

Class Schedule

Week 1: Survival and Resistance: The Patient Growth of the Early Church (49-312)

Week 2: Constantine, Councils, and Creeds (313-451)

Week 3: Augustine and the Fall of Rome (303-430)

Week 4: Developing Doctrine: The Rise of Scholasticism, 800-1274

Week 5: Doctrinal Decay and the Seeds of Reform, 900-1415

Week 6: Reformation Unleashed: Martin Luther and Ulrich Zwingli (1483- 1546)

Week 7: Reformation Contested: Calvin and the Council of Trent (1509-1564)

Week 8: The English Reformation and Puritanism (1520-1689)

Week 9: The Early English and American Baptists (1609-1988)

Week 10: Awakenings in America (1662-1875)

Week 11: The Modern Missions Movement (1792-1910)

Week 12: Rise and Response to Theological Liberalism (1799-1929)

Week 13: History of Capitol Hill Baptist Church (1867-present)

Recommended Reading:

Chadwick, Henry. *The Early Church*. Rev. ed. Penguin History of the Church 1. London: Penguin, 1993.

J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Creeds* (A&C Black, 2006).

Cyril Richardson, *Early Christian Fathers*, Reprint edition (New York: Touchstone, 1995).
Irenaeus Saint Bishop of Lyon, *On the Apostolic Preaching*, trans. John Behr (Crestwood, N.Y: St Vladimirs Seminary Pr, 1997).

Tom Holland, *Dominion: How the Christian Revolution Remade the World*, Illustrated edition (New York: Basic Books, 2019).

Sharon James, *How Christianity Transformed the World* (Christian Focus, 2021).

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Survival and Resistance: The Patient Growth of the Early Church (49-312)

Church History Core Seminar | Class 1 of 13

“These men who have *turned the world upside down* have come here also, and Jason has received them, and they are all acting against the decrees of Caesar, saying that *there is another king, Jesus*” (Acts 17:6-7).

1. The Earliest Christians: Confronting Rome

Nero (64) and Tacitus (116)

“To kill the rumors, Nero charged and tortured some people hated for their evil practices – the group popularly called “Christians.” The founder of this sect, Christus, had been put to death by the governor of Judea, Pontius Pilate, when Tiberius was emperor.” (Tacitus, Annals, Bk. 16, Ch. 44).

Pliny’s Letter to Emperor Trajan (112)

“religio licita” (approved religion) vs. *“superstitio”* (superstition)

2. The Threat of Gnosticism

“Gnosticism is a generic term used primarily to refer to theosophical adaptations of Christianity propagated by a dozen or more rival sects which broke with the early church between A.D. 80 and 150.” (Chadwick, 34)

Irenaeus of Lyon (ca. 130-200)

Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching
Against Heresies (180)

3. The Need for Unity in Faith and Order

Apostolic Succession

The Canon of Scripture

“The New Testament books did not become authoritative for the Church because they were formally included in a canonical list; on the contrary, the Church included them in her canon because she already regarded them as divinely inspired.” F.F. Bruce, *The New Testament Documents*, p. 22.

The Apostle’s Creed

4. Expansion and Growth

The Witness of Charity

The Sanctity of Marriage

The Sanctity of Life

5. The Pagan Revival and Rise of Persecution

Conclusion

Polycarp of Smyrna (70 - 156)

“The proconsul became more insistent and said, “Take the oath and I will release you. Revile Christ.” But Polycarp responded, “For eighty-six years I have served him, and he has done me no wrong. How can I blaspheme my king who has saved me?”