Sept. 1

EARLY and MEDIEVAL CHRISTIANITY



FIRST COURSE

Church History

by Weldon E. Viertel
and
William L. Womack

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RECOMMENDED TEXTBOOKS

Level 1:
The Study Guide, *Early and Medieval Christianity*

Level 2:
The Study Guide, *Early and Medieval Christianity*
Robert A. Baker, *A Summary of Christian History* *

Level 3:
The Study Guide, *Early and Medieval Christianity*
Robert A. Baker, *A Summary of Christian History* *
Henry Bettenson, *Documents of the Christian Church* *

(*See Selective Bibliography for publication information.)

PREFACE

Presenting concisely and clearly fourteen centuries of Christian history is a difficult goal to accomplish. The primary aim of this study manual is to trace doctrinal, ecclesiastical, and missionary developments in early and medieval Christianity. This aim was complicated by the fact that these developments were influenced by social and political conditions. Environmental circumstances and intellectual temperaments varied from country to country. After the fifth century, numerous political entities became interwoven into the history of the Church. Actions of popes can be understood only by knowing the kings and emperors with whom they vied for authority.

A knowledge of Christian history serves numerous purposes for the contemporary servant of God. Doctrinal developments in the Church and denominational distinctions have historical roots and cannot be appreciated properly apart from the knowledge of their origins and developments. The contemporary structure of the Church finds no parallel in the New Testament. The present church organization must be understood in the light of historical developments. Most problems faced by the Church in maintaining purity today have been confronted in history. In determining courses of action to safeguard the integrity of the Church, history gives guidance concerning decisions which may be beneficial or detrimental. One of the most important lessons to learn is that political power does not build the Kingdom of God on earth but rather leads to the corruption of the body of Christ.

Several approaches can be taken in presenting the history of Christianity. The approach followed in this manual is to maintain a chronological continuity without losing the student in historical details. This goal has not always been achieved. Another possible approach is topical in which an area of Church development is traced over several centuries with a minimum of attention given to political and geographical details. In attempting to write a simple introduction to Christianity, Dr. Robert Baker focused on the main movements of the Church and minimized chronological details. His book has been chosen as a supplementary text because of the excellent evaluations it gives to developments within the Church. *Documents of the Christian Church,* edited by Bettenson, exposes Level 3 students to the type of original writings from which a church history is derived.

Appreciation is expressed to William L. Womack who wrote significant portions of this manual. Gladys Nelson has prepared the learning activities, and my wife Joyce has contributed to the clarification of the text and the correlation of learning activities and text. Dora Jean Sanderford and Kenneth Evenson have added the art. Although the manual is more difficult than desired by the authors, perhaps it lays the foundation for a future simplified and better organized work.

WELDON E. VIERTEL

El Paso, Texas
July, 1975

MINISTERIAL TRAINING BY GUIDED STUDY

Ministerial Training by Guided Study is designed to introduce students on various levels of academic preparation to the Bible and related areas. This is not a correspondence course, nor the traditional lecture system, but a new approach in education. The goal of the programme is to make quality theological training available to all students. Family and church responsibilities and lack of academic prerequisites and finances prevent many men and women who have been called of God from improving their ministry through training. These obstacles can be overcome by an approach which emphasizes self-study and weekly small group discussions. The study guides are designed for students on three levels of preparations:

1. Students with some primary education
2. Students with some secondary education
3. Students with university qualifications

Although this course is designed primarily for pastors and ministerial candidates with no seminary training, laymen and lay preachers can also benefit from some of the courses. Pastors with divinity degrees might use some of the study guides as refresher courses while serving as leaders of study groups and conveners of the weekly seminars.

Study guides are used to direct private and group activities in the mastery of the content of a subject. They contain the basic content for each subject and recommend supplementary sources for a more advanced study. Questions are included to direct the attention of the student to the important facts in the lessons and to provide an immediate response to the material read. Weekly seminars of approximately an hour for each subject provide opportunities for the discussion of issues related to the subjects and their practical application in contemporary life. A teacher or tutor guides the seminar discussions, but the students from all three levels present and discuss their ideas. When students come to the seminar with a basic understanding of the lesson, the seminar can be dedicated to enrichment of the subject and to discussion of the practical use of the material in the life of the Church.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR USING THE STUDY GUIDE

Text and learning activities

The study guide is designed primarily for home study. When the guide is opened, the text appears on the left side of the page, and questions requiring an immediate response to the material read are on the right. The student should read a paragraph before reading and answering the question or questions for that paragraph. If there are no questions for a paragraph, he may wish to make a few notes on that paragraph and move on to the next. The questions and answers should be covered with a strip of paper (see following insert) until the paragraph has been read and the student is ready to answer each question. Then the cover sheet should be moved down the page only enough to enable the reading of the question and the writing in of the answer. The answer according to the text appears immediately under the question. After the student has written his own answer, he may then compare it with the given answer. If the two are not the same, the paragraph in the text should be read again.

Home study exercises

A home study assignment appears at the end of each lesson. The study guide contains the basic content for each lesson, and the questions on the *basic* material are to be answered by all three levels. After reading the text and doing the learning activity on each page, the student should be able to answer most of the home study questions without further reference to the text. These questions are self-testing exercises. If a student is unsure of the correct answer, he has not learned adequately the material in that particular section, and he should review until he is sure that he understands the content. Some questions call for more extensive answers and require concentrated effort for mastery. The completed questions serve as a summary of the lesson and should be helpful as a review.

Students on Levels 2 and 3 are required to do *supplementary* work in addition to the basic exercises. The supplementary activities include sometimes a reading assignment in another book with questions to be answered.

Level 3 is required to do *advanced* study in addition to the basic and supplementary work. This work will vary according to the availability of library resources. Sometimes there will be questions over a parallel reading assignment in a recommended resource book. At other times, the questions will require independent or individual research. Bible dictionaries, encyclopaedias, and books on the subjects of the study guide are sources which should be consulted. A bibliography at the end of the study guide indicates where additional material may be found.

Seminar

It is suggested that the students of all three levels in a geographical area meet for an hour each week with a teacher or tutor to discuss the lesson with reference to—

1. problems encountered in home study in answering questions or in understanding the textual material;
2. the application of the lesson to the practical work of Christian ministry and conduct;
3. the significance of the lesson as a whole and its place in the total programme of ministerial training.

The fragmentary questions of the lesson may sometimes be answered without getting a picture of the lesson as a whole. It is also possible to learn the facts about Christianity without seeing their application in the life of the Church. The student is responsible for getting the detailed information of the lesson in his home study. Understanding the overall meaning of the lesson and its practical application should be the goal of the seminar.

Some seminar questions have been included with each lesson. Their purposes are—

- to stimulate interest (some are controversial questions which have not been resolved by scholars);
- to guide in the beginning of the seminar discussions;
- to direct attention to problems related to the material studied;
- to require original thinking which will lead to suggestions for the practical application of the material.

Teacher or tutor

The teacher or tutor may offer other seminar questions which are more relevant in a given situation. He should feel free to use any approach he chooses as long as the discussion remains related to the material of the lesson. It is his responsibility to prevent the seminar discussion from departing from relevant issues.

The teacher may find that a brief test at the beginning of the seminar will be helpful. The test will encourage students to prepare more adequately their home study assignments and enable the teacher to evaluate the progress of each student. Two or three questions from the basic studies should be sufficient. Students who are not making satisfactory progress may need personal help and encouragement in preparing their lesson. They should not be overlooked!

cut to separate

LEARNING ACTIVITY

Use this sheet of paper to cover the learning activity on each page.

* * * * * * * *

When you have finished reading each paragraph, slide the sheet down just far enough to expose the learning activity for that paragraph. If there is no activity, continue to the next paragraph.

Write your answers.

Then slide the sheet down farther to expose the suggested answers.

Compare your answers with the suggested ones. If they do not agree, reread the paragraph.

Continue to the next paragraph.

LEARNING ACTIVITY

Use this sheet of paper to cover the learning activity on each page.

* * * * * * * *

When you have finished reading each paragraph, slide the sheet down just far enough to expose the learning activity for that paragraph. If there is no activity, continue to the next paragraph.

Write your answers.

Then slide the sheet down farther to expose the suggested answers.

Compare your answers with the suggested ones. If they do not agree, reread the paragraph.

Continue to the next paragraph.