

**American Baptist Churches of New York State  
Lay Study Program**

**CHURCH HISTORY**

**STUDENT GUIDE**

Curriculum Committee  
of the  
ABC/NYS Lay Study Team

April 5, 2002



## Course Description

Throughout the history of the Christian Church many issues and conflicts have occurred. These conflicts and the attempts to mediate them have affected the manner in which we worship, our perceptions of whom we worship, the governance of our churches and the posture of our churches in the global community of man. The early church also faced many of the most pressing issues facing our faith in our modern world as it struggled to grow and spread the gospel of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

This course will explore the history of the Christian Church from the disciples of Jesus through to the current developments and conflicts in the twenty-first century. Along the way we will meet some of the significant players in this unfolding drama and discuss their roles in creating and solving problems that allowed our church to develop into the great force that our church has become in our time.

Much of our exploration will be through the vehicle of discussion and debate on those issues that could have divided the church irreparably throughout its' development.

To be grounded in the historical development of one's faith gives one tremendous insight into the problems inherent in the church of today. Often others in history have already successfully solved some of the same issues that currently face us. To know of their work and their solutions would allow us to more efficiently serve the Kingdom of God. That is why this course is a part of the Lay Study Program.

## General Texts & Other Sources

**Church History in Plain Language** by Bruce L. Shelley  
Updated Second Edition, Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville. This text is available from amazon.com for \$13.99 plus shipping. Paperback, 510 pages

**The Story of Christianity, Vol. 1** by Justo L. Gonzalez  
Available from barnesandnoble.com for \$16.80 plus shipping. Readers gave both this and volume 2 five of five stars. December 1990, Harper, San Francisco, Paperback, 448 pages

**The Reformation to the Present Day, Vol. 2** by Justo L. Gonzalez  
Available from barnesandnoble.com for \$16.80 plus shipping, November 1990, Paperback, 432 pages

## Scriptures

The use of any standard Bible is recommended. Among such recommended scriptures are: The King James Version (KJV), The New International Version (NIV), Revised Standard Version (RSV), New King James Version (NKJV), New American Standard Bible (NASB), New Living Translation (NLT), 21<sup>st</sup> Century King James, NIV formatted, or the Amplified (AMP).

## **STUDY TOOLS**

These web sites are available on the Internet.

Bible Gateway: <http://bible.gospelcom.net/bible>

Bible Study Tools: <http://crosswalk.com>

Blue Letter Bible: <http://www.blueletterbible.org>

Multiple search engine such as: [http:// www.dogpile.com](http://www.dogpile.com)

### **Documents of the Christian Church**

Chris Maunder and Henry Bettenson (Editor)

Available from amazon.com for \$13.57 plus shipping. August 1999, Oxford University Press, Paperback, (3<sup>rd</sup> edition) 463 pages.

### **Christianity the First Thousand Years and Christianity the Second Thousand Years**

Is a VHS video series from the Arts and Entertainment TV Network in two parts. Each part is four video tapes (200 minutes) Available from [www.aetv.com](http://www.aetv.com) for \$39.95 each plus shipping. (Item number AAE-15420.)

The above two sets are also available on DVD from the Arts and Entertainment Network.

The price is \$39.95 for the complete 400-minute series set in the DVD format. (Item number is AAE-71000)

The authors of this course are: Dr. Joseph O. Perry and Rev. William Harrel from the Curriculum Committee of the ABC/NYS Lay Study Team.

## **SESSION SCHEDULE, OBJECTIVES, ASSIGNMENTS & ACTIVITIES**

### **General Course Objectives**

By the end of the class sessions each student will demonstrate his or her knowledge and understanding of the History of the Christian Church and the various forces that shaped this history. They will demonstrate this knowledge and understanding by applying and synthesizing their learning to a variety of applications such as oral presentations, debate, participation in class discussions and role playing exercises. In order to fully understand and act positively to the forces that are shaping Christ's Church in today's society, one must understand that these forces are for the whole not new. One needs to know how churches have dealt with these forces in the past.

### **Student Requirements and Assessment**

The students are expected to read the material as assigned. Each student will complete as scheduled three projects/presentations from the list of projects included in the session-by-session schedule. At least one of the projects must be a role playing/debate and at least one project should be in the form of an oral presentation to the class. The third project can be another role/playing debate, oral presentation or a written 1,200- word (about four typed pages, double spaced) theme paper.

The instructor's assessment of the student's work in the class will consist of his/her evaluation of the student's oral presentations, debate/role playing exercises, any written paper and the quality and degree of the student's participation in the class discussions. An instructor may also choose to use "take home" quizzes. The final grade will be either pass or not pass.

## **Session One**

### **Premise**

Christ is the head of our Christian Church. He has given us the promise of salvation and life everlasting through his grace. His church has gone through much development throughout the ages and the development of today's church and the various forces that have shaped and continue to form it today is the topic of this course.

### **Specific Goals for the First Session**

The student should be able to demonstrate their basic knowledge and understanding of who Christ was, what were the Old Testament prophecies concerning his coming, what was his mission on earth and how did he form his church to accomplish his mission. The student will be expected to apply such knowledge and understanding in their participation in class discussions and any oral presentations.

### **Assignments for First Session**

The student should complete the first reading assignments prior to the first class. The assignment is to read in the scriptures the various prophecies about the coming and ministry of Christ. (The prophecies in Isaiah {9:2-7, 11: 1-9, 40; 1-11, 42: 1-9, 49:1-6, 60: 1-6,} Micah {1:2 -3:12} and the Psalms {2, 16, 22, 40, 45, 69, 72, 89, 110 and 118} are among those that would be desirable for this purpose.) Also please read about the ministry of Christ and the start of his church in any of the recommended texts or collateral sources. A brief review of the life of Christ (as found in the Gospels) and of the early followers of Christ (as found in Acts) would also be appropriate for study at this time.

## **Session Two**

### **Premise**

The second session tells about the development of Christ's church from about 70 AD to about 312 AD. This period is sometimes referred to as the Age of Catholic Christianity.

### **Specific Goals for the Second Session**

The student should be able to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of concepts such as: "Catholic" Christianity, Orthodoxy, the office of Bishop, the canonization of the New Testament, the church in Alexandria, the emergence of the Christian theology,

gnosticism and the Apostle's Creed. The student will be expected to apply such knowledge and understanding in their participation in class discussions and any oral presentations.

### **Suggested Action Learning Projects**

1. Select or ask for two student volunteers to present a "debate" at the next session. One student will take the role of Polycarp (a student of the Apostle John) and the other student will take the role of Cerinthus (a famous Gnostic). In a basic three-minute presentation by each, each will present his views of their beliefs. Each will be allowed two minutes to question the other and then each will have a final two minutes to refute the other beliefs and clearly state their character's own. It is also possible to eliminate the questioning and go to the rebuttals directly after the main presentation.
2. A student may do a brief oral presentation (cir. four minutes.) on one of the following major players in the development of the church at this time: The thrust of these reports should not be biographical but more on what these people believed and contributed to the growth of the church.
  - A. Origen
  - B. Irenaeus
  - C. Tertullian
  - D. Augustine
  - E. Clement

In all of the "Action Learning" projects for this course it is expected that the student will go beyond the coverage of the topic from any text the instructor chooses to use and do further research.

### **Session Three**

#### **Premise**

The period of Church History from approximately 312 to 590 AD is sometimes referred to as the "Age of the Christian Roman Empire." It is the age of Constantine, the first Christian Emperor and a period where the sacred aspects of the church often were in conflict with the secular roles of the government.

#### **Specific Goals for the Third Session**

The student should be able to demonstrate their basic knowledge and understanding of: the emergence of Constantine, Doctrine of the Trinity, Nicene Creed, 1<sup>st</sup> Council at Nicea, early monasticism, Eastern Orthodoxy, the invasion of the barbarians, the Council at Chalcedon and the emergence of the papacy. The student will be expected to apply such knowledge and understanding in their participation in class discussions and any oral presentations.

## **Suggested Action Learning Projects**

1. Students can select one of the following people and give at the fourth or fifth session (depending on how the course is structured) a four- minute oral presentation on one of the following persons or movements from this time in church history.

- A. Constantine
- B. Eusebius
- C. Ambrose, Bishop of Milan
- D. Arianism
- E. Benedict
- F. Donatists
- G. John of Damascus
- H. Justinian

2. Two students can engage in a role- playing debate.

- A. Theodosius and Ambrose over the role of the Emperor in the slaughter of Thessalonians
- B. Arius and the Bishop Alexandria over the nature of Christ
- C. Pelagius and Augustine over the conflict on original sin
- D. Pope Leo and one of the writers of the Gospel over Leo's view of the supremacy of the papacy

## **Session Four**

### **Premise**

The period of time from about 590 AD to about 1517 is sometimes referred to as the Christian Middle Ages. As this is a critical period for the development of the church, we will cover to about the year 1100 AD in this session. This is the period of Gregory the Great, the Holy Roman Empire and the beginnings of the Crusades. The rest of this period will be dealt with in session five.

### **Specific Goals for the Fourth Session**

The student should be able to demonstrate their basic knowledge and understanding of: The theology and doctrine of Gregory the Great, the empire of Charlemagne, the political forces that lead to the early crusades, the emergence of scholasticism and the structure of feudalism. The student will be expected to apply such knowledge and understanding in their participation in class discussions and any oral presentations.

## **Suggested Action Learning Projects**

1. Students can select one of the following people or concepts.

- A. Gregory the Great
- B. Charles the Great (Charlemagne)
- C. Feudalism
- D. First Crusade
- E. Pope Sylvester II
- F. Peter Abelard
- G. Thomas Aquinas.

2. Two students can engage in a role- playing debate.

- A. Pope Gregory versus the Apostle Paul in whether works are needed for salvation or is grace sufficient?
- B. Pope Gregory versus the Apostle Paul on sin and the place known as purgatory
- C. Pope Gregory versus Henry IV on the power of a monarch over the church.

- D. Saladin and Pope Urban II about the validity of each ones' Holy War against the other
- E. Thomas Aquinas and Martin Luther on salvation by grace vs. salvation by grace and works

## **Session Five**

### **Premise**

Session five begins with the consideration for the Christ's concern with poverty. This is the age of St. Francis of Assisi, of heretics, the inquisition and the seeds of revolution within the Catholic Church.

### **Specific Goals for the Fifth Session**

The student should be able to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of: Apostolic life style, various heresies of the time, pre-protestant movements, the Great Papal Schism and the decline of the papacy. The student will be expected to apply such knowledge and understanding in their participation in class discussions and any oral presentations.

### **Suggested Action Learning Projects**

1. A student may do a brief oral presentation (cir. four minutes.) on one of the following major players or events in the development of the church at this time:
  - A. St. Francis of Assisi and the Franciscans
  - B. Arnold, Abbot at Brescia
  - C. Peter Waldo and the Waldenses
  - D. Dominic Guzman and the Dominicans
  - E. Pope Innocent III
  - F. Pope Boniface VIII
  - G. John Wyclif
  - H. John Hus
2. Two students can engage in a role- playing debate.
  - A. Archbishop of Lyon vs. Peter Waldo on voluntary poverty
  - B. Pope Innocent IV vs. Gregory VII on authorizing physical torture in questioning heretics
  - C. Pope Urban (Rome) vs. Pope Clement (Avignon) on which was the "true" pope
  - D. Pope Boniface VIII and John Wyclif on the power of the Papacy over mortal men

## **Session Six**

### **Premise**

The period known as the Reformation comes out of the Renaissance in Europe in the fourteenth, fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. This "reformation" creates a "new" manner of worshipping God and points to a different relationship with man and his creator.



## Specific Goals for the Sixth Session

The student should be able to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of: Martin Luther and the start of Protestantism, the Anabaptists, the Church of England, Calvinism, the early church in America, the spreading of the church into Asia, rise of Denominationalism and the Catholic Reformation. The student will be expected to apply such knowledge and understanding in their participation in class discussions and any oral presentations.

## Suggested Action Learning Projects

1. A student may do a brief oral presentation.  
A. Martin Luther B. George Blaurock C. Menno Simons D. John Calvin  
E. John Knox F. King Henry VIII G. Ignatius Loyola H. Francis Xavier  
I. John Foxe J. John Smythe
  
2. Two students can engage in a role-playing debate.
  - A. Reconstruct the trial of Martin Luther at the "Diet at Worms." One student should make accusations against Luther (as would one of the church officials under Charles V) and the other student should assume the role of Luther in defending his views.
  - B. A debate between Jacob Arminius and John Calvin on Calvin's belief that grace is inevitable and that man's choice in receiving the work of the Holy Spirit was inconsequential or non-existent
  - C. A debate between Conrad Grebel and the City Council of Zurich about the baptism of Grebel's newly born son
  - D. A debate between John Calvin and Ignatius Loyola on whether or not a person is "justified" by faith alone
  - E. A debate between Bartholomew de Las Casas and Juan Gines de Sepulveda on the nature of certain men to slavery
  - F. A debate between Matthew Ricci vs. a Franciscan Monk on whether converts should be made by adaptation or conquest
  - G. A debate between a Church of England spokesman and an American Denominationalist on the subject of whether or not denominationalism destroys the "unified" church as Paul conceived in his letters
  - H. A debate between King James of England and a Puritan about the role of the monarchy in both religion and the governance of the state

## Session Seven

### Premise

The period from circa 1648 to 1789 is called the Age of Reason and Revival. Many historians call it the "Age of Enlightenment." It is the age of great church leaders such as John Wesley and leaders in the intellectual community such as Blaise Pascal and Voltaire. It is the period in which the "Great Awakening" occurred in the Americas.

### **Specific Goals for the Seventh Session**

The student should be able to demonstrate their basic knowledge and understanding of: The Age of Reason, Casuistry, Pietism, Methodism, charismatic churches, Latitudinarians and the Great Awakening. The student will be expected to apply such knowledge and understanding in their participation in class discussions and any oral presentations.

### **Suggested Action Learning Projects**

1. A student may do a brief oral presentation (cir. four minutes.) on one of the following major players or events in the development of the church at this time.
  - A. Erasmus of Rotterdam
  - B. John Locke
  - C. Voltaire and Deism
  - D. Bishop Joseph Butler
  - E. Blaise Pascal
  - F. Cornelius Jansen
  - G. Philip Spencer
  - H. Count von Zinzendorf
  - I. John Wesley
  - J. George Whitefield
  - K. Jonathan Edwards
  - L. Isaac Backus
2. Two students can engage in a role- playing debate.
  - A. A debate between Martin Luther and Erasmus on their views of man
  - B. A debate between Augustine and an Age of Reason spokesman on the nature of man, sin and need for the grace of God
  - C. A debate between Voltaire and Joseph Butler on the deist view of Christianity
  - D. A debate between Philip Melancthon and Pascal about the views of the Pietists vs. traditional Lutheran theology
  - E. A debate between John Wesley and George Whitefield on the doctrine of predestination
  - F. A debate between Isaac Backus and a spokesman for the Church of England on the role of the civil legislature in representing mankind in religious affairs

## **Session Eight**

### **Premise**

The period between 1789 and 1914 is sometimes referred to as "The Age of Progress." During its time several important events occurred including the Revolutions in America and France, the war against slavery and the industrial revolution. Important changes were also occurring in the churches of the time, many of which have major effect on our views of Christianity today.

### **Specific Goals for the Eighth Session**

The student should be able to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of: the conflict between Catholicism and Liberalism, the New Evangelicals, the Protestant Mission movement, Protestant Liberalism and the Social Crisis of the time. The student will be expected to apply such knowledge and understanding in their participation in class discussions and any oral presentations.

## **Suggested Action Learning Projects**

1. A student may do a brief oral presentation.
  - A. Pius IX
  - B. William Wilberforce and the Clapham Sect
  - C. John Henry
  - D. Newman and the Tractarians
  - E. William Carey
  - F. Lyman Beecher
  - G. James McGready and the Second Great Awakening
  - H. Lyman Abbott
  - I. William Booth
  - J. William Gladder
  - K. Walter Rauschenbusch.
2. Two students can engage in a role- playing debate.
  - A. Tocqueville vs. Thomas Jefferson on the tyranny of the majority
  - B. Pius IX vs. Charles Haddon Spurgeon on the lack of original sin in the Virgin Mary
  - C. Rev. Theodore Woolsey and H.L. Mencken on "what sense can America be called a Christian Country"
  - D. Harry Emerson Fosdick and H. Richard Niebuhr on evangelical vs. modern liberalism
  - E. Lyman Abbot vs. Andover Seminary on whether or not the faculty should subscribe to the Apostle's and Nicene Creeds
  - F. Egbert Smith vs. a New England Theology proponent on whether the heathen can make election to accept the eternal life after they die but before the final judgment

## **Session Nine**

### **Premise**

The period between 1914 to the present is frequently referred to as the Age of Ideologies. Because of the tremendous importance and wide variety of events that are shaping our churches today, we have decided to cover this important period in two sessions. The first session will cover from 1914 up to and including the Second Vatican Council.

### **Specific Goals for the Ninth Session**

The student should be able to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of: the various Twentieth Century Ideologies (such as evolution, fundamentalism, modernism, progressive, conservative, Marxism, communism), the Evangelical Movement in America, the move towards Ecumenicism, and the outcomes and discussions of Vatican II. The student will be expected to apply such knowledge and understanding in their participation in class discussions and any oral presentations.

## **Suggested Action Learning Projects**

1. A student may do a brief oral presentation.
  - A. Pope John XXIII
  - B. Jan Cardinal Alfrink
  - C. Alfredo Cardinal Ottaviani
  - D. Billy Graham
  - E. Lyman Stewart
  - F. John Mott

2. Two students can engage in a role- playing debate.

A. Arthur Schlesinger Jr. vs. Jimmy Carter on the bringing of Carter's religion into the presidential campaign of 1976

B. Jerry Falwell (fundamentalist) vs. Shailer Matthews (modernist) on the differences between the two views

C. Nathan Soderblom and Charles Brent on their views on bringing the Christian community together in common concerns

D. Cardinal Ottaviani (conservative) vs. Cardinal Alfrink (progressive) on their points of view during Vatican II

E. Cardinal Suenens vs. Pope Paul VI about the role of the pope on issues such as artificial contraception and divorce

## **Session Ten**

### **Premise**

This final session continues on from Vatican II and studies the current happenings in the churches of the world at this time. There are many forces that are pulling on our faith and our basic concepts of the church, who God is, who Christ is and what will be the church in the future. We will explore these forces in this session.

### **Specific Goals for the Tenth Session**

The student should be able to demonstrate their basic knowledge and understanding of: Christianity in the Underdeveloped countries, Christianity in the current Generation, Christianity in Today's "pluralistic" society, the Megachurch and the relationship of Christianity with other religions and beliefs. The student will be expected to apply such knowledge and understanding in their participation in class discussions and any oral presentations.

### **Suggested Action Learning Projects**

1. A student may do a brief oral presentation.

A. Simon Kimbangu B. Ralph Reed C. Pat Robertson.

2. Two students can engage in a role- playing debate.

A. Jean Danielou and a World Council of Churches Protestant Missionary on the proper role of a missionary in today's world

B. A proponent of restoring the unity of the various churches and denominations prevalent in our society vs. a believer in the individual right to worship with whom and as they choose

C. A traditionalist verses a liberationist (New Class) on the new morality, new sense of patriotism or religious faith