

Grace School of Ministry

Church History: Pentecost to Present

with
Dr. Jeffrey L. Seif

Course Description

As the title informs, this seminar will survey church history, and by so doing assess how the Holy Spirit has been at work in the world since the outpouring of Pentecost. The story of the ancient, nascent church will be told at first, covering the period between 5 B.C. through 590 A.D., in conjunction with which we will consider the church's Jewish origin, the development of New Testament literature, tensions with the Roman state, creedal controversies, monasticism's rise, and assorted hierarchical and liturgical developments in the early church. The medieval church period, covering 590 A. D. through 1517 A. D., will then be considered, covering the rise of the papacy, the emergence of the "Holy Roman" empire, crusades, reformers, and closing with a brief treatment of medieval learning and worship. The inquiry will close with an examination of the modern church, briefly covering 1517 A. D. to the present, by reflecting on the renaissance and reformation, the rise of rationalism, revivalism and denominationalism, with an appraisal of revivalism, missions and modernity in general. The survey then closes with an assessment of the clash between church and culture since 1914.

Course Textbook

Earle E. Cairns. *Christianity Through the Centuries*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing, 1996.

About the Instructor

Jeffrey Seif was born into a Jewish home on 9 November 1955. In the wake of his coming to a saving faith in Jesus, and his experiencing a subsequent "call" into vocational Christian ministry, Jeffrey went to and studied at Moody Bible Institute, Trinity College of the Bible, Trinity Theological Seminary, the Graduate Theological Foundation and Southern Methodist University, where he finally earned both a master's degree and doctorate. Dr. Seif has served as a missionary with the American Board of Missions to the Jews and has extensive experience as a local church pastor. Reverend Seif was initially ordained as a Baptist minister, but has held ministerial ordination with the Christian Evangelistic Assemblies since the early 1990s. Dr. Seif has taught theology and ministry at Christ for the Nations Institute since the Summer of 1989, where he also chaired a few departments. In addition to serving as a professor at Grace School of Ministry, Dr. Seif serves as the program's Dean. In addition to being both a local church pastor and professor at a few locations, Jeff is also a fireman and a certified police officer, and holds a reserve commission with the city of DeSoto. Seif is a graduate of the North Texas Regional Police Academy in Applied Police Science, holds a certificate in Law Enforcement Technology from Rio Community Salado College and is a certified police academy professor and Field Training Officer of police. He has worked as a criminal justice instructor as well. Jeff is married to Patricia Lynn Seif, a school psychologist for the Cedar Hill Independent School District, and together they have two really cool guys: Jacob, 17 and Zachary 14.

Course Lecture Schedule

The History of the Christian Church: Pentecost to Present

I. The Ancient Church

- A. The Spread of Christianity in the Empire to 100
 - 1. The Religious Contributions of the Jews
 - a. Monotheism
 - b. Messianism—Fulfillment of OT Hopes...
 - c. Ethics
 - d. OT Scriptures
 - e. Synagogue
 - 2. The Social Environment
 - a. Political Contributions of the Romans
 - b. Intellectual Contribution of the Greeks
 - c. Hellenistic Influences Upon NT World
 - 3. Introducing Jesus—the Movement's Founder
 - a. Historicity of Christ
 - 1. Pagan Testimony—Pliny, Tacitus
 - 2. Jewish Testimony—Josephus
 - b. Jesus' Ministry
 - 1. Message—Jewish Messianism with a Soteriological Twist
 - 2. Mission—both Local and Cosmopolitan
 - 3. Miracles—Authenticating Criterion
 - 4. Meaning—a Call to Re-Orient Priorities
 - 4. Outreach to the Jews
 - a. Founding of, and Developments in, the Messianic Jerusalem Congregation
 - 1. Acts of the Spirit in Jerusalem
 - a. Power: Pentecost Acts 2:1-47
 - b. Miracles: Healing of Lame Man (3:1-26)
 - c. Persecution: Imprisonment of Peter and John (4:1-31)
 - d. Sharing and Caring: Community Goods (4:32-5:11)
 - e. More Miracles, Conversions and Persecution (5:12-42)
 - f. Tensions: Disputes—Food and Deacons (6:1-7)
 - g. Mentors: Stephen's Short Ministry (6:8-8:3)
 - b. Acts of the Spirit Beyond Jerusalem
 - 1. Phillip's Ministry (8:4-40)
 - 2. Paul's Entrance into the Narrative (9:1-31)
 - 3. Peter's Healing of Aenas and the Raising Tabatha (9:32-43)

4. Peter's Vision and Cornelius' "Conversion" (10:1-11:18)
- c. Gospel's Expansion in Antioch in Syria (11:19-26)
 1. Famine and Relief for Jerusalem Believers (11:27-30)
 2. Herod's Activity and Demise (12:1-25)
5. Outreach to the Greeks
 - a. Paul's Greco-Roman Environment
 - b. Paul's Work
 1. Missionary: Advancing the Kingdom Orally
 2. Author: Publisher of Written Texts
 3. Theologian: Core Pauline Principles
6. The Movement's Literature—the New Testament
 - a. From an Oral to a Written Tradition
7. The Movement's Leadership—Bishops and Deacons
 - a. From a Fledgling Movement to an Institution
 1. Jewish Contributions to NT Institutionalization
 2. Charismatic Leadership
 3. Vested, Administrative Officials
 - b. Early Christian Worship
 1. Eucharist
 2. Word
 3. Gatherings
- B. The Struggle of the Old Imperial Church for Survival, 100-313
 1. Causes of Persecution
 - a. Political—disconnection from Judaism
 - b. Religious:
 1. Differentiated from Roman faith
 2. Secrecy of meetings...
 3. Seen as a slave-religion
 2. Persecution of the Church
 - a. Nero (Paul and Peter fell)
 - b. Domitian (John exiled under him)
 3. Under State Ban, 100-250
 - a. First recorded Roman trial in Bythnia, under Pliny...
 - b. Ignatius killed, Polycarp killed, Justin Martyr killed
 4. Universal Persecution
 - a. Emperor Decius tried to save classical Roman culture in the late 200s with a strong arm... He offered a libellus to those who offered sacrifices to the emperor as to a god
 1. Origin suffered and died under him
 - b. Diocletian continued the policies
 - c. Galerius issued the Edict of Toleration in 311, but persecution did not end till Constantine's Edict of Milan in 313
 5. Results of Persecution
 - a. The movement spread—"blood of the martyrs..."
 - b. Scriptures gathered and preserved
 6. Doctrinal Tensions from 100-313
 - a. Heresies
 - b. Heterodoxies—e.g., Montanism (charismatic), Donatism (legalistic)

7. Contending for the Faith
 - a. Apologists—testifying outside of the church
 - b. Polemicists—against false teaching within the church
8. The Church Closes Ranks
 - a. Monarchial Bishops
 - b. The “Rule of Faith”—the Creed
 - c. The Canon of Scripture
 - d. Liturgy—baptism, eucharist, holy days
- C. The Supremacy of the Old Catholic Imperial Church, 313-590
 1. Church and Empire Close Ranks
 - a. Church and State—Constantine’s influence and progressive Christianization
 - b. Church and Barbarians—mass migrations of people
 - c. Evangelization of Barbarians
 2. Theological Controversies and Creedal Developments
 - a. The Trinitarian Theology--Generally
 - b. Christology
 - c. Anthropology
 3. The Church Fathers
 - a. Eastern, Post-Nicean Fathers
 1. Chrysostom—Expositor and Orator
 2. Theodore—Exegete
 3. Eusebius—Church historian
 - b. Western, Post-Nicean Fathers
 1. Jerome—Vulgate
 2. Ambrose—Administrator, challenged the emperor
 3. Augustine—Theologian
 4. Christianity of the Cloisters
 - a. Causes of Monasticism
 - b. Development of Monasticism
 - c. Evaluation of Monasticism
 5. Hierarchical and Liturgical Developments
 - a. Dominance of the Roman Bishop
 - b. Growth of Liturgy

II. The Medieval Church

- A. The Rise of the Empire and Latin-Teutonic Christianity, 590-800
 1. Gregory I: The First Medieval Pope
 2. Losses and Expansion: Mass Migrations and Missions
 - a. Rise of Islam
 - b. Missions to Britain, Germany, the Low Countries, Italy & Spain
 3. Revival of Western Imperialism
 - a. Merovingian Dynasty: Clovis, Charles Martel, Pepin, and Charlemagne
- B. The Ebb and Flow in Relationships Between Church and State, 800-1054
 1. Emergence of the “Holy Roman Empire”
 - a. Decline of Carolingian Empire
 1. Weak successors of Charlemagne
 2. Teutonic principle of inheritance—division to sons

3. Rise of Feudalism
 - b. Institutional Church as the Grand Unifier
 2. Revival and Schism in the Church
 - a. Renewal in the West
 1. “Donation of Constantine”
 2. Conversion of Scandanavia
 3. Doctrine of the Mass—transubstantiation: Paschasius (785-860); officially confirmed at Council of Trent (1545)
 4. Monastic Reform
 - a. Problems with simony (selling church offices) nepotism (favoring relatives) and concubinage ameliorated
 5. Capable leaders
 - b. The Church in the East—the Greek Orthodox
 1. Differences between East and West
 2. The Schism of 1054 and the result
- C. The Supremacy of the Papacy, 1054-1305
1. The Zenith of Papal Power
 - a. Gregory VII and Innocent III
 1. Tensions between Temporal and Spiritual leaders
 2. Decline of Papal Power under Boniface—the removal of papacy from Rome
 - a. Boniface and *Unam Sanctum*—i.e., no salvation outside the church
 3. Crusades and Reformers
 - a. Cross vs. Crescent, 1095-1291
 1. Causes of Crusades
 2. The Crusades
 3. Consequences of the Crusades
 - b. Monastic Reforms
 1. Cistercian Order—asceticism and simplicity
 2. Military Orders
 3. Friars
 - c. “Lay” Reform Movements
 1. Philosophic Albigenses
 2. Puritan Waldeneses
 3. Eschatological Joachimites
 4. Medieval Learning and Worship
 - a. Scholasticism
 - b. The Rise of Universities
 - c. Medieval Life and Worship
- D. The Medieval Sunset and the Modern Sunrise, 1305-1517
1. Attempts at Internal Reform
 - a. The Papacy in Decline
 1. Failure of the Clergy—licentiousness
 2. Papal Taxation
 3. Demise of Feudal States and Rise of Nation States
 - b. Rise of Mystics—call to return to the heart...
 - c. Forerunners of the Reformation

1. John Wycliffe (c. 1328-84)
2. John Huss (1372-1415)
3. Savonarola (1452-98)
- d. Reforming Councils—Pisa, Constance, Basel and Ferrara
2. The Papacy Faces External Opposition
 - a. The Renaissance
 1. The Italian Renaissance
 2. Biblical Humanists
 - b. Rise of Nation States and the Middle Class
 1. Rise of the English Nation State
 2. Rise of the French Nation State
 3. Rise of the Spanish Nation State

III. The Modern Church

- A. The Reformation and The Counter-Reformation, 1517-1648
 1. Background of the Reformation
 2. Luther and the German Reformation
 3. The Reformation in and Outside of Switzerland
 4. The Puritan Reformation in England
 5. The Roman Catholic Counter-Reformation
- B. Rationalism, Revivalism and Denominationalism, 1648-1789
 1. Christian Expansion in North America
 2. Modern Currents—e.g., Rationalism and Revivalism
- C. Revivalism, Missions and Modernism, 1789-1914
 1. Roman Catholic Advances
 2. Movements and Reforms in England and Europe
 3. Liberalism
 4. The American Church
- D. Church and Society in Tension Since 1914
 1. The Church's Place in a Changing World
 2. The Liberal Church and Radical Theologies
 3. The Ecumenical Movement
 4. The Church's Decline and Expansion