

# Christian Foundations:

A survey of the story of the Church and the development of Christian Doctrine.  
Pleasantville Center for Training & Renewal - Fall 2020  
Pleasantville, PA

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## Course Description

This course is an overview of church history from the time of the apostles to the present. It will focus on persons, movements and the development of basic Christian doctrines that have shaped the church historically. The student will complete several projects which will take their observations from the class and prepare materials that can be used in contemporary ministry settings.

## Course Objectives

1. To help the student appreciate their Christian heritage.
2. To help the student gain the basic overview of the persons, places, dates, events and movements that shaped the history of the Christian Church.
3. To gain an understanding of the issues that led to the development of the churches beliefs, practices and structures and how and why they were modified over the last 2,000 years.
4. To understand history of heresy, errors and schism and how they shape our theological understandings today.
5. To view present church beliefs and practices in light of their historical development.
6. To gain insight into ones call to ministry and/or leadership in the church based on observation of historical and theological trends in the church.

## Required Reading

González, Justo L, *The Story of Christianity: The Reformation to the Present Day (revised)* Harperone, 2010

González, Justo L, *The Story of Christianity: The Early Church to the Dawn of the Reformation (revised)* Harperone, 2010

Don Demaray, *Basic Beliefs: An Introduction to Christian Theology*, Light and Life Publishing, 1996

The books by González are available from Amazon & Christianbook.com The paperback edition is cheaper through Christianbook.com 18.99 vol 1 & 15.99 vol 2 (ebook is 14.99 & 15.99). Amazon is 26.99 vol 1 & 24.99 vol 2 (kindle is 14.99 & 14.99)

The book by Demaray is available through freemethodistbooks.com (8.95)

## Schedule for completing reading:

- |                         |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| 1 <sup>st</sup> Weekend | <i>The Story of Christianity</i> , Volume 1: The Early Church to the Dawn of the Reformation<br><br>Don Demaray, <i>Basic Beliefs: An Introduction to Christian Theology</i> |
| 2 <sup>nd</sup> Weekend | <i>The Story of Christianity</i> , Volume 2: The Reformation to the Present Day, pp 1-398  |

## Class Assignments and Evaluation

1. Participation & 2 devotionals	20%	
2. Two class projects		
- Heresies and their 21 <sup>st</sup> Century Counterparts	30%	Due 2 <sup>nd</sup> Weekend
- Foundations for standing firm in the 21 <sup>st</sup> Century	30%	Due 3 weeks after class ends
3. A reflection paper on your observations of the role and character of pastors throughout the history of the church and your own vocation as a pastor.	20%	Due 3 weeks after class ends

## Projects

Make these practical and creative. You are encouraged to make them useable in your current ministry setting such as a small group study, devotional guide, a series of articles that could help to broaden your congregations understanding of the church or a sermon series. **The scope and quality of these projects should reflect the fact that they constitute 60% of your grade.** These projects should demonstrate your clear understanding of the material while also showing how you can effectively use what you have learned in the ministry setting.

Project 1 - Your project should cover: Gnosticism, Marcion, Donatism, Arianism, and one other of your choosing. Make sure that it not only cover the original heresy but also covers contemporary parallels

Project 2 - You must develop a project that will present at least 4 key doctrines of the church. You must include the development of each doctrine and present why they are crucial in the life of the church in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

## Devotionals

Prepare two devotionals for use during the weekends. A quote from one of the persons that you have learned about for the course must be used. The devotional for the **first weekend** should use a quote from the apostolic age to pre-reformation. The **second weekend** devotional should use a quote from the reformation to 1950 (it's not that the last 60 years haven't had some excellent insights from writers but I just want you to reach back past your own lifetime.)

## Glossary

You will receive a glossary which could be used along with your reading. This will help you be aware of important terms, people, places, or events in your reading.

## Submission of work

If your projects used handouts, presentation software, pictures or other multi-media items please include them either in hard copy, on CD or send them electronically. Projects will not be returned so make sure that you keep a copy. Devotionals must be handed in whether you presented them orally or not and a copy should also be emailed to me. If the quality is sufficient I am considering using them to develop a devotional booklet The reflection paper must be printed or emailed to me. A grade sheet that gives my evaluation of your work will be emailed to you once I have received and evaluated all of the material.