear conception of the Trinity.

### **In the Last Session**

- You learned that we are using the Vertical method in this course to study the history of Christian Doctrine. We are studying each doctrine individually through the various ages.
- You explained the difference between doctrine (the teachings in the Scriptures) and dogma (the organization of those teachings into statements).
- You also thought about the important and monumental task of taking the doctrines of the Bible and translating them into the dogmas or the doctrinal statements we have today.

### **Begin video.**

### **The Doctrines of the Trinity and of Christ**

- The author of our textbook, Louis Berkhof, makes a statement regarding the early Christological controversies connected to our study of the Trinity.
  - “The early Christological controversies do not present a very edifying spectacle.
  - The passions were too much in evidence.
  - Unworthy intrigues often played an important part and
  - Even violence occasionally made its appearance.”

- Sadly, this is often a too common experience for the Church throughout our history.
- I hope that we can learn to “contend earnestly for the faith, which was once for all handed down to the saints,” (Jude vs 3) without being contentious.

### **The Doctrine of the Trinity**

- After the Council of Nicea in 325, the Council of Sirmium in 357 tried to unite all the factions by setting aside the use of some terms because:
  - “They pertained to matters far beyond human knowledge.”
  - However, no one would admit that this was beyond their knowledge and things had gone too far for any such settlement.
    - Even John Calvin, who defended the doctrine of the Trinity as formulated by the early Church, labels some of the concepts being fought over as “difficult, if not meaningless.”
    - We must realize the limitations of our understanding and our dependence on God’s revelation.
- Dt 29:29 – “The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our sons forever, that we may observe all the words of this law.”
  - There are things we cannot know and things we do not need to know. Get used to it.

### **The Early Church Fathers**

- The early Church Fathers did not have, or at least did not present, a clear conception of the Trinity.
- This should not surprise us since they did not have easy access to much of the New Testament.
- I would imagine that most Christians, even today, do not have a clear conception of the Trinity.
- We saw in our last lesson, that Tertullian was the first to assert clearly the tri-personality of God and to maintain the substantial unity of the three Persons.

### **Defending The “Oneness” of God**

- In the Church, there were those seeking to defend and promote the Oneness or unity of God.
- Others were fighting for the deity of Christ, while still others sought to protect His humanity.
- The Holy Spirit’s status occupied no important place in these discussions at the beginning.
- Almost all of this was completely:
  - Out of balance and reactionary, not to mention, arrogant!



- Arius, who was an Elder in Alexandria, saw the Logos/Son as an impersonal, divine energy that finally became incarnate and was eventually adopted as Son and so entitled to the veneration of men. This was based on what? I do not know.
- His own bishop along with the archdeacon of Alexandria, Athanasius, opposed him.
- Athanasius felt that to regard Christ, as a creature was to deny that faith in Him brings man into saving union with God.
- He strongly emphasized the unity of God and insisted on a view of the Trinity that would not endanger that unity.
- It was his understanding of the doctrine of salvation that led Athanasius to the position that union with God is necessary for salvation and that no creature, but only one who is Himself God can unite us with God.

### **The Council of Nicaea**

- The Council of Nicaea convened in 325 to settle these disputes.
- After much debate and no consensus, the emperor stepped in and secured the victory for Athanasius. The Council adopted this statement: (in part)
- “We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of things visible and invisible. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, begotten not made, being of one substance with the Father...”
- The key words are “being of one substance with the Father.”
- This decision of the Council, or rather the emperor, did not terminate the controversy; it was actually just the beginning.
- A settlement forced upon the Church by the emperor could not satisfy – and was of uncertain duration.
- The dispute eventually included the doctrine of the Holy Spirit.
- The Nicene Creed was not helpful in this case, since it only contained the indefinite statement: “And I believe in the Holy Spirit.”

### **The Council of Constantinople**

- The Council of Constantinople, in 381, declared its approval of the Nicene Creed and accepted an addition to the formula regarding the Holy Spirit:
- “And we believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, The Life-giving, who proceeds from the Father, Who is to be glorified with the Father and the Son, and Who speaks through the prophets?”
- This statement ultimately proved unsatisfactory.
- First – the word for “being of one substance” was not used, so that the consubstantiality of the Spirit with the Father (being of the same essence) was not directly asserted.

- Second – they did not define the relationship of the Holy Spirit to the other two Persons.
- It was neither denied nor affirmed that He also proceeds from the Son.
- To say that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father only, seemed like a denial of the essential oneness of the Son with the Father;
- To say that He also proceeds from the Son, seemed to place the Holy Spirit in a more dependent position than the Son – infringing on His deity.

### **The Synod of Toledo**

- It was not until the Synod of Toledo in 589 that the words “and from the Son” were added to the Constantinople Symbol which was a doctrinal statement.
- The Eastern Church never adopted this addition and it was a major factor in the split between the east and the west.
- Later theology did not add significantly to the doctrine of the Trinity. However, there were deviations from, and consequent restatements of, this truth.

### **The Reformed Confessions**

- The doctrine of the Trinity, as formulated by the Church, was expressed in all the Reformed Confessions; perhaps most completely and with the greatest precision in chapter three of the Second Helvetic Confessions. This was also a doctrinal statement developed by a counsel of Church leaders.

### **The Doctrine of Christ**

- The Doctrine of Christ and the Christological Controversies are essential to our understanding of the Trinity.
- The Holy Spirit was guiding the Church, often through shame and confusion, into the clear atmosphere of the truth.
- Some claim the Church attempted too much when it tried to define a mystery, which from the nature of the case transcends all definition.
- We should note that the early church did not claim to be able to penetrate to the depths of this great doctrine and did not pretend to give a solution of the problem of the incarnation (in the formula of Chalcedon).
- It merely sought to guard the truth against the errors of theorizers and ward off various unscriptural constructions of the truth.
- The Church was in search of a conception of Christ that would do justice to the following points: (Otherwise its conception of Christ would be defective.)
- First, His true and proper deity,
- Then, His true and proper humanity,
- Also, the union of deity and humanity in one person and
- Finally, the proper distinction of His deity and humanity.

- All the Christological heresies that arose in the early church (and that cycle back through various cults today) originated in the failure to combine all these elements in the doctrinal statement of the truth.

### **In the Middle Ages**

- In the Middle Ages, the construction of the doctrine of Christ by Thomas Aquinas shows us how the matter stood at the time of the Reformation.
- He adhered to the official theology of the Catholic Church.
- The Person of the Logos became composite after the incarnation and
- The human manhood was hindered from arriving at an independent personality.
- The human knowledge of Christ was such that He could know all things that can be so known by men and all that is made known to them by revelation, a knowledge perfect in its kind but yet subject to creaturely limitations.
- We can find the most complete official statement on the Reformed position regarding the doctrine of Christ in the Second Helvetic Confession of 1566.
- The word confession is used to indicate their doctrinal statement or their statement of faith.

### **A Striking Change**

- From the nineteenth century on, a striking change took place in the study of the Person of Christ.
- There was a growing conviction that there was a better method for studying the Person of Christ: The study of the historical Jesus.
- The point of view was anthropological (the study of man) and the result was anthropocentric (man-centered).
- This new method was employed in such a manner as to yield destructive, rather than constructive results.
- Its application went hand in hand with a strong aversion to authority and the supernatural, as well as with an insistent appeal to reason and experience.
- It was not what the Bible teaches us concerning Christ, but our own discoveries in investigating the phenomena of His life and our experience of Him, that became the determining factor in forming a “proper” conception of Jesus. (You may roll your eyes here.)

### **To Consider**

- The doctrinal controversies of the Church were the birth pangs of new dogmas. Though not edifying, it is essential that we gain a proper understanding of the beginnings of ecclesiastical dogmas.
- We find religious doctrines in Scripture, though not in their finished form.
- Then we take the doctrines and form them into Dogmas.
- They are the fruit of human study and reflection, often occasioned or intensified by theological controversies.

### **Review**

- You learned that words matter, especially when it comes to stating our beliefs.
- You gained an understanding of the importance of the doctrines of the Trinity and of Christ.
- You gained an appreciation of the struggle, and those who have fought the good fight for the doctrines of the Trinity and of Christ.

### **In the Next Session**

- We will be discussing, in the History of Christian Doctrine, the section on the Doctrine of Sin, Grace and Related Doctrines.

## **ASSIGNMENT: DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY AND DIETY OF CHRIST**

For the rest of this session you will spend time discussing what you have learned and what you have written in your summaries of the sections of your textbook.

There are a series of questions or assignments numbered and in bold letters for discussion.

**1. Discuss the proper view point to this statement: “he did not succeed in giving a scriptural representation of the relation of the three Persons to the one essence in the Godhead.”**

**2. Discuss Athanasius’ “understanding of the doctrine of salvation” (page 86), with 1 Timothy 2:5 – “For there is one God and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus” and Gal 3:20 – Now a mediator is not for one party only; whereas God is only one.”**

**3. Discuss why “because I said so” is rarely an adequate answer. Refer to 1 Peter 3:15, “We must be ready to make a defense...for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence.”**

**4. “Not this way among you” – Passions, unworthy intrigues and violence occasionally made their appearance. Have you seen these hanging around your church? Are they usually connected with doctrinal issues or with something else? Remember 2 Timothy 2:23-26.**

**5. It was a goal of the quest for the historical Jesus that the dominant point of view would become anthropocentric (man-centered); i.e. Not what the Bible teaches us concerning Christ, but our own discoveries in investigating the phenomena of His life and our experience of Him. Does this mean that who Jesus is to you, can be different than who Jesus is to me? Or does it mean that I must incorporate who Jesus is to you in with my perception, conception of who Jesus is? Where does this lead us? Where does it stop?**

**6. Discuss “the doctrinal controversies of the Church were the birth pangs of new dogmas. Though not edifying, it is absolutely essential that we gain a proper understanding of the beginnings of ecclesiastical dogmas.”**

## **SESSION 14 – DOCTRINE OF SIN, GRACE AND RELATED DOCTRINES**

After this session, you will:

- Know the doctrinal distinctions between Augustine and Pelagius.
- Be able to understand the importance of having a proper view of man, sin and grace.
- Think about and discuss the consequences of a low view of sin and a high view of humanity.
- See the great need for God’s generous grace.

You will KNOW:

- What importance the decisions of the Synod of Dort played.

You will BE ABLE TO:

- Explain that the decay of true religion has always been accompanied by errors and imbalance in the doctrines of man, sin and grace.

You will THINK ABOUT:

- The Greek Fathers’ view of sin was largely influenced by their opposition to Gnosticism.

### **In the Last Session**

- You learned that words matter, especially when it comes to stating our beliefs.
- You gained an understanding of the importance of the doctrines of the Trinity and of Christ.
- You gained an appreciation of the struggle, and those who have fought the good fight for the doctrines of the Trinity and of Christ.

### **Begin video.**

### **The Doctrine of Sin, Grace and Related Doctrines**

- From the view of practical Christianity, the importance of the doctrines regarding sin and grace, as well as, the freedom of the will and divine predestination can hardly be overrated.
- Their bearing on the work of redemption is even more directly apparent than that of the christological questions.
- These are the doctrines and questions that draw the lines between the great divisions of Christianity.
- The decay of true religion has always been accompanied by errors and imbalance in these doctrines. Always!

### **The Greek Fathers**

- The Greek Fathers were the Church leaders in the East. Constantinople rather than Rome.
- The Greek Fathers’ view of sin was largely influenced by their opposition to Gnosticism with its emphasis on the physical necessity of evil and its denial of the freedom of the will.
- They reacted by taking the opposite view, with their main emphasis on the free will of man and almost abandoning the operation of divine grace.
- They learned more toward Pelagius rather than to Augustine.
- Sadly, most of the Greek Fathers simply chose to avoid the issues.

### **Out West**

- In the Catholic West, they wrestled with the questions of whether people were born sinful and sinners or were we born neutral and only sinned because of ignorance and bad examples.
- They also sought answers to whether we receive salvation by God and man working together – The Synergistic Theory or by God’s work alone – The Monergistic Theory?
- Cyprian, along with Ambrose and Hilary later, taught the doctrine of the original sinfulness of man and of the monergistic renewal of the soul.
- They believed that the guilt of original sin is not as great as actual sin and that a sinful nature (what they believed) is distinguished from a corrupt nature (which they did not believe).
- Augustine of Hippo and Pelagius of Britain lived about the same time (354-430) and developed significantly different doctrines of sin and grace. (See chart 27)
- Augustine’s view of sin and grace was molded by his deep religious experiences, his conviction of sin and regeneration by the Holy Spirit.

### **Pelagius**

- Pelagius was a British monk, who led an austere life, with a blameless character and an even temper.
- He was a stranger to those conflicts of the soul that Augustine experienced – the struggles with sin and the deep experience of an all-renewing grace.
- They developed their teachings independently, without knowing each other’s views.
- This kept them from reacting to each other, at least until later.
- They both represented elements that were already present in the writings of the early Church Fathers.
- The most important questions in the debate between Pelagius and Augustine were those of free will and original sin.

- According to Pelagius:
  - Adam’s original condition was one of neutrality: neither sinful nor holy, but with a capacity for both good and evil.
  - Adam’s mortality could not depend on his choice because he was already subject to the law of death.
  - His fall injured only himself and left humanity unimpaired for good. The only thing passed on by Adam was a bad example.
- The fact that God commands man to do what is good is proof positive that he is able to do it. His responsibility is the measure of his ability.
- He admits that sin is universal but that is due only to wrong education, to bad examples and to long-established habits of sinning.
- Grace relates to external gifts and natural endowments - man’s rational nature, the revelation of God in Scripture and the example of Jesus.

### **Augustine**

- According to Augustine: Man, even in his unfallen state, was absolutely dependent on God for the realization of his destiny.
- Through the organic connection to Adam, the fallen nature was transmitted to his posterity, along with guilt and corruption.
- As the result of sin, man is totally depraved and unable to do any spiritual good, though he is capable of acts that are civilly good.
- Augustine saw the will of man as needing renewal, which is exclusively a work of God’s grace.
- Grace becomes the source of all good in man.
- His view of regeneration is entirely monergistic. e.g., solely from God.
- Grace is imparted to sinful man, not because he believes, but in order that he may believe; for faith itself is the gift of God.

### **Semi-Pelagianism**

- Semi-Pelagianism made the attempt to avoid all the difficulties Pelagianism raised, by giving a place to both divine grace and human will as coordinating factors in the renewal of man, and by basing predestination on foreseen faith and obedience.
- It did not deny human corruption but regarded human nature as weakened or diseased rather than as fatally injured by the fall.
- Pelagianism was condemned at the Council of Ephesus in 431 and Semi-Pelagianism was condemned as contrary to the orthodox faith at the Council of Orange in 529.
- Both councils vindicated a moderate Augustinianism.
- Salvation by grace only was victorious, but the sacramental grace of baptism replaced the doctrine of the irresistible grace of predestination.



- They also abandoned the doctrine of double predestination (to salvation and to evil).
- The general decline in the Roman Catholic Church led to a drift in the direction of Semi-Pelagianism, which even though condemned at the Council of Orange, had a strong footing in the East.
- The Latin Church or Catholic Church eventually adopted the anthropology of the Greek Church and has adhered to it ever since.

### **The Reformers**

- The Reformers followed Augustine and Anselm in their construction of the doctrine of sin and grace though with some modifications.
- Socinianism was a non-Trinitarian system of doctrine that was developed by Faustus Socinus. It represented a reaction against the doctrine of the Reformation, and in the doctrines of sin and grace, it is simply a revival of the old Pelagian heresy.
- In the beginning of the 17th century, the Calvinistic doctrines of sin and grace met with a determined opposition in the Netherlands, centered in the great Arminian controversy.

### **Arminius**

- Arminius had been a strict Calvinist but became a convert to the doctrine of universal grace and free will.
- He denied the decree of reprobation, the teaching that God predestined some to eternal damnation. He toned down the doctrine of original sin. His view was practically that of Semi-Pelagianism.
- The Synod of Dort was an international gathering of reformation church leaders. They met in the Netherlands in 1618-1619.
- Their goal was to settle a divisive controversy initiated by the rise of Arminianism.
- The Arminians were not seated as delegates at the Synod of Dort but appeared only as defendants.
- They held 154 sessions (I assume those would be smaller groups?), along with a large number of conferences (the whole group?).
- The Arminians had published Five Articles of Remonstrance. This was their forceful, reproachful protest of reformed doctrine.
- The Synod of Dort rejected the Five Articles of Remonstrance (ree-mahn-strunce) of the Arminians and adopted five, thoroughly Calvinistic Canons, which disputed the five Arminian points.

### **The Synod of Dort**

- The decisions of the Synod of Dort were important for various reasons:
  - They dealt with some of the most important points of Reformed Theology.
  - They were the decisions of essentially an ecumenical council.
  - They ended the uncertainty that many churches faced.
  - They had a great determining influence on the composition of the later Westminster Confession.

### **The School of Saumur**

- The School of Saumur was a French Huguenot University at Saumur.
- They attempted to tone down the Calvinism of the Synod of Dort especially on two points.
- Amyraldus, led the way and made a distinction between a universal and conditional decree and that of a limited and unconditional decree.
- In the universal and conditional decree – God decreed to provide a universal salvation through the mediation of Jesus Christ, to be offered to all, on the condition of faith.
- In the limited and unconditional decree – God, seeing that of himself no man would believe, elected some to eternal life and decided to give them the necessary grace of faith and repentance.
- Three Synods dealt with the case of Amyraldus and did not condemn him but found it necessary to guard against the misconceptions to which his view might lead.
- Because, according to this view of the plan of salvation, election is subordinate to redemption. God first redeems all and then elects some.
- In opposition to this, the Formula Consensus Helvetica was drawn up, which gave a clear statement of the Reformed position and was for a time honored in Switzerland as an official standard.
- In the last 200 years, there have been no controversies that brought new elements to the forefront and no Synod or Councils that formulated new dogmas.
- There were a few divergences from the teachings of the Reformation advanced by individual theologians during the last two centuries. You have that information in your notes.

**To Consider**

- The doctrinal controversies of the Church were the birth pangs.
- The decay of true religion has always been accompanied by errors and imbalance in the doctrines of man, sin and grace. Always!
- The issue revolves around whether humans are born as sinners or become sinners. The answer is yes!

**Review**

- You learned the doctrinal distinctions between Augustine and Pelagius.
- You gained an understanding of the importance of having a proper view of man, sin and grace.
- You will be able to think about and discuss the consequences of a low view of sin and a high view of humanity.

**In the Next Session**

- We will be discussing, in the History of Christian Doctrine, the sections on the Doctrine of the Atonement.

## **ASSIGNMENT: DOCTRINE OF MAN, SIN AND GRACE**

For the rest of this session you will spend time discussing the notes for this section, as well as what you have learned and written in your summaries of the next sections of your textbook according to the assigned reading list.

There are a series of questions or assignments numbered and in bold letters.

- 1. Most of the Greek Fathers scrupulously avoided the issue of free will versus predestination. I am certain that we all face this same temptation. What kind of consequences will we face if we refuse to establish a biblical view of man, sin, grace and free will?**
- 2. See Chart 19 re: Manichaeism. See chart 21 re: Augustine for background information.**
- 3. See chart #27 for a summary of the Pelagian Controversy. Does the fact that a person has not experienced the “depths of sin” that others have, mean that their sin is “not as bad” as the sin of others?**
- 4. For the summary of the positions of Calvinism and Arminianism, see chart 72.**
- 5. The Five Articles of Remonstrance have been printed at the end of your notes. They seem to be of a different tone and flavor than I expected. It would be beneficial for you to read through them, if not in class, then on your own.**

The Five Articles of Remonstrance refers to the document drawn up in 1610 by the followers of Jacobus Arminius (1560-1609). A "remonstrance" is literally "an expression of opposition or protest," which in this case was a protest against the Calvinist doctrine of predestination contained in the Belgic Confession. This document was condemned as heresy by the reformed churches at the Synod of Dort, 1618-1619.

### **Article 1**

That God, by an eternal and unchangeable purpose in Jesus Christ his Son, before the foundation of the world, hath determined, out of the fallen, sinful race of men, to save in Christ, for Christ’s sake, and through Christ, those who, through the grace of the Holy Ghost, shall believe on this His Son Jesus, and shall persevere in this faith and obedience of faith, through this grace, even to the end; and, on the other hand, to leave the incorrigible and unbelieving in sin and under wrath, and to condemn them as alienate from Christ, according to the word of the Gospel in John 3:36: "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him," and according to other passages of Scripture also.

### **Article 2**

That agreeably thereunto, Jesus Christ the Savior of the world, died for all men and for every man, so that He has obtained for them all, by His death on the cross, redemption and the forgiveness of sins; yet that no one actually enjoys this forgiveness of sins except the believer, according to the word of the Gospel of John 3:16, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." And in the First Epistle of 1 John 2:2: "And He is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."

### **Article 3**

That man has not saving grace of himself, nor of the energy of his free will, inasmuch as he, in the state of apostasy and sin, can of and by himself neither think, will, nor do anything that is truly good (such as saving faith eminently is); but that it is needful that he be born again of God in Christ, through His Holy Spirit, and renewed in understanding, inclination, or will, and all his powers, in order that he may rightly understand, think, will, and effect what is truly good, according to the Word of Christ, John 15:5, "Without me ye can do nothing."

**Article 4**

That this grace of God is the beginning, continuance, and accomplishment of all good, even to this extent, that the regenerate man himself, without prevenient or assisting, awakening, following and cooperative grace, can neither think, will, nor do good, nor withstand any temptations to evil; so that all good deeds or movements, that can be conceived, must be ascribed to the grace of God in Christ. But regarding the mode of the operation of this grace, it is not irresistible; inasmuch as it is written concerning many, that they have resisted the Holy Ghost. Acts 7 and elsewhere in many places.

**Article 5**

That those who are incorporated into Christ by true faith, and have thereby become partakers of his life-giving Spirit, have thereby full power to strive against Satan, sin, the world, and their own flesh, and to win the victory; it being well understood that it is ever through the assisting grace of the Holy Ghost; and that Jesus Christ assists them through His Spirit in all temptations, extends to them His hand, and if only they are ready for the conflict, and desire His help, and are not inactive, keeps them from falling, so that they, by no craft or power of Satan, can be misled nor plucked out of Christ’s hands, according to the Word of Christ, John 10:28: “Neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.” But whether they are capable, through negligence, of forsaking again the first beginning of their life in Christ, of again returning to this present evil world, of turning away from the holy doctrine which was delivered them, of losing a good conscience, of becoming devoid of grace, that must be more particularly determined out of the Holy Scripture, before we ourselves can teach it with the full persuasion of our mind.

## **SESSION 15, PART 1 – THE DOCTRINE OF ATONEMENT**

After this session, you will:

- Know how the Doctrine of the Atonement developed up to the time of the Reformation.
- Be able to understand the challenges faced by those trying to develop the Doctrine of the Atonement.
- Think about and discuss the value of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ in relation to our sin.
- See the negative influence of the faulty dogma of the Church (especially the Eastern Church) on the dogma of the Atonement.
- Be grieved by the devaluation of the work of Christ.

You will KNOW:

- God gave His Son as a ransom for sin and the resulting covering of sin by the righteousness of Christ.

You will BE ABLE TO:

- See the negative influence of the faulty dogma.

You will THINK ABOUT:

- How man’s sin deserves punishment.

### **In the Last Session**

- You learned the doctrinal distinctions between Augustine and Pelagius.
- You gained an understanding of the importance of having a proper view of Man, Sin and Grace.
- You will be able to think about and discuss the consequences of a low view of sin and a high view of humanity.

### **Begin video.**

### **The Apostolic Fathers**

- The Apostolic Fathers speak of the work of Christ using scriptural language.
- Perhaps most significantly, they combine the ideas of Man’s sin deserving punishment.
- God giving His Son as a ransom for sin and the resulting covering of sin by the righteousness of Christ.

### **The Apologists**

- The Apologists added little to the subject but they did represent Christ as a Redeemer, most often redeeming us from the power of the devil and bondage to sin.

- If these teachings had remained as the foundation for this doctrine, all would be well.
- However, from this point onward, through nearly every era, the speculations, arrogance, faulty interpretations of scripture and reactionary imbalance seemed to head off in every direction.
- Granted, it was nearly 400 AD before the New Testament canon was officially established.
- Even then, the availability of and access to these Scriptures was limited.
- Most would hold to some of the orthodox teachings but then add something to it that was anything but orthodox.

### **Five Examples:**

#### **In the Gnostic Systems**

- Christ redeemed us from the kingdom of darkness.
- They might have been referring to Colossians 1:13 – “For He rescued us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son.”
- However, they were not seeing the kingdom of darkness as sin or Satan.
- No, they meant, from the world of matter, the physical universe, which they considered evil.

#### **In Marcion’s Scheme**

- The death of Christ is the price with which the God of love (the New Testament God) purchased men from the Creator of the world (the Old Testament God).

#### **Clement of Alexandria**

- Clement of Alexandria added to his orthodoxy.
  - That it is Christ as Teacher, who saves men.
  - By endowing them with true knowledge.
  - Inspiring them to a life of love and true righteousness.

#### **Origen**

- Origen taught that the work of Christ saves:
  - By deifying human nature through the incarnation
  - By giving the supreme example of self-sacrifice,
  - By inspiring others to love God in return and offer a similar sacrifice of obedience.



### **Athanasius Believed**

- The Logos became incarnate to restore the true knowledge of God to humanity, which was lost by sin.
- He was man’s substitute, who pays his debt by enduring the penalty of sin.
- Necessitated by God’s veracity (truthfulness and faithfulness) – but not by God’s justice.

### **John of Damascus**

- We can sum up the development of the theology of the Greek (Eastern) Church with two statements related to John of Damascus.
- Salvation comes as the direct result of the incarnation, as a new divine revelation given to man, combined with Christ’s death and resurrection, communicating new life to humanity.
- Salvation comes as the result of the fulfillment of certain objective conditions, such as a sacrifice to God, or of a satisfaction to the divine justice, or even of a ransom paid to Satan.
- Most eventually rejected the teaching, of a ransom paid to Satan.
- However, there were those who also rejected the idea that God the Father even required a ransom or atonement.

### **Tertullian in The West**

- In the Latin (Western) Church, Tertullian thought of the incarnation as affecting humanity chiefly through precept and example.
- He viewed the death of Christ on the cross as the real end of the mission of Christ.
- He introduced several legal terms into theology, such as:
  - Guilt
  - Satisfaction
  - Merit
- But he did not apply these terms to the sacrificial work of Christ.
- He applied them to the repentance and good works that should follow sins committed after baptism.
- By this, he laid the foundation for the development of the doctrine of penance in the Catholic Church.

### **Hilary of Poitiers**

- One hundred years later, Hilary of Poitiers (pwa-tee’aye) taught that the satisfaction rendered in the sacrifice of Christ was rendered to God and that Christ died voluntarily in order to satisfy a penal obligation (punishment for a crime).
- However, he sees the need for this satisfaction as providing for the veracity (faithfulness or truthfulness) of God, rather than to satisfy His justice.

### **Pope Gregory I**

- Pope Gregory I – aka: “the Great,” wrote the most complete summary of ancient Latin theology on the atonement:
  - “Man, voluntarily fell under the dominion of sin and death and only a sacrifice could blot out such sin.
  - Where to find this sacrifice? An animal could not serve the purpose; only a man would do, and yet no man could be found without sin.
  - Therefore, the Son of God became incarnate, assuming our nature, but not our sinfulness.
  - The Sinless One became a sacrifice for us, a victim that could die in virtue of His humanity and could cleanse in virtue of His righteousness.
  - He paid for us a debt of death, which He had not deserved, that the death, which was our due, might not harm us.”

### **Anselm of Canterbury**

- Five hundred years later, Anselm of Canterbury made the first attempt at a harmonious and consistent representation of the doctrine of the atonement in his book: “Why God Became Man.”
- His work rests on the absolute necessity of the atonement for the redemption of humanity.
- He rejected the Recapitulation Theory, the Ransom to Satan Theory and the idea that the death of Christ was merely a manifestation of the love of God to humanity, because none of these explained the necessity of the atonement adequately.
- The Reformers would build upon and improve his teachings later.

### **Peter Abelard**

- During this same era, Peter Abelard’s Theory represented the death of Christ NOT as a ransom but as an example, a revelation of God’s love.
- He says God is eager to pardon the repentant sinner.
- This great love calls for and awakens a responsive love in the heart of the sinner.
- This responsive love redeems us, liberates us from the power of sin and leads us into the liberty of the sons of God, so that we obey freely from the motive of love.
- He supposedly based this on Lk 7:47 where Jesus says the one that is forgiven much, loves much.
- But he seems to miss the point and the timing.
- Two of the many things wrong with this theory would be:
  - The false idea that love is the central and all-controlling attribute in God.
  - It robs the sufferings of Christ of their redemptive significance and reduces Him to a mere moral teacher.

- There were several who tried to bring together the ideas of atonement for sin and a response to the love of God displayed in Christ’s sacrifice and example.

### **John Bonaventure**

- John Bonaventure believed that the required satisfaction for sin made the incarnation necessary because the person rendering the satisfaction should be both God and man.
- The merits Christ gained by action and suffering, paid the honor that was due to God.
- His sufferings were the most appropriate means for placating God – displaying both the mercy and the righteousness of God; it was also best suited to arouse in man a responsive love to God.
- The blessings of Christ are then transferred to us, as members of His body – with Him being the head.

### **Thomas Aquinas**

- Thomas Aquinas (uh-kwhy-nus) represents the Dominican theology, which is the official theology of the Church of Rome.
- He saw the work of redemption from the point of view that makes Christ the teacher of and pattern for the human race by His teachings, acts and sufferings.
- These sufferings reveal more clearly the love of God and awaken a responsive love in the hearts of men.
- Perhaps this helps us understand the use and focus on the crucifix, as opposed to the empty cross.
- Thomas Aquinas taught that the passion of Christ affects the salvation of sinners in four ways.
  - By meriting the blessings of salvation, which are passed on to sinners.
  - As a superabundant satisfaction, well-pleasing to God, whose blessings are brought to the faithful through the mystical union (being born again).
  - As a voluntary sacrifice with which God was delighted.
  - By redeeming sinners from slavery and punishment.
- He taught that Satan did NOT receive the ransom and that the superabundant satisfaction of Christ does not save humanity apart from baptism and penance. Since these are the way the members are connected to the Head in the mystical body of Jesus Christ.

### **John Duns Scotus**

- John Duns Scotus, (commonly known as Duns Scotus) the founder of the Franciscan theology, saw no inherent necessity for the sacrifice of Christ to render satisfaction for humanity’s sin.
- He believed that one pious act of Adam might have served to atone for his first sin.
- Nor did he see a requirement that the sacrifice needed to be a man.
- However, God accepted the merits of Christ, even though it was not equal to the debt owed.
- The death of Christ was only necessary because of the arbitrary will of God.

### **To Consider**

- The issues in the Doctrine of the Atonement involve:
  - How far did Adam fall and did we all fall with him?
  - What was the purpose of the suffering and sacrifice of Christ?
  - Was it only His suffering and death involved in our salvation?
  - What did Jesus accomplish in His work?
  - Did He satisfy God’s honor, His veracity or His justice?

### **Review**

- You learned how the Doctrine of the Atonement developed up to the time of the Reformation.
- You came to understand the challenges faced by those trying to develop the Doctrine of the Atonement.
- You thought about the value of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ in relation to our sin.

### **In the Next Session**

- We will be discussing the sections on the Doctrine of the Atonement from the Reformation on.

## **ASSIGNMENT: DOCTRINE OF ATONEMENT**

For the rest of this session, you will spend time discussing what you have learned and what you have written in your summaries. Then, you will cover the remainder of the section on the Doctrine of the Atonement from the period of the Reformation on.

There are a series of questions or assignments numbered and in bold letters.

### **The Doctrine of the Atonement or the Work of Christ**

Let’s begin with some of the basic questions the Church struggled to answer as they wrestled with the Doctrine of the Atonement:

- Were the sufferings and death of Christ atonement for, punishment of or a ransom payment for the sins of humanity? Was this payment made to God or to Satan?
- Did His suffering and death satisfy God’s veracity or His justice? Was it necessary? Could there have been another way?
- Were the sufferings and death of Christ equivalent payment for the sins of humanity or merely representative (a token)? Is this payment available to all or is it restricted to those who are the “elect”? (John 11:51-52; 1 John 2:2) Is there something that humans are required to do, to make this applicable to them individually? (John 1:11-13)
- Does the atonement cover the sins of fallen angels, including Satan?
- Were the sufferings and death of Christ merely a demonstration of God’s love, meant to inspire humanity to love God and obey Him even to the point of death? Were His sufferings and death merely the great example of love, to inspire us to sacrifice for others?
- How do the incarnation and the righteous works of Jesus during His life fit into this idea of atonement for sin?

**1. Review these questions above, so that we gain an understanding of the scope and depth of the challenge of developing the Doctrine of the Atonement or The Work of Christ.**

Irenaeus, (late 100’s) joined the Apologists and looked at redemption partly as deliverance from the power of Satan – though he does not look upon it as a satisfaction due to Satan. The death of Christ satisfies the justice of God and thus liberates man. *He gives great prominence to the recapitulation theory (to repeat briefly) – the idea that Christ “recapitulates in Himself all the stages of human life, and all the experiences of these stages, including those which belong to our state as sinners.” Thus, He reverses the course on which Adam by his sin started humanity and becomes a new leaven in the life of mankind.*

**2. If we would have stayed with the teaching of the Apostolic Fathers, who “usually spoke in Scriptural terms,” we would have been in good shape! Here is a perfect example of what happens when we “exceed what is written.” (1 Corinthians 4:6) Note the emphasis on freedom from the power of Satan and the explanation of the “Recapitulation Theory” above.**

**3. The question regarding who receives the “ransom payment” arises from: Mk 10:45 and 1 Timothy 2:5-6. Consider also Col 1:13-14 and Romans 1:16-18; 3:21-26; 5:9; 7:1-6. There is a ransom and there is redemption.**

**Fill in the blanks:**

**The ransom Christ paid was to \_\_\_\_\_**

**The redemption Christ provided was from \_\_\_\_\_**

**4. Consider Jesus’ prayer in the Garden – Mt 26:39; Mk 14:36; Lk 22:42 – might God have saved sinners in some other way?**

**5. Justice? Veracity? Righteousness? Love? Mercy? All of them?**

**6. Review the weaknesses (listed below) of Anselm’s view of the Atonement and work of Christ.**

**7. Discussing what you have read about atonement, does this make God an unjust judge, since His judgments are not based on righteousness, but on whatever He decides at the time?**

## **SESSION 15, PART 2 – DOCTRINE OF ATONEMENT - REFORMATION**

After this session, you will:

- Know how the Doctrine of the Atonement developed during and since the time of the Reformation.
- Be able to understand the challenges faced by those trying to defend the Doctrine of the Atonement.
- Think about and discuss the work of Jesus Christ in relation to our sin from a biblical foundation.
- See the need to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints.
- Be grateful for those who have fought the good fight for the Doctrine of the Atonement and the Work of Christ.

You will KNOW:

- See the need to contend for the faith.

You will BE ABLE TO:

- The Reformers looked upon sin primarily as transgression of the law of God and therefore as guilt rather than as an insult.

You will THINK ABOUT:

- The challenges to the Doctrine of the Atonement.

### **In the Last Session**

- You learned how the Doctrine of the Atonement developed up to the time of the Reformation.
- You understood the challenges faced by those trying to develop the Doctrine of the Atonement.
- You thought about the value of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ in relation to our sin.

**Begin video.**

### **The Doctrine of the Atonement (Since the Reformation)**

- The doctrine of the atonement was not a subject of debate between the Reformers and the Catholic Church.
  - Both regarded the death of Christ as a satisfaction for sin.
  - A satisfaction of infinite value.
- They differed primarily on how the work of Christ is applied to believers.
  - The Reformers moved along lines of agreement with Anselm.
  - He taught that forgiveness of sins was a gift from God based on the atoning work of Jesus Christ.
  - The Catholic Church agreed with Thomas Aquinas.
  - He taught that the fullness of grace dwells in the human nature of Christ, who is now the head of the human race. And therefore, His perfection and virtue overflow to the members of His body, those who are baptized.

### **The Reformers and Anselm**

- Both the Reformers and Anselm maintained the objective nature of the atonement and regarded it as a necessity.
- However, they differed as to the nature of this necessity.
- Anselm speaks of this as absolute.
- Some Reformers regarded it as relative or hypothetical.
- Calvin says, “...The necessity (of the atonement) was not commonly (seen as) simple or absolute, but flowed from the divine decree on which the salvation of mankind depended. What was best for us, our most merciful Father determined.”
- It would be unfair to say that Calvin makes the atonement dependent on the arbitrary will of God.
- He recognizes no “to be determined” will in God, but only a will that has been determined by all His attributes.
- He emphasizes the fact that the atonement in Christ fully satisfies the justice of God.
- The Reformers agreed that the atonement, through the sufferings and death of Christ, is in harmony with divine wisdom and revelation.
- The doctrine of the atonement developed by the Reformers improved on Anselm’s in several ways.
- The Reformers looked upon sin primarily as transgression of the law of God and therefore as guilt rather than as an insult.
- The Reformers saw the death of Christ as a penal sacrifice to satisfy the justice of God. This lifts atonement out of the sphere of private rights into that of public law.



- The Reformers stressed the fact that the sufferings of Christ were not only penal but also vicarious, service as a substitute.
- The Reformers distinguished between the active and passive obedience in the work of Christ as the mediator.
- His life and His sufferings together, satisfied the demands of divine justice.
- The Reformers agreed with the importance of the mystical union with Christ but also directed attention to the conscious act of man by which he appropriates the righteousness of Christ – the act of faith.
- They were also very careful not to represent faith as merit or earning justification.

### **Faustus Socinus**

- The Socinian (sow-si’gn-ee-un) conception of The Atonement comes from the teachings of Faustus Socinus (sow-si’gn-us) and forms the foundation for Unitarianism.
- His teaching was, at least partly, a reaction to the Reformers.
- He was an Italian, rationalistic, religious, reformer who denied the Trinity and so the divinity of Christ.
- He held that we gain salvation only by practicing the virtues exemplified in Christ, (our good works) which we learn as we study the Scriptures.
- In his view, faith is more than the belief that the teaching of Christ is true, but it also results in repentance of sins and in obedience that leads to eternal life.
- Socinian (sow-si’gn-ee-un) doctrine is a concoction of several heresies condemned by the early church.
- Pelagianism with its belief in the inherent goodness and spiritual ability of man.
- The Adoptionist doctrine, making Christ in His human nature a Son of God by adoption.
- The Moral Influence theory with its emphasis on the exemplary life of Christ.
- The Scotus doctrine of an arbitrary will in God.
- We can summarize the Socinian conception of the Atonement as being thoroughly rationalistic (and arrogant); an abstract play of human logic.
- Failing to do justice to the truth revealed in the word of God (which he ironically appealed to.)
- Failing to do justice to the truth experienced in the lives of the redeemed.

### **Hugo Grotius**

- For some reason, Hugo Grotius (grow-she-us), a Dutch legal scholar and Arminian supporter, sought a middle ground between the Reformers and the Socinian view.

- In seeking to eliminate the idea of the Atonement as satisfying the justice of God, he taught that the Ruler of the universe could modify or even abolish the law and its penalty altogether.
- So – the question arises – Why didn’t God simply officially abolish the law, since this was within His power?
- Grotius answered, (revealing a rather low view of God) that God as the Ruler of the universe had to maintain order in His great realm.
- It would not have been safe for Him to remit without revealing in some way the inviolable nature of the law and His holy displeasure against sin.
- This is the Governmental Theory of the Atonement.

### **The Arminian View**

- The Arminian view of the Atonement represents the death of Christ as a sacrificial offering.
- Maintaining that it was not the payment of a debt, a complete satisfaction of justice.
- It is merely an accompanying condition of the forgiveness of sins.
- They regarded the sufferings of Christ as penal and judicial and that they had the effect of reconciling God to humanity, by purchasing the forgiveness of sins.
- However, they did not view His sacrifice as an equivalent substitutional penalty but one that is of inferior worth.
- They described it as a “satisfaction of benevolence.”
- The Arminians disagreed with the Reformers (Calvinists) in four areas regarding the Atonement.
- Christ did not endure the full penalty of sin since He did not suffer eternal death.
- If Christ completely atoned for sin, there is nothing for divine grace to accomplish and no need for divine compassion.
- If Christ rendered full satisfaction, then God has no right to demand faith and obedience or to punish the sinner, if he fails to obey (that would be double punishment.).
- The atonement is general or universal; it is made for the sins of humanity in general and of every individual.
- The divine intention is not universally effective since many are lost.
- This partial failure is due to the obstinacy of the sinner in refusing the offered atonement and so, defeats the divine intention. The application of the atoning work of Christ depending ultimately on the sinner’s will.

### **The Synod of Dort**

- The Synod of Dort (Netherlands) opposed the doctrine of the Arminians, saying the atonement of Christ was sufficient for the salvation of all men but was intended only for those to whom it is effectively applied.

### **The School of Saumur**

- The School of Saumur was a Calvinistic French Huguenot university that sought a compromise.
- They attempted to tone down the extreme Calvinism of the Synod of Dort and at the same time avoid the extremes of Arminianism.
- Moses Amyraldus proposed that Christ did indeed die for all men, and decreed beforehand that it was by repentance and faith in Christ that all men should be saved.
- God knowing, that left to their own devices, none would ever repent and believe, so by a subsequent decree elected some as the objects of the saving operation of His grace. These alone are those actually saved.
- They succeeded in getting the Arminians to agree with their first decree and the Calvinists to agree with their second but not in uniting the two groups.

### **Challenges to the Doctrine of the Atonement**

- Since the Reformation, the doctrine of the atonement has continually faced challenges.
- Most often, the challenge was trying to reconcile Calvinists and Arminians.
- There were also many threats from liberal theology, which emphasized that Christ’s work was a moral influence of some sort, rather than atonement for sin.
- In Great Britain during the 16th and 17th centuries, Neonomianism (New Law) turned the Gospel into a new law.
- This view said that Christ made salvation possible for all and then introduced a new law – the law of the Gospel, which requires faith and conversion.
- Justification is based on our own imperfect work of faith and conversion, rather than the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ.
- This is only Arminianism by another name.
- There was strong opposition to this teaching, which ultimately led to a split in the Church of Scotland in 1733.
- The liberal theology that dominated Germany in the 17th and 18th century had a devastating effect on churches around the world.
- Schleiermacher (sh-li’ar-mocker) and Ritschl (rich-el) were leading voices in the deconstruction of the Scriptures as the Word of God, of Jesus as the Son of God and of His atonement for our sins.

- Please note: not all German theologians bought into their ideas. The Lord did not leave Himself without a witness.
- The Church continues to meet with reproductions of most of the typical theories we have considered in the preceding sections – with some variations and combinations.
- Perhaps this portion of our study helps us understand the urgency of Jude as he wrote in Jude 1:3 – “Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints.”

### **To Consider**

- Many of the problems surrounding the Doctrine of the Atonement relate to speculation and over reaction to the errors of others.
- The Attacks on the Doctrine of the Atonement seem to be relentless.
- Jude 1:3

### **Review**

- Learned how the Doctrine of the Atonement developed during and since the time of the Reformation.
- Understand the challenges faced by those trying to defend the Doctrine of the Atonement.
- Thought about the work of Jesus Christ in relation to our sin from a biblical foundation.

### **In the Next Session**

- We will be discussing in the History of Christian Doctrine, the section on the Doctrine of the Application and Appropriation of Divine Grace.

## **ASSIGNMENT: THE DOCTRINE OF ATONEMENT**

For the rest of this session you will spend time discussing the notes for this section, what you have learned and what you have written in your summaries of the sections of your textbook.

You will not only have the opportunity to share your insights but you will also gain from the insights of your classmates.

There are a series of questions or assignments numbered and in bold letters.

- 1. Note the improvements or corrections to Anselm’s teaching.**
- 2. What does the teaching of Socinus tell us about His view of God?**
- 3. What does it mean that “the death of Christ...is merely an accompanying condition of the forgiveness of sins”?**
- 4. How would you respond to this idea, that our faith in Christ is a “righteous act” by which we “save ourselves”?**
- 5. Discuss the following: When we are reacting to teaching that is false or out of balance, we face the danger of over-reacting, perhaps using dubious language or even refusing to use solid biblical language in trying to re-balance the teaching. Even if we are not out of balance ourselves, we are sometimes accused of heresy. There is certainly a need to “contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints.” (Jude 1:3)**
- 6. Discuss the following: What the Scripture teaches matters. Words matter. Doctrine matters. “The doctrinal controversies of the Church were the birth pangs of new dogmas. Though not edifying, it is essential that we gain a proper understanding of the beginnings of ecclesiastical dogmas.”**

## **SESSION 16 – THE DOCTRINE OF DIVINE GRACE – SOTERIOLOGY**

*Disclaimer: Just a reminder, we are studying the historical development of Christian doctrines. The doctrinal controversies and the ideas discussed in these videos do not necessarily represent our final conclusions.*

After this session, you will:

- How the Doctrine of Soteriology developed.
- Be able to clarify the Doctrine of Soteriology from a biblical perspective.
- Think about the process involved in our salvation.
- See the relentlessness of seeking to save the “dignity of humanity” by maintaining a dogma of “works righteousness.”
- Be aware of the great contrast between the “free-gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 6:23) and all other systems that depend on the grace of God AND our good works.

You will KNOW:

- About the early church father.

You will BE ABLE TO:

- Understand legalism.

You will THINK ABOUT:

- Augustine’s different view of man’s natural condition.

### **In the Last Session**

- You learned how the Doctrine of the Atonement developed during and since the time of the Reformation.
- You understood the challenges faced by those trying to defend the Doctrine of the Atonement.
- You thought about and discussed the work of Jesus Christ in relation to our sin from a biblical foundation.

### **Begin video.**

### **The Doctrine of the Application & Appropriation of Divine Grace – (Soteriology)**

- In this session, we will discuss how the objective work of redemption through the atonement of Christ, is applied to believers through the work of the Holy Spirit.
- In simpler words, we will look at how we experience salvation and sanctification.

### **The Early Church Fathers**

- It would be unreasonable to look for a common, definite, well-integrated and fully developed view of the application of the work of redemption in the earliest Church Fathers.
- Karl Kahnis – a Lutheran theologian said: “It stands as an assured fact, a fact knowing no exceptions, and acknowledged by all well versed in the matter, that all of the pre-Augustinian Fathers taught that in the appropriation of salvation there is a co-working of freedom and grace.”
- This was in harmony with the New Testament statement, that man obtains the blessing of salvation by “repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ” (Acts 20:21); the early Fathers stressed these requirements.
- They regarded faith as the way we receive the merits of Christ, and often called it the “only means.”
- They taught, that faith consists of:
  - True knowledge of God.
  - Confidence in Him.
  - Self-committal to Him.
  - Having Jesus Christ and His atoning blood as its special object of faith.
- This faith, rather than the works of the law, was regarded as the means of justification.
- They generally did not expand on this doctrine – mostly repeating what they found in the Bible! This is always a good choice!

### **Legalism**

- However, despite their emphasis on the grace of God and on faith in Jesus Christ for salvation, some of the early Fathers revealed a legalism that is not in harmony with the Pauline doctrine of salvation. Pauline refers to the writings of the apostle Paul.
- They described the Gospel as a new law. They tended to see salvation as depending on the grace of God AND on our good works. I think this was mostly as a preventive of spiritual laxity and as leverage against sin.
- The legalistic perversion of New Testament Christianity was the continuation of the Judaistic legalism combated, by the apostle Paul in Galatians, and the natural self-righteousness of the human heart.
- The first three centuries reveal an initial drift towards ceremonialism and sacramentalism, the belief that “sacred” activities confer or transmit grace to those participating in the sacred ceremony.
- Especially in the idea that baptism carried with it the forgiveness of previous sins and that pardon for sins committed after baptism can be obtained by penance.

- Gradually the idea that the good works of some, and especially the sufferings of martyrs, may serve to atone for the sins of others.

### **Born Catholic**

- Rudolph Sohm, a German-Lutheran theologian and church historian, explained the departure from the teachings of Scripture in the fact that “the natural man is born Catholic.”

### **Pelagius**

- Pelagius deviated much further from the scriptural representation of the application of redemption.
- He forsook the biblical foundation and re-asserted the self-sufficient principle of heathen philosophy.
- This was an early version of “God helps those who help themselves.”
- The Semi-Pelagians denied the total inability of man to do spiritual good.
- Did admit his inability to perform saving works without the assistance of divine grace.
- Pelagianism and Semi-Pelagianism were condemned by various councils/synods and Augustinianism appeared triumphant in the Church.

### **Augustine**

- Augustine starts with a different view of man’s natural condition.
- He regards man as totally depraved and utterly unable to perform spiritual good.
- Grace consists of the Gospel, Baptism and the forgiveness of sins.
- But he realizes this is not sufficient that man needed something internal.
  - A spiritual grace.
  - A supernatural influence of the Spirit of God.
  - Enlightening the mind.
  - Inclining the will towards holiness.
- He distinguished between:
  - “Grace that goes before man when unwilling, that he may will.”
  - “Grace that follows him when willing, that he may not will in vain.”
- Augustine taught that in justification, God not merely declares but makes the sinner righteous by transforming his inner nature assuming sanctification is included in justification.
- Everything is related to the grace of God.
- Augustine’s doctrine did undergo some modifications, since it contained some elements that conflicted with man’s absolute dependence on God and pointed toward sacramentalism and works-based righteousness.



- Participation in the grace of God is dependent on the Church and its sacraments.
- Regeneration may be lost again.
- The doctrine of justification by faith does not consist primarily in the forgiveness of sins but in regeneration – the infusion of grace, which enables man to do good works and to merit everlasting life.
- Faith justifies, not because it appropriates the righteousness of Jesus Christ, but because it works by love.
- Grace merely serves the purpose of making it possible for man once more to merit salvation.
- The Church eventually settled on a modified Augustinianism and “grace alone” was upheld.
- The doctrine of predestination was abandoned, along with irresistible grace.
- The position of the Church was that of a mild Augustinianism, though the Schoolmen, the scholastics or university professors drifted toward Semi-Pelagianism, even though it was declared to be heresy.

### **The Reformation**

- During the Reformation, Luther and Calvin held a common opposition to Rome and agreed on the nature and importance of the doctrine of justification by faith.
- They describe it as an act of free grace and as a legal action which does not change the inner life of man but only the judicial relationship in which he stands to God; no inherent righteousness of the believer, but only the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ, which the sinner appropriates by faith.
- They taught that justification is instantaneous and complete.
- The believer can be certain that he is forever translated from a state of wrath and condemnation to one of favor and acceptance.
- Unfortunately, Lutheran theology did not remain entirely true to this position.

### **Luther**

- Luther, in opposing Roman Catholic works-righteousness, stressed that true repentance is the fruit of faith.
- Later in opposing antinomianism, those who would teach that the moral law is of no use or obligation.
- He stressed that a deep feeling of penitence precedes true faith. Penitence is a feeling of remorse over sin.
- Which is true? Can both be true? There is an old saying that “Scripture is written for the direction you are going.” If you need encouragement, there is encouragement. If you need a warning, there is warning.

### **The Order of Salvation**

- There was much discussion about the order of events related to a person experiencing God’s grace and salvation.
- This ordering is about God’s working, not about our completion of a series of steps.
- I have included, in your notes, a chart that shows the “order of salvation” from five perspectives: Calvinism, Modified Calvinism, Classical Arminian/Wesleyan, Lutheran and Catholic.
- Those wishing to sustain an idea of sequential order in salvation appeal to a variety of Scriptures, especially, Romans 8:29-30, “For those whom He foreknew He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren and these whom He predestined, He also called and these whom He called, He also justified and these whom He justified, He also glorified.”
- However, when we compare the various lists in our chart, with the Scriptures, there seems to be some gaps or perhaps dyslexia in the order?
- Some theologians have criticized the idea of an order of salvation.
- They think that we run the risk of "psychologizing" salvation and that we do not do justice to the fullness of salvation by trying to determine the order or timing in the process.
- The concept of an ordered sequence of the doctrine of salvation was an important part of the construction of the Westminster Confession.
- In addition, some have observed that Christians cannot avoid thinking about the particular elements of salvation and the order in which they are experienced. This is the way humans operate.
- Perhaps we should consider, Deut 29:29 – “The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our sons forever, that we may observe all the words of this law.”
- Let us beware of speculation and take our stand on the sure foundation of God’s Word.

### **To Consider**

- There is a constant assault upon the Doctrine of Salvation by grace through faith.
- There is a continual attempt to exalt humanity by claiming the ability to save ourselves and to change ourselves.
- A humble, reasoned and biblical response is always necessary when dealing with Dogmas.

**Review**

- We talked about how the Doctrine of Soteriology developed.
- We clarified the Doctrine of Soteriology from a biblical perspective.
- We thought about the process involved in our salvation.

**In the Next Session**

- Which will be our last, we will discuss the Doctrines of the Church, the Sacraments and the Last Things.

**THE ORDER OF SALVATION CHART – ROMANS 8:29-30**

Calvinist:	Modified Calvinist:	Classical Arminian/Wesleyan:	Lutheran:	Catholic:
Predestination	Predestination	Foreknowledge	Calling	Faith (willed assent to the Church's dogmata, not fiducial faith as in Protestantism)
Election	Election	Predestination	Illumination	Conitriion
Calling	Calling	Election	Repentance	Regeneration (in the Sacrament of Baptism)
Regeneration	Faith	Prevenient Grace	Regeneration	Penance (after the Sacrament of Reconciliation)
Faith	Regeneration	External Calling	Justification	Sanctification
Repentance	Repentance	Repentance and faith	Mystical Union	Purgation
Justification	Justification	Justification	Sanctification	Theosis
Adoption	Adoption	Regeneration	Conservation	
Sanctification	Sanctification	Sanctification		
Perseverance	Perseverance	Perseverance (conditional)		
Glorification	Glorification	Glorification		

## **ASSIGNMENT: THE DOCTRINE OF DIVINE GRACE**

For the rest of this session, discuss what you have learned and written in your summary of each chapter in your textbook.

There are a series of questions or assignments numbered and in bold letters.

**1. Discuss “repeating what they found in the Bible” is always safe ground to stand on. Read 1 Corinthians 4:6, “...learn not to exceed what is written...”**

**2. What is it in us, which pulls us toward moralism and legalism? Moralism means that we have an especially undue emphasis on morality. Legalism refers to the idea that we are saved by the keeping of the Law, or a variety of other standards established by the Scripture or by others.**

Rudolph Sohm, (1841-1917) a German-Lutheran theologian and church historian, explained the departure from the teachings of Scripture in the fact that “the natural man is born Catholic.”

**3. What does he mean that “the natural man is born Catholic”?**

**4. What would be “the way of salvation” according to Pelagius?**

**5. Is there a legitimate distinction between “believing Christ” and “believing in Christ”? How would you explain the distinctions? Are they significant?**

**6. Review and discuss “influences contrary to the doctrine of grace as the source of all spiritual blessings” (below). What were the contrary ideas that were being supported by some of the Catholic Church’s practices?**

Romans 1:17 – man is justified by faith alone

Mathew 4:17 – repentance consisted in real inner contrition of the heart and was a fruit of the grace of God only.

**7. Can both these positions (above) be true? Perhaps this is an example of Scripture being written for the direction you are going?**

**8. Compare these scriptures: Acts 2:38; 20:21; Romans 8:29-30; 1 Corinthians 1:30; 6:11; 1 Peter 1:1-2. See if a biblical base for the order of salvation can be established.**

I have included, in your notes, a chart that shows the “order of salvation” from five perspectives: Calvinism, Modified Calvinism, Classical Arminian/Wesleyan, Lutheran and Catholic

Some theologians have criticized the idea of an order of salvation. They think that we run the risk of "psychologizing" salvation and that we do not do justice to the fullness of salvation by trying to determine the order or timing in the process.

The concept of an ordered sequence of the doctrine of salvation was an important part of the construction of the Westminster Confession. In addition, some have observed that Christians cannot avoid thinking about the particular elements of salvation and the order in which they are experienced. Because this is the way humans operate.

**9. Review the conceptions of the order of Salvation chart (page 167 of this book). How important or necessary is it that we can designate an order? What does it mean, if a person’s experience is, or seems to be, different from the established order? Does it mean that this person is not saved?**

## **SESSION 17, PART 1 – THE DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH**

After this session, you will:

- Know how the Doctrine of the Church developed.
- Be able to explain the difficult challenges the Church has faced throughout its history.
- Think about and discuss the importance of the Church.
- Appreciate your freedom to worship in a church of your choosing.
- Be amazed at the Church’s surviving and thriving.

You will KNOW:

- We should not romanticize the times of persecution as the Church’s best, strongest or purest eras.

You will BE ABLE TO:

- Talk about how the Church identified itself.

You will THINK ABOUT:

- The persecution of the Church.

### **In the Last Session**

- You learned how the Doctrine of Soteriology developed.
- You clarified the doctrine of Soteriology from a biblical perspective.
- You thought about the process involved in our salvation.

### **Begin video.**

### **The Doctrine of the Church**

- Rudolph Sohm, a German-Lutheran theologian and church historian, argued that the Early Church had no legal constitution.
- Ecclesiastical law stands in contradiction to the nature of Ecclesia.
- The Early Church was ruled not by legal concepts but by a power he called "charisma" ("a gift of grace") bestowed by the Holy Spirit.
- The charismatically based Jesus movement of the Early Church changed into the legalistic bureaucracy of Roman Catholicism.

### **The Apostolic Fathers**

- The Apostolic Fathers and the Apologists generally represented the Church as "The Communion of The Saints."
  - The People of God.
  - Those He has chosen for a possession.

- At times, they referred to the Church as “The True Israel,” though how it related to the people of Israel and God’s covenant with them was not always clear.

### **Persecution**

- We should take notice that the followers of Christ suffered persecution by the State, for 163 years of out of 250 years, from 54 to 304 AD,.
- There were multitudes that confessed their faith in Jesus Christ and persevered despite horrendous suffering and death.
- Several times, leaders had to discourage believers from purposely seeking out martyrdom.
- However, some fled to other locations or even denied Christ.
- How was the Church to respond to those who did not respond well?
- Was there forgiveness available?
- There were many who said, “NO!”
- The pressures from the State and from false teaching within the Church made this a very difficult time and even influenced the development of doctrine.
- We should not romanticize the times of persecution as the Church’s best, or strongest or purest eras.

### **The Church’s Identity**

- By the second century, with the rise of heresies, it was necessary to designate some external characteristics by which the true catholic (worldwide) Church could be known.
- The Church identified itself simply as an organization ruled by a bishop, and in possession of the true religion.
- The local churches were not seen as separate units, but as parts of the universal church.
- They would be true churches only if they were loyal and subject to the Church as a whole.

### **The Sects**

- The sects, such as Montanism, Novatianism and Donatism, tended to focus on the holiness of its members as the mark of the true Church.
- These were reform movements against:
  - The gradual secularization.
  - The increasing worldliness.
  - The corruption of the Church.



### **Cyprian**

- Cyprian was the first to develop the doctrine of the episcopal Church.
- The idea of a Bishop or Overseer ruling each church.
- His grand contributions to the progress of error and corruption in the Church were the central ideas that “outside of the Church (catholic) there was no salvation.”
- That only the leaders who received the Spirit – which could be received only in the Church – could impart forgiveness of sins.

### **Augustine**

- Sadly, Augustine’s conception of the Church did not harmonize with his doctrine of sin and grace.
- There was a dualism in his idea of the Church:
  - On the one hand, he conceives of the Church as the company of the elect, The Communion (community) of the Saints, and not just in an outward sense.
  - The real unity of the saints is an invisible one.
  - On the other hand, the true Church is the Catholic Church, outside of which there is no salvation.
- This Church is a mixed body, but is destined for perfect purity in the future.

### **The Middles Ages**

- The theologians in the Middle Ages had very little to say about the Church, seeing that the Church had developed into a close-knit, compactly organized, absolute hierarchy.
- Two ideas became very prominent during the Middle Ages:
  - The primacy of Rome.
  - The identity of the Church as the Kingdom of God.
- In the 4th & 5th centuries several traditions gained traction.
- First, that Christ had given Peter an official primacy over the other Apostles.
- That Peter had been the first bishop of Rome and that this primacy was passed on to his successors.
- The idea, that the Catholic Church was the Kingdom of God, developed at the same time, as these traditions, leading to the conclusion that the authority of the “Universal Bishop” (conferred on Boniface III - 607) was over the entire earth – thus over an earthly kingdom.
- This identification of the visible and organized Church with the Kingdom of God had important and far-reaching consequences.
- Most significantly, it led to the secularization of the Church.
- As an external Kingdom, the Church began to pay more attention to politics than to the salvation of souls.

### **The Roman Catholic Church**

- The Roman Catholic Church did not officially formulate their conception of the Church until after the Reformation.
- The Tridentine Catechism (From the Council of Trent 1566) defined the Church as “the body of all the faithful who have lived up to this time on earth with one invisible head, Christ, and one visible head, the successor of Peter, who occupies the Roman see.” This refers to the holy chair or seat and relates to the sovereignty of the Vatican and the Popes authority over the Catholic Church as the Vicar of Christ or the substitute of Christ.

### **Luther**

- Luther rejected the ideas of:
  - An infallible Church,
  - A special priesthood, and
  - Sacraments that operate in a magical way.
- He sought to restore to its rightful place the scriptural idea of the priesthood of all believers.
- He regarded the Church as the spiritual community of those who believe in Christ – established and sustained by Christ who is its Head.

### **The Anabaptists**

- The Anabaptists had the most extreme reaction against the Roman Catholic externalization of the Church.
- They denied the identity of the Old Testament Church with that of the New, insisting on a Church of believers only.
- Though children had a place in the Church of the Old Testament, they have no legitimate place in the Church of the New Testament since they can neither exercise faith nor make a profession of it.
- They also demanded absolute separation of Church and State.

### **The Reformed (Calvinists)**

- The Reformed conception of the Church is fundamentally the same as the Lutheran.
- Both agree that we can find the real essence of the Church in the community of the saints as a spiritual entity (the invisible Church).
- The Reformed were also of the opinion that the possibility of salvation extends beyond the borders of the visible Church and that the Spirit of God is not absolutely bound to the ordinary means of grace, but may work and save “when, where and how He pleases.”

- The Reformed spoke of the invisibility of the Church in more than one sense:
  - As those called out through all time and in all places.
  - As the group of the elect which will not be completed until the revelation of Jesus Christ – His return.
  - As the group of the elect who are called – signifying the inability to distinguish absolutely the true believers from the false.
- Finally, the Reformed found the true marks of the Church, not only in the true administration of the Word and the sacraments, but also in the faithful administration of Church discipline.
- There were also differences between the Reformed and the Lutherans as to the government of the Church.

### **Divergent Views**

- There were some divergent post-Reformation views as well.
- The Socinians, which have probably infiltrated more churches than we realize, spoke of the invisible Church, but forgot all about it.
- Since they conceived of the Christian religion simply as an acceptable doctrine – as long as Jesus is not God.
- The Arminians, denied that the Church is essentially the invisible communion of the saints.
- Made it primarily a visible society.
- They robbed the Church of its independence by yielding the right of discipline to the State.
- Retained the right to preach the Gospel and to admonish its members.
- The Methodists, representing many pietistic movements chose a different approach.
- They disregarded the visible Church.
- Pietists were those who had a disciplined and emotional devotion in their practices of Christianity.
- They were indifferent towards the institutional Church, with its functions and sacraments.
- They brought their followers into small groups or cells.
- They focused on a society or fellowship, as opposed to a church.

### **The Roman Catholic Church**

- The Roman Catholic Church moved even further in the direction of an absolute hierarchy after the days of the Reformation with a more pronounced authority of the Pope.
- The Vatican Council in 1870 finally declared the infallibility of the Roman Pontiff, when speaking to fulfill the office of pastor and teacher.

- The Germans, however, were not willing to submit to this decision and began to identify themselves as “The Old Catholic Church.”
- When comparing themselves with the Protestants, the Catholic Church boasts of its unity.
- Though this is more appearance than reality.
- Their unity is merely a corporate or organizational unity, rather than a unity of spirit and purpose.

**To Consider**

- The Church was greatly influenced by the Roman Empire, especially as the State Church.
- There seemed to be little willingness to submit the Church structure/ organization to a biblical standard.
- The power of the Church structure – Protestant and Catholic- was equally resistant to change.

**Review**

- You learned how the Doctrine of the Church developed.
- You were able to explain the difficult challenges the Church has faced throughout its history.
- You thought about and discussed the importance of the Church.

**In the Next Session**

- We will be discussing, in the History of Christian Doctrine, the sections on the Doctrines of the Sacraments and the Last Things.

## **ASSIGNMENT: THE DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH**

For the rest of this session, discuss what you have learned and written in your summary of each chapter in your textbook.

There are a series of questions or assignments numbered and in bold letters.

**1. Is there a conflict between the Church as a fellowship and the Church as an organization? Should there be a problem? Is it either/or?**

**2. What should be the external characteristics that designate a true church, a truly Christian church? Are there core doctrines, practices or a specific organizational structure we must use? What are some things that we probably should not use to determine a true church? For example, I once heard that if a church did not have a bus ministry and a gymnasium, then it was not a New Testament church. What would you put on this list?**

**3. Is the idea of a pure church membership in the local church, realistic? Where is the balance? Augustine considered Jesus’ teaching on the wheat and the tares as evidence that a pure (visible) church is not expected. See Mt 13:24-30 (the parable) and 13:36-43 (the explanation). What do you think?**

**4. Here are a few of the questions (below) that arise when considering Augustine’s teachings. Perhaps we should consider our answers to these questions concerning our own belief about the church – visible and invisible. Note: it is acceptable to answer, “I do not know.”**

Who are in the Church? (Augustine’s answer)

- All the predestined, including the still unconverted.
- All believers, including those who will relapse.
- All those who have part in the sacraments.

Which is the true Church, the external communion of the baptized, or the spiritual communion of the elect and the saints, or both, since it is said that there is no salvation outside of the external communion?

How is the Church, as constituted of the number of the elect, related to the Church as the communion of the faithful? They are clearly not identical for some may be of

the faithful (in attendance and support) who are not of the elect and are finally lost. “No one has God for a Father, who does not have the Church (i.e. the one visible catholic Church) for a mother.” So, what about the elect who never join the Church?

If the Church is founded on the predestinating grace of God, how is it possible that those who have once received the grace of regeneration and the forgiveness of sins in baptism, should lose this again and forfeit salvation?

If God is the only absolute source of all grace and dispenses it in a sovereign way, can it be considered proper to ascribe this power to the visible Church with its sacraments, and to make salvation dependent on membership in that organization?

**5. Consider the consequences (above) of seeing the Church alone, as the Kingdom of God.**

**6. In our earlier question about the identifying characteristics of a truly Christian Church, did you include some of the things we see in the Reformation groups above? Such as, the “pure or true administration of the Word (the Gospel) and the sacraments”? How about, “in the faithful administration of Church discipline”? Did you find other things that you agreed with or disagreed with? Are there things you would add?**

**7. It is hard for us to imagine, that the idea of gathering in small groups for Bible study, fellowship and worship would be considered “unlawful or secret religious gatherings.” Small groups or cell groups have always proved effective in making disciples. Does this mean that we should abandon the “visible” / local church and only meet in independent, small groups? Why or why not?**

## **SESSION 17, PART 2 – THE DOCTRINE OF THE SACRAMENTS**

After this session, you will:

- Know how the Doctrine of the Sacraments developed.
- Be able to explain the proper function of the Sacraments.
- Think about and discuss the significance and identity of the Sacraments.
- See clearly, the scriptural ceremonies, sacraments that we are to observe: Baptism and The Lord’s Supper
- Feel that we should observe them sincerely and seriously, but avoid any consideration of magical power.

You will KNOW:

- The term “sacraments” is not used in the New Testament, but was the Latin translation of the Greek word for mystery.

You will BE ABLE TO:

- Explain the proper function of the Sacraments.

You will THINK ABOUT:

- The significance and identity of the Sacraments.

### **In the Last Session**

- You learned how the Doctrine of the Church developed.
- You examined the difficult challenges the Church has faced throughout its history.
- You thought about the importance of the Church.

**Begin video.**

### **The Doctrine of the Sacraments**

- The term “sacraments” is not used in the New Testament, but was the Latin translation of the Greek word “mystērion” (mystery) which was used to designate something that was not revealed in the Old Testament.
- Later it acquired another connotation, becoming the designation of all that was mysterious and incomprehensible in the Christian religion.
- “Sacrament” had a wide application in the early Christian centuries.
- It was used of anything to which the idea of sanctity or sacredness could be attached; such as:
  - The sign of the cross
  - Salt given to a person receiving instructions prior to baptism
  - The ordination of priests
  - Marriage
  - Exorcism
  - Celebration of the Sabbath
  - The term was predominately applied to baptism and the Lord’s Supper.

### **The Scholastics**

- The Scholastics followed Augustine’s conception of the sacraments as visible signs and mediums of an invisible grace.
- There was no agreement of their number, somewhere from 5-30.
- Eventually, in 1439, the Roman Catholic Church settled on seven:
  - Baptism
  - Confirmation
  - Eucharist (The Lord’s Supper)
  - Penance
  - Priestly Consecration
  - Marriage
  - Extreme Unction (Last Rites)
- The relation of the physical to the spiritual element was not clearly defined.
- Neither was there a clear explanation of how the sacraments work.
- Many considered them as magic, or at least unexplainable.

### **The Reformation**

- The Reformation subjected the doctrine of the sacraments to a scriptural revision.
- Generally, the reformers agreed that the Grace imparted in the sacrament is first the forgiving grace of God, which bears on the guilt of sin rather than on the lower nature of man.
- Sacraments are signs and seals attached to the Word, which communicate no kind of grace that is not also imparted by the Word and have no value apart from the Word.



- Operation and fruit of the sacrament is dependent on faith in the recipient and always presupposes saving grace.
- Luther at first stressed the fact that the operation of the sacraments is dependent on faith of the recipient, and later gave greater prominence to their intimate and essential connection with the Word, of which they are signs and seals.
- Because of his struggles with the Anabaptists, he emphasized their effectiveness was dependent on the divine institution rather than on the faith of the recipient.
- Because sacraments are administered only to believers, Zwingli, (and the Anabaptists) conceived of them as signs and proofs of faith.
- Secondly they saw them as the means for the strengthening of faith.
- Reminders of the blessings appropriated by faith.
- Directing our faith away from ourselves to the grace of God in Jesus Christ.
- Calvin also regards the sacraments as acts of confession but only secondarily.
- They are first signs and seals of the promises of God which direct attention to the riches of His grace.
- God is and remains the only source of grace.
- Unbelievers may receive the external sign, but do not participate in the thing signified.

### **Baptism**

- Baptism was foremost among the sacraments as the rite of initiation into the Church.
- Even in the Apostolic Fathers, we find the idea that it was instrumental in effecting the forgiveness of sin and in communicating the new life of regeneration.
- It could be said that they taught baptismal regeneration, or salvation by water baptism, with some qualifications.
- They held that baptism was effective in the case of adults, only in connection with the right inner disposition and purpose.
- They did not regard baptism as essential to the initiation of spiritual life but rather as the completing element in a process of renewal.
- Infant baptism was apparently practiced in the days of Origen and Tertullian though opposed on some grounds.
- The mode of baptism was not a matter of dispute.
- While immersion was practiced, it was not the only mode and was not considered to be of the essence of baptism.
- The conception of baptism changed from the second century on, the idea gaining ground that the sacrament works magically.

### **Augustine**

- Augustine considered faith and repentance as the necessary conditions of baptism in the case of adults.
- That children who die unbaptized are lost.
- Those baptized have the faith of the Church as their sponsors.
- The official stand of the Roman Catholic Church declares baptism to be the sacrament of regeneration and of initiation into the Church.
- Baptism provides forgiveness for original sin and for sins committed before baptism.
- Note: martyrdom was considered the full equivalent of baptism.

### **Luther**

- Luther taught that the Word of God with its intrinsic divine power makes the water of baptism a gracious water of life and a washing of regeneration.
- At first, it was dependent on faith, but since children can hardly exercise faith, he next held that God by His prevenient grace works faith in this unconscious child. Prevenient means divine grace, and it comes before any human action including faith.

### **The Anabaptists**

- The Anabaptists denied the validity of infant baptism (hence the name)
- They insisted on re-baptizing those baptized in infancy, who wanted to join their circle.
- In their estimation, there was no true baptism that was not preceded by a voluntary profession of faith in Jesus Christ.

### **The Reformed**

- The Reformed proceeded on the assumption that baptism was instituted for believers and therefore does not work, but strengthens faith.
- Their two-fold difficulty involved having to prove that children (infants) can be regarded as believers.
- They had to define the spiritual benefit which the child receives in baptism – since they have no faith to be strengthened.
- Their answer focused on the benefit received.
- That baptism gives the parents assurance that their child is incorporated in the covenant, gives the child a share in all the blessings of the covenant.

### **The Lord’s Supper**

- The Lord’s Supper was, at first, part of a common meal provided for and shared in by the people.
- Later, when the bishop became a priest, the Supper itself assumed the character of a sacrifice brought by the priest-bishop, which changed the nature of the ceremony from a remembrance to something else.
- The original, symbolic conception was supplanted by the doctrine that the flesh and blood of Christ was in some way combined with the bread and wine in the sacrament.
- In 818 the doctrine was put forward that the material elements in the sacrament are, by divine power, literally changed into the very body that was born of Mary.
- The outward appearance of bread and wine being, after consecration, a mere veil that deceives the senses, the Council of Trent (1545-1563) declared that Jesus Christ is truly, really and substantially present in the holy sacrament.

### **The Reformers**

- The Reformers all rejected the sacrificial theory of the Lord’s Supper and the mediaeval doctrine of transubstantiation. Transubstantiation is the idea that the bread and wine are turned into the actual body and blood of Jesus.
- They began constructing a scriptural doctrine of the Lord’s Supper and that is where they parted ways.
- Luther said they were signs and seals of the forgiveness of sin.
- But then later adopted another view.
- Opposing Zwingli’s figurative interpretation of the words of the institution saying they should be taken literally.
- Zwingli opposed especially the idolatry of the mass and denied absolutely the bodily presence of Christ in the Lord’s Supper.
- Calvin held an intermediate position, having two objections with Zwingli.
- Zwingli stressed the activity of the believers rather than the gracious gift of God in the sacrament – thus it is an act of profession.
- Zwingli saw in the eating of the body of Christ nothing more than an expression of belief in His name and confident trust in His death.
- Calvin’s theory was, that the glorified humanity of Christ is a fountain of spiritual virtue or efficacy.
- This efficacy is mediated by the Holy Spirit to the believing recipient of the Eucharistic elements. Eucharist comes from the Greek word for “thankful.”
- Accordingly, the body of Christ is present in the Eucharist in virtue of efficacy. Efficacy means the ability to produce a desired or intended result.
- The eating of Christ’s body is entirely spiritual, by means of faith and a physical chewing of His body is out of the question.
- 1 Corinthians 11:23-33:

- 23 – “For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus in the night in which He was betrayed took bread;
- 24 – “and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, “This is My body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of Me.”
- 25 – “In the same way He took the cup also after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in My blood; do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.”
- 26 – “For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.”
- 27 – “Therefore whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner, shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord.”
- 28 – “But a man must examine himself, and in so doing he is to eat of the bread and drink of the cup.”
- 29 – “For he who eats and drinks, eats and drinks judgment to himself if he does not judge the body rightly.”
- 30 – “For this reason many among you are weak and sick, and a number sleep.”
- 31 – “But if we judged ourselves rightly, we would not be judged.”
- 32 – “But when we are judged, we are disciplined by the Lord so that we will not be condemned along with the world.”
- 33 – “So then, my brethren, when you come together to eat, wait for one another.”

### **To Consider**

- There was very little clarity regarding what were sacraments.
- There was very little clarity on what exactly they were supposed to accomplish and how they worked.
- There was no scriptural support for all the “sacraments” other than Baptism and the Lord’s Supper.

### **Review**

- You learned how the Doctrine of the Sacraments developed.
- You learned about the proper function of the Sacraments.
- You thought about the significance and identity of the Sacraments.

### **In the Next Session**

- We will be discussing, in the “History of Christian Doctrine,” the sections on the Doctrine of the Last Things.

## **ASSIGNMENT: THE DOCTRINE OF THE SACRAMENTS**

In the next part of this session (which will be our last), we will be discussing, in the History of Christian Doctrine, the sections on the Doctrines of the Last Things.

For the rest of this part of our session you will spend time discussing the notes for this section, what you have learned and what you have written in your summaries of the sections of your textbook.

There are a series of questions or assignments numbered and in bold letters.

**1. The question about “sacraments” is directional. Is this something that is done to me, for me or is it something I do, or is it all of these? Does the sacredness of the ceremony come from the ceremony, from the administrator or from the participant? Is it declarative or is it internal? Or is it both?**

**2. Was Luther’s change of emphasis regarding the sacraments a reaction or a response? Earlier we saw him respond in two different ways when seeking to counter perceived heresies regarding the order of salvation. Is this the same kind of situation? Can both these things be true? Is it more a matter of emphasis or is it a change of doctrine? Is it dependent on faith or is it dependent upon the sacrament? What about the person administering the sacrament, does that matter?**

**3. Calvin says that “unbelievers may receive the external sign, but do not participate in the thing signified.” Should we be concerned about “unbelievers” participating in observing “The Lord’s Supper” and perhaps restrict participation to (certified) church members only?**

**4. Because of their qualifications, perhaps it could be said that the Apostolic Fathers viewed baptism as only for those who have already responded to Jesus Christ for salvation and are being baptized to confirm that commitment?**

**5. If baptism were an essential sacrament for salvation, how can martyrdom be a substitute?**

## **The Lord’s Supper**

### Development of the Doctrine Before the Reformation

At first the Lord’s Supper was part of a common meal provided for and shared in by the people.

When the bishop became a priest, the Supper itself assumed the character of a sacrifice brought by the priest-bishop; which affected the representation of the sacramental union. The symbolic conception found in Origen was supplanted by the doctrine that the flesh and blood of Christ was in some way combined with the bread and wine in the sacrament.

In 818 the doctrine was put forward that the material elements in the sacrament are by divine power literally changed into the very body that was born of Mary, the outward appearance of bread and wine being after consecration a mere veil that deceives the senses. The Council of Trent (1545-1563) declared that Jesus Christ is truly, really and substantially present in the holy sacrament.

**6. “After consecration,” this is where the idea of “magic” or “supernatural” enters the picture, even more so. This is also why it is called the “Eucharist” or “The Blessing.” Supposedly, just as Jesus spoke a blessing and made the bread into His body and the wine in the cup into His blood, so, the priest recites the word prescribed and does the same.**

**7. I am not sure what Calvin means by his use of “efficacy,” but I am thinking that he is talking about the reality of the Spirit’s work in our lives through our observance of the Lord’s Supper. Christians generally have a good association, good memories, and good feelings related to our observance. Much of it, I think, relates to our eating this bread and drinking this cup with one another. Consider your own thoughts about the observance of the Lord’s Supper. Is it something that has a special place in your experience?**

## **SESSION 17, PART 3 – THE DOCTRINE OF LAST THINGS**

At the end of this lesson, you will:

- Know how the Doctrine of the Last Things developed.
- Be able to discern truth from speculation regarding the Last Things.
- Think about how speculation produced different ideas about the Last Things, from those produced by the Scriptures.
- Renew your commitment to building dogma on the truths of God’s word.
- Realize that God’s word tells us more than we realize about the Last Things.

You will KNOW:

- There has been a great deal of speculation regarding The Last Things of Heaven, Hell, Judgment, Resurrection, the Return of Christ and His Millennial Kingdom.

You will BE ABLE TO:

- Discern truth from speculation regarding the Last Things.

You will THINK ABOUT:

- The doctrine of purgatory was opposed by the pre-Reformers and rejected as contrary to Scripture by the Reformers.

### **In the Last Session**

- You learned how the Doctrine of the Sacraments developed.
- You understood the proper function of the Sacraments.
- You thought about and discussed the significance and identity of the Sacraments.

### **Begin video.**

### **The Doctrine of the Last Things**

- Eschatology is the formal name of the doctrine of Last Things.
- The doctrine of the last things never stood in the center of attention.
- It is one of the least developed doctrines and therefore allows little elaborate discussion regarding its history.
- In the 20th century, we reached a point in the history of dogma in which the doctrine of the last things received greater attention and developed further.

### **The Abode of The Dead**

- The Apostolic Fathers did not write extensively about what happens after death.
- According to the common opinion of their day, and consistent with New Testament teaching, the pious at death immediately inherit the heavenly glory prepared for them and the wicked at once suffer the punishment of hell.
- When it became apparent that Christ would not immediately return, some began to rethink our status between death and the resurrection.
- Justin Martyr said, “The souls of the pious are in a better place, those of the unjust and wicked in a worse, waiting for the time of judgment.”
- He denounced as heretical those who said that their souls, when they die, are taken to heaven.

### **Purgatory**

- The general opinion of the later Fathers was that the dead descend into Hades, a place with various divisions, where they remain until the Day of Judgment or, according to Augustine, until they are sufficiently purified. (Purgatory)
- The doctrine of purgatory was opposed by the pre-Reformers and rejected as contrary to Scripture by the Reformers; being described as “The vermin brood of idolatry, begotten by the tail of the dragon” and as “A fond thing vainly invented and grounded upon no warranty of Scripture.”

### **The Second Advent**

- Regarding the Second Advent and the Millennial hope, early Christians were taught to look for the return of Jesus Christ and it is evident even from the New Testament that some of them expected a speedy return.
- The literal interpretation of Revelation 20:1-6 led some early Church Fathers to distinguish between a first and a second resurrection and to believe in an intervening millennial kingdom.
- The belief in a millennial kingdom, which existed in the early Church, gradually eroded because of several factors.
- Centuries rolled by without the return of Jesus Christ.
- Persecutions ceased.
- Christianity received a sure footing in the Roman Empire and even became the State religion.
- The passionate longing for the appearance of Jesus Christ gave way for an adaptation of the Church to its present task.
- The allegorical interpretation of Scripture had a chilling effect on all millennial hopes.
- Turning the thoughts of the Church from the future to the present.



- Identifying the Church as the Kingdom of God.

### **The Millennial Kingdom**

- In the Middle Ages, belief in a Millennial Kingdom was generally regarded as heretical.
- However, in the 10th century, there was a widespread expectation of the approaching end of the world when we reached the year 1000 – but it did not happen.
- At the time of the Reformation, the doctrine of the millennium was rejected by the Protestant Churches, but revived by some, the Anabaptists in particular.
- Luther scornfully rejected the dream that there would be an earthly kingdom of Christ preceding the Day of Judgment.
- The Augsburg Confession declared that this doctrine should be suppressed.

### **The Second Helvetic Confession**

- “Moreover, we condemn the Jewish dreams, that before the Day of Judgment there shall be a golden age in the earth and the godly shall possess the kingdoms of the world, their wicked enemies being trodden under foot.”

### **Postmillennialism**

- In the 17th century, a more spiritual conception of the millennium appeared, advocated by some Lutheran & Reformed theologians.
- Their view was that before the end of the world and the return of Jesus Christ, there will be a period in which the spiritual presence of Christ in the Church will be experienced in an unusual measure and a universal religious awakening will ensue.
- The Kingdom of Jesus Christ will then stand out as a kingdom of peace and righteousness. This was the early form of postmillennialism.
- In Liberal circles, a new form of postmillennialism has made its appearance, with the expectation of a new social order in which the law of Christ shall prevail, and result in peace, justice and a glorious blossoming of present spiritual forces.

### **Premillennialism**

- During the 18th and 19th centuries, the doctrine of the millennium again met with great favor in some circles.
- There is great diversity of opinion among the premillennialists as to the order of the final events and the actual condition of things during the millennium.
- Too many, have foolishly made repeated attempts to predict the time of Christ’s return.

- There is widespread belief today, especially in the United States that the return of Christ will be followed by a temporary visible reign of Christ on earth. However, there are many who deny it.

### **The Resurrection**

- How did the Doctrine of the Resurrection develop?
- Most of the early Church Fathers believed in the resurrection of the body and in the identity of the future body with that of the present.
- Origen described the resurrection body as a refined and spiritualized body. Some of the Church Fathers shared his view but the majority did not.
- Augustine believed that at the resurrection all would have the stature of the full-grown man.
- Jerome insisted on the identity of the very hairs and teeth.
- The East manifested a tendency to adopt a more spiritual view of the resurrection than that of the West. Some suggested the analogy of the seed and the plant.
- Those who believed in a future millennium spoke of a double resurrection.
- That of the pious at the beginning and that of the wicked at the end of the millennial reign.
- The Scholastics speculated, in their usual way, about the body of the resurrection, with little permanent value.
- Thomas Aquinas seemed to have special information on the subject.
- He informs us that they who are alive at the coming of Christ will first die and then be raised again with the rest of the dead which will take place in the evening.
- All will be in the bloom of youth.
- The body will be tangible, but fine and light and not subject to growth.
- The theologians of the Reformation agreed that the resurrection body would be identical with the present body.
- This doctrine is included in the confessional standards of the Churches of the Reformation.
- With the advance of the physical sciences, some (unjustly) had difficulties with a doctrine of the resurrection and religious liberalism simply denied the resurrection.

### **The Last Judgment**

- The earliest Church Fathers have very little to say about the last judgment, but generally stress its certainty.
- Most are of the opinion that the saints in heaven will enjoy different degrees of blessedness, as reward for the virtues they had on earth.
- The punishment of the wicked was considered eternal.
- The Later Fathers stood firm in the conviction that there would be a final judgment at the end of the world.
- Augustine assumes that the scriptural representations are figurative and is uncertain about how long this judgment will last.
- Some believed in degrees of bliss and torment and generally regarded them as eternal, most clung to the idea of material fire.

### **Heaven and Hell**

- The Scholastics paid special attention to the location of heaven and hell (of course they did).
  - There were the visible heavens
  - The spiritual heaven
  - The intellectual heaven
- Hell was the abode of the damned.
- There were three regions besides Hell.
  - Purgatory in close proximity to Hell.
  - The limbo state of children who were unbaptized.
  - The limbo state of the Old Testament saints.

### **The Reformers**

- The Reformers were content with the affirmation of the simple doctrine of the Scripture that Christ will come again to judge the world.
- Being careful to distinguish between the general judgment at the end of the world and the secret and particular judgment, which takes place at the death of each individual.
- They shared the common belief in the eternal bliss of heaven and the eternal torments of hell.
- Some Anabaptists taught restorationism and some Socinians taught annihilation of the wicked. Restorationism, as it relates to eschatology, is the belief in a temporary future punishment and a final restoration of all to the favor and presence of God. A universalist.
- Some Protestant theologians believe that material fire has a part in the endless punishment of the wicked – others are non-committal on the subject; and still others interpreted it in a figurative manner.

- The doctrine of future rewards and punishments, as taught by the Reformation, remains the official doctrine of the Churches up to the present day.
- Only Universalists believe in universal salvation and in the restoration of all things in the absolute sense of the word.

### **To Consider**

- There has been a great deal of speculation regarding The Last Things of Heaven, Hell, Judgment, Resurrection, the Return of Christ and His Millennial Kingdom.
- Let us not lose heart in hoping for Christ’s return. His word and promise are true.
- There is a hell to shun and a heaven to gain – through Christ.

### **Thank You**

- I trust that you have benefited from our time together as we studied Church History - Ecclesiology and the History of Christian Doctrine. May God continue to bless you.

### **Review**

- Learned how the Doctrine of the Last Things developed.
- Understood the difference between the truth and speculation regarding the Last Things.
- Understood how speculation produced different ideas about the Last Things, from those produced by the Scriptures.

## **ASSIGNMENT: THE DOCTRINE OF LAST THINGS**

The final assignment will be a paper, detailing your learning experience in this class: what you learned, what was especially beneficial to you and how this has affected your attitude and view of the Church.

For the rest of this session, discuss what you have learned and written in your summary of each chapter in your textbook.

There are a series of questions or assignments numbered and in bold letters.

- 1. Why would a change in expectation of Christ’s return produce a change in an understanding of the state between death and the resurrection?**
- 2. How can these things (above) overcome our hope of Christ’s return and kingdom? See 2 Peter 3:3-13. What was the “perceived present task” of the church?**
- 3. “The weight of theological opinion” being for or against something would only matter, if that theological opinion has real substance, being based on the Scriptures.**
- 4. Who will we believe? Will we believe the speculations of Scientists, or God’s Word? Are we going to trust our own wisdom and understanding or the wisdom and understanding of God?**

## GLOSSARY

**Atonement** - A term originally coined by William Tyndale to translate the Latin term *reconciliatio*, which has since come to have the developed meaning of “the work of Christ” or “the benefits of Christ gained for believers by his death and resurrection.”

**Calvin, John** - (1509-64). French Protestant and the second most outstanding figure in the Reformation after Martin Luther. Born in Noyon, he spent his youth training for a career in the Roman Church. He was educated in French Legal Humanism in Universities in Orleans, Paris and Bourges. He became a Protestant sometime in the late 1520’s or early 1530’s. Associated most strongly with Geneva, he was scholar turned pastor. He wrote voluminously, taught daily through the Bible and preached from the NT each Lord’s Day. His greatest theological work is his *Institutes of the Christian Religion* which he revised several times from 1536-59. His contribution to Protestant theology was to link Luther’s doctrine of justification to a more developed doctrine of sanctification framed by a thoroughly Trinitarian understanding of creation and redemption.

**Canons of Dort** - (1619). Five articles drafted and adopted by an international Reformed Synod convened at Dordrecht by the Dutch Reformed Church in response to the five points of the Remonstrant (Arminian) theologians.

**Cappadocian Fathers** –also traditionally known as the Three Cappadocians. They are: Basil the Great (330–379), who was bishop of Caesarea; Basil's younger brother Gregory of Nyssa (c.332–395), who was bishop of Nyssa; and a close friend, Gregory of Nazianzus (329–389), who became Patriarch of Constantinople. The Cappadocia region, in modern-day Turkey, was an early site of Christian activity, with several missions by Paul in this region.

**Christology** - The locus of Christian theology dealing with the identity, person, and work of Jesus Christ, and particularly the relation of his human and divine natures.

**Clericalized** -To cause to become clerical or be influenced by clericalism.

**The Cluniac Reforms** – A series of changes within medieval monasticism of the Western Church focused on restoring the traditional monastic life, encouraging art, and caring for the poor.

**Consubstantiation** - A term used to refer to the theory of the real presence, especially associated with Martin Luther, which holds that the substance of the Eucharistic bread and wine are given together with the substance of the body and blood of Christ.

**Council of Trent** - (1545-63) Promulgated the official Roman Catholic response to and anathema against the Protestant Reformation. Vatican Council I (1869-70) solidified this response by adding the doctrine of Papal infallibility. Vatican Council II (1962-65), however, appears to move back from Trent and Vatican I by describing Protestants as ‘separated brethren’.

**Creed** - A formal definition or summary of the Christian faith, held in common by all Christians. The most important are those generally known as the “Apostles’ creed” and the “Nicene creed.”

**Doctrine** - Body of beliefs and tenets, as of the church.

**Donatism** - A movement, centering upon Roman North Africa in the fourth century, which developed a rigorist view of the church and sacraments.

**Ekklesia** – (ek-klay-see'-ah) An assembly, congregation, church; the Church, the whole body of Christian believers.

**Ecclesiastical** – Of or pertaining to the church or clergy (from Latin ecclesia).

**Ecclesiology** – The study of Church doctrine.

**Eucharist** – The term used in to refer to the sacrament variously known as “the mass,” “the Lord’s supper,” and “holy communion.”

**Helvetic Confessions** - Two documents expressing the common belief of the Reformed churches of Switzerland.

**John Duns Scotus** - Commonly known as Duns Scotus is generally considered to be one of the three most important philosopher-theologians of the High Middle Ages. Duns Scotus had considerable influence on both Catholic and secular thought.

**Pope Gregory I** - Commonly known as Gregory the Great. He was pope of the Catholic Church from 590 to his death in 604. Gregory is famous for instigating the first recorded large-scale mission from Rome to convert people to Christianity.

**Kyriakos** - Belonging to the Lord.

**Martin Luther** - A German professor of theology, composer, priest, monk and a seminal figure in the Protestant Reformation.

**Modalism** - (or **modalistic Monarchianism**) God is one person appearing and working in the different "modes" of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The chief proponent of **modalism** was Sabellius, hence the view is commonly called Sabellianism.

**Monergism** - Is the doctrine that the Holy Spirit is the only efficient agent in regeneration. That the human will possesses no inclination to holiness until regenerated, and cannot cooperate in regeneration.

**Novatianism** - An Early Christian sect devoted to Novatian. (a scholar, priest, theologian and antipope between 251 and 258). It held a strict view that refused readmission to communion of Lapsi, those baptized Christians who had denied their faith or performed the formalities of a ritual sacrifice to the pagan gods, under the pressures of the persecution sanctioned by Emperor Decius, in AD 250. The Novationists were declared heretical.

**Origen or Origen Adamantius** - A Greek scholar, ascetic, and early Christian theologian who was born and spent the first half of his career in Alexandria.

**Orthodoxy** - Literally "right beliefs." Doctrine authoritatively established by the Church.

**Qahal** - (kha-hale) One of the primary words for a gathering or assembly. The Biblical text consistently distinguishes between 'edah and qahal.

**Sacralized** - To treat as or make sacred.

**Schism** - From the Greek meaning "to tear or to split," a division, usually from an organization or a movement. Refers to a person who creates or incites division in a group or a church, or a defined organization with a hierarchy.

**Thomas Aquinas** - An Italian Dominican friar, Catholic priest, and Doctor of the Church. He was an immensely influential philosopher, theologian, and jurist in the tradition of scholasticism, within which he is also known as the Doctor Angelicus and the Doctor Communis. The name Aquinas identifies his ancestral origins in the county of Aquino in present-day Lazio.



**Totalitarian** - Relating to a centralized government that does not tolerate parties of differing opinion and that exercises dictatorial control over many aspects of life.

**Vatican II or Second Vatican Ecumenical Council** - Commonly known as the Second Vatican Council, or informally Vatican II, addressed relations between the Catholic Church and the modern world. It was the twenty-first and most recent ecumenical council of the Catholic Church and the second to be held at St. Peter's Basilica in the Vatican. The council, through the Holy See, formally opened under the pontificate of Pope John XXIII October 11, 1962 and closed under Pope Paul VI on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception December 8, 1965.

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