



# Village Missions Contenders Discipleship Initiative

## Syllabus

**Course:** The Church (Ecclesiology - Church History – History of Christian Doctrine)

**Instructor:** Pastor Russell Richardson  
(Pastor/Teacher: Sauvie Island Community Church)

**Overview:** This course gives students knowledge, perspective and resources to help them understand what the Bible teaches about The Church, as well as how The Church and Christian doctrine have developed through the years.

Upon completion of this course, you should have a solid foundation and understanding of God's purpose for the church, as well as how the church should function. You should see that the church has always been in need of reform and that in the midst of our humanity and failure, Jesus Christ has and will continue to build His church (Mt.16:18).

As we see the struggles and the sacrifices made by those who contended for the faith and did the hard work involved in developing the doctrines into the form we have today; you will have a great appreciation for their work and for God's sovereignty in preserving the truth for us.

There is a famous saying related to progress, reform and the study of history: "Progress, far from consisting in change, depends on retentiveness. When change is absolute there remains no being to improve and no direction is set for possible improvement: and when experience is not retained... infancy is perpetual. **Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.**" *The Life of Reason (1905-1906) - Vol. I. Reason in Common Sense* – George Santayana

**Subjects: Ecclesiology**

Introduction

Understanding the Church

Pictures of The Church

What is The Church to Do?

The Church's Organization

**Church History**

The Age of The Apostles & Catholic Christianity – 6 B.C.-312 AD

The Age of The Christian Roman Empire – 312 - 590 AD

The Christian Middle Ages – 590 - 1517 AD

The Age of The Reformation – 1517-1648 AD

The Age of Reason and Revival – 1648-1789 AD

The Age of Progress – 1789-1914 AD

The Age of Ideologies 1914-1989 AD

The Age of Global Expansion and Relocation 1900 AD and on

**History of Christian Doctrine**

Introduction and Preparatory Doctrinal Development

The Doctrine of the Trinity and The Doctrine of Christ

The Doctrine of Sin and Grace and Related Doctrines

The Doctrine of the Atonement or of The Work of Christ

The Doctrine of the Application and Appropriation of Divine Grace

The Doctrine of the Church and The Sacraments and of the Last Things

**Classroom sessions will involve:**

Lectures

Class Discussions

Student Presentations

**Outside assignments to include, but not limited to:**

Scripture Memory

Outside reading with chapter summaries

A chart cataloguing the 7 Churches in Revelation 2 &3

The final assignment will be a paper, detailing your learning experience in this class: what you learned, what was especially beneficial to you and how this has affected your attitude and view of the church.

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**Required Text Books:**

Church History in Plain Language by Bruce Shelley (4<sup>th</sup> edition) ISBN 978-1-4016-7631-5  
The History of Christian Doctrine - by Louis Berkhof (2009) ISBN 978-0-85151-005-7

**Recommended Text Book:**

Chronological & Background Charts of Church History - Robert Walton

ISBN -978-0-310-25813-1