Week 3 Church History Overview

# Course Overview

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This week we will give an overview of Church History. We will briefly examine the various ages of Church History. We will examine what is continuity and why it is very important.

It is the goal that this overview will give you a basic foundation from which to continue your studies as it relates to the history of the Church. That you will understand how the church developed and grew. You will also a basic knowledge of the Reformation and its reaction to Rome and the Episcopacy.

Class Objectives and Focus

- This week we will give a brief historical overview of the Church

- We look at the Various periods in Church History and cause the most change in the Church

- We will look at the Reformation and Continuity

- We will examine how this plays into Apostolic Succession

- We will look at some of the major theological battles of the Church

# Course Materials and other Resources

The Church in History

Read the following Scriptures: Revelation 1 through 3

# Course Study Guide

**Most church historians recognize three general periods:**

**I. Patristic Christianity - AD 95 to AD 590**

**(So called because of the dominant influence on both life and thought of the Church Fathers)**

**II. Medieval Christianity - AD 590 to AD 1517**

**(This period was first called the Middle Ages by Christopher Keller [1634-80])**

**III. Modern Christianity - 1517 to the present**

**(The great turning point in church history was the Protestant Reformation, "inaugurated" by Martin Luther on Oct. 31, 1517)**

**It is helpful to further subdivide each of these general periods into more descriptive phases:**

**I. Patristic Christianity - AD 95 to AD 590**

**a. The Age of Apologetics -** this period dates from AD 95, generally regarded as the year when the final book of the NT canon (Revelation) was written, to AD 325 and the Council of Nicea. Some prefer AD 312, the year Constantine was "converted" to Christianity. The Edict of Milan in 313 effectively ended the persecution of the church as a minority movement and granted it full legal status, to be tolerated equally with all other religions. During this period the struggling church defended itself against the threats of paganism, both politically and theologically.

**b. The Age of Polemics -** from AD 325 to the rise of Gregory (the last of the Church Fathers and the first of the real Popes) in AD 590. Following the "conversion" of Constantine, the church "moved swiftly from the seclusion of the catacombs to the prestige of palaces" (Shelley). With the power of the state at its behest, the church began to exert its moral influence on society as a whole. With prestige and political influence, however, there also came internal corruption. Monasticism emerged in protest of this secularization of the faith. In 392, the emperor Theodosius I established Christianity as the only legal religion of the Roman Empire. It was also during this period that the major doctrinal controversies raged and were resolved at state-sanctioned theological councils.

**II. Medieval Christianity - AD 590 to 1517**

**a. The Age of Papal Hierarchy -** from Gregory the Great (590) to the schism between East and West (1054) or to Gregory VII (1073). The principal characteristic of this age, often referred to (perhaps without justification) as the Dark Ages, was the establishment and solidification of the power of the Roman Catholic papal hierarchy.

**b. The Age of Scholasticism or Systematization -** from 1054/1073 to the beginning of the Protestant Reformation in 1517. During this period Christian doctrine is thoroughly systematized through the philosophy and theology of the churchmen such as Anselm (1033-1109), Peter Abelard (d. 1142), Hugh of St. Victor, Peter Lombard, Albert the Great, Duns Scotus, reaching its zenith in the monumental work of St. Thomas Aquinas (1225-74), whose theology (called Thomism) was declared eternally valid for Catholicism in 1879.

**[It was also during this period that the church in the East broke from Rome (1054).]**

**III. Modern Christianity - 1517 to the present**

**a. The Age of Protestant Reform and Polemical Confessionalism -** from Martin Luther's posting of the 95 theses (1517) to the Peace of Westphalia (1648-50). This period witnessed the triumph of the Protestant Reformation in Europe (with the emergence of four major traditions in early Protestantism: Lutheran, Reformed, Anabaptist, and Anglican), as well as the reaction of Rome in the Catholic Counter-Reformation and the influence of the Jesuits. The 17th century was characterized by the development of scholastic and creedal orthodoxy. Reactionary and revivalistic movements emerged in the latter stages of this period, partially in opposition to the apparent stagnation which had settled in amidst much of Protestantism.

**b. The Age of Rationalism and Revival -** from 1650 to the French Revolution (1789). Also known as the Age of Reason, respect for science replaced belief in the supernatural, as the church came under the powerful influence of the Enlightenment (in which reason was prized above revelation). The great revival movements in England (the Wesley’s) and America (Edwards and Whitefield) were the church's best defense against the inroads of humanism.

**c. The Age of Progress -** from 1789 to World War I (1914). The early years of this period were characterized by political upheaval (the American [1776] and French [1789] Revolutions) and social transformation (the Industrial Revolution). The emergence of German higher criticism and the publication of Darwin's Origin of Species set in motion a philosophy that threatened to undermine the foundations of orthodoxy. It is during the latter stages of this period that we see the emergence of what is known as modern theological liberalism.

**d. The Age of Ideologies -** from 1914 (World War I) to the present day. During this period a plethora of new gods arose to compete for the allegiance of the secular mind. Communism, Nazism, Facism, theological liberalism (which was challenged by the reaction of Barthian neo-orthodoxy), socialism, ecumenism, individualism, and humanism are among the many competing ideologies. The church responded to this so-called modernism with its own -ism, Fundamentalism, and eventually the more intellectually sophisticated and culturally engaged Evangelicalism. Other developments of note were Denominationalism and the Pentecostal/Charismatic movement.

**A closer look**

**Early Apostolic Church**

* Founded by Christ and first called The Way which was consider a sect of Judaism.
* Christ is its founder, Hebrews 3:1, there is no Christianity without Christ for he is the Apostle and High Priest of our Profession
* Twelve Apostles, Judas hung himself and was replace by Matthias, and not Paul
* There were other apostles in Scripture named by Paul and Luke in the New Testament
* These apostles establish churches that were led by the bishops (pastors) in every city.
* Ministry in the early church was more fluid than it is today.   
    
  **Post-Apostolic Church**
* This was supposedly the era of the church after the death of the Apostle John who died around the year 100.
* We see the Church maturing and expanding throughout the known world and adding tiers of leadership and expanding the roles of the presbyters during this period.
* Around 250, we have metropolitans, the bishops of the metropolis, coming on the scene who would hold councils with the other bishops in their areas.
* The church begun to consolidate power within the hands of the bishops. The ruling elders became priests and the bishop ruled along assisted by presbyter-priests and deacons.
* Doctrinal challenges as it relates to the person and work of Christ begun to arise in the Church which led to the calling of the Nicene Council.

**Church Councils and Controversy**

* Who called them
* Why were they called
* Who attended them
* Model off the Acts 15 council
* When were they considered Ecumenical  
    
  **The Reformation and Continuity**
* 95 Theses and Martin Luther
* Break with Roman Continuity
* Various Protestant Salvation Theologies and Definition of what a Cleric was
* Main Branches of Protestantism
* Apostolic Succession and Protestants  
    
  **Anglicanism and the Methodist**
* Arminianism and Calvinism collide
* John Wesley, the Scriptural Episcopos
* BCP and Protestant Worship
* Modern Colleges of Bishops  
    
  **Baptacostals**
* Baptist Bishops
* Baptist Polity and Episcopacy

**Course Schedule**

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| Week | Subject | Course Information |
| 1 | The Holy Scriptures | Inspiration, The Canon, Original text |
| 2 | Sacramental Theology | Reformed verses Roman Catholic View of Sacraments |
| 3 | Church History Overview | Ages of Church, Continuity, Reformation |
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# Exam Schedule

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| Week | Subject |
| 3 | Exam on Holy Scriptures and Sacraments (Online) Feb 29th |
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# Homework

Answer the following:

What is Continuity? Do churches birth at the time of the Reformation have continuity with Rome and Orthodox? Explain your answers.

What does Continuity have to do with Apostolic Succession?

What are the periods of church history with a brief explanation of each?

Who are the Anti-Nicaean fathers?

Who is Eusebius?

What is Apostolicae Curae?

What are the main branches of Protestantism?

What is convergence?

How does church History compare to Revelation chapters 2 & 3?

What is Baptist Succession?

Who called the council of Nicaea? Who presided over the Council? Why was it called?

How many councils of the undivided church was called? Give the reason for each one. Who called it? Who presided over the council?

Which Council resolve the controversy around the celebration of Easter?

Which councils gave us the Nicene Creed? And which council gave us its current format?

Who were the Anglican Divines? Why are they important?

Who introduce the concept of a purely symbolic communion?

Who introduce what we believe to be the biblical concept of a Communion that was both Symbolic and Spiritual that became to be known among Calvinists and Anglicans, Methodists and others as the Real Spiritual Presence?

Who is credited as being the Father of the Reformation by the fact of nailing the 95 theses on the Wittenburg Church in Germany on October 31, 1517?