



# CH101 History of Christianity I: From Jerusalem to Chang'An (AD 1 - 1500)

Dr Lai Pak Wah | 3CR

## About the Course

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History of Christianity I is the first of a two course survey (3 credits each) on the history of Christianity over the last 2,000 years.

The course aims to identify the significant historical movements in the first 1,500 years of

church history and consider their influence and relevance for contemporary Christians, especially those living in Asia. We begin with the theological, historical and spiritual developments in what John Calvin calls the 'Golden Age of the Church', that is, the age of the church fathers (2nd to 5th centuries). From here, we then examine the history of three major streams of Christianity, namely the Orthodox, Oriental and Western (Latin) Christianities, from the Middle Ages right up to the pre-Reformation period. Topics to be discussed include the formation of the biblical canon and how this affects our Christian beliefs, the challenge of evangelism and Christian living in a multi-cultural and religious society like the Roman Empire, the insights that we may gain from the Nestorian evangelization of China in the 8<sup>th</sup> century, and the legacy of medieval theology and spirituality for modern day Christianity.

The guiding principle is to consider the relevance of these historical movements for contemporary Protestant / Evangelical Christianity.

### Credits

3CR

### Fees\*

S\$450(Credit)

S\$240 (Audit)

### Class Format

Online

\* Alumni are entitled to 10% discount on audit course(s)

## About the Lecturer

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**Dr Lai Pak Wah** is Lecturer of Church History and Historical Theology at BGST. A graduate from BGST (Grad Dip CS) and Regent College, Vancouver (MCS, ThM), Pak Wah completed his PhD at Durham University, where he specialised in Christianity in Late Antiquity, that is, the history, theology and spirituality of the 2nd - 5th century church fathers (also known as Patristic Studies). Apart from his research on John Chrysostom, Pak Wah is also interested in the interface between history, culture and science. His book on Christian Perspectives of Chinese Medicine is forthcoming. Previously, Pak Wah was a full-time lecturer at the School of Business, Singapore Polytechnic, and engaged in investment promotion work with the Singapore Economic Development Board.



# Course Objectives

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Upon completion of the course, it is hoped that the student will:

- Be familiarised with the rich theological and spiritual legacy of the Western, Orthodox and Oriental Churches and understand their relevance for our Protestant faith
- Be equipped with the skills necessary to interpret and critique historical narratives (such as documentaries on church histories) and construct their own historical papers
- Gain the comfort and ability to read and interact with historical writings (particularly their spiritual literature), and benefit from their theological/ spiritual insights

## Course Outline & Resources

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### VIDEO LECTURES & ACTIVITIES

For each topic, the relevant video lectures can be accessed through the video links provided on the course Moodle site. At the end of each set of video lectures, the necessary lecture activities (lecture MCQ questions, short questions on readings, and online reflections) should be completed before proceeding to the next topic.

### REQUIRED READING

All required readings are from Gonzalez, Justo L. *The Story of Christianity*. Vol. 1. NY: HarperOne, 2010. Articles can be downloaded in PDF form from the course Moodle site. Please see the Course Bibliography below for more details.

S/N	Lecture Topic	Activities	Required Reading
1	Introduction <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Historiography: Methods, Pitfalls and Spiritual Discipline</li><li>● How to Write a Historical Paper - Principles and Practices</li></ul>	-	Gonzalez, Vol. 1, p. 1-81
2	Whirlwind Tour of Church History: An Overview	Lecture MCQ Questions 1  Short Questions 1 (on Bradley & Mueller article)	Gonzalez, Vol. 1, p. 83-128  Bradley & Mueller, <i>Introduction to Church History and Related Disciplines</i> (available on course Moodle site)

3	<p>Patristic Christianity I</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Background to Early Christianity</li> <li>● Scripture and Canon (Pts I-II)</li> </ul>	<p>Lecture MCQ Questions 2.1 &amp; 2.2</p> <p>Short Questions 2 (on the <i>Didache</i>)</p>	Gonzalez, Vol. 1, p. 129-208
4	<p>Patristic Christianity II</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Doctrine of Salvation: From OT to NT</li> <li>● Pre-Nicene Doctrine of Salvation (1<sup>st</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> Centuries)</li> <li>● Post-Nicene Doctrine of Salvation (4<sup>th</sup> Century) (Lecture text and slides only)</li> </ul>	<p>Lecture MCQ Questions 3</p> <p>Online Reflection 1 (on Pre- and Post-Nicene Doctrine of Salvation)</p>	Gonzalez, Vol. 1, p. 295-314
5	<p>Patristic Christianity III</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Christian Martyrdom</li> <li>● Christian Monasticism</li> <li>● Augustine and his Legacy</li> </ul>	<p>Short Questions 3 (on <i>Martyrdom of Polycarp</i>)</p> <p>Online Reflection 2 (on Augustine)</p>	<p><i>The Martyrdom of Polycarp</i></p> <p><i>Excerpts from the Life of Antony</i></p>
6	<p>Byzantine Christianity I: The Cross in the Shadow of the Crescent</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Origins of Byzantium to Ecclesiastical Reforms in the 7<sup>th</sup> Century</li> <li>● The Rise and Impact of Islam</li> </ul>	<p>Lecture MCQ Questions 4.1 &amp; 4.2</p>	Gonzalez, Vol. 1, p. 263-294
7	<p>Byzantine Christianity II</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Iconoclastic Controversy</li> <li>● The Flourish and Decline of Byzantium</li> </ul>	<p>Short Questions 4 (on John of Damascus' treatise)</p> <p>Short Questions 5 (on Gregory of Palamas' <i>Triads</i>)</p>	<p>Gonzalez, Vol. 1, p. 315-323</p> <p>John of Damascus' <i>Defense against those who attack the Holy Images</i> I.3-17</p> <p>Excerpts from Gregory of Palamas' <i>Triads</i></p>
8	<p>Christianities in Asia I</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Historical Overview: The Council of Chalcedon</li> <li>● Non-Chalcedonian Churches I: Monophysites</li> </ul>	<p>Lecture MCQ Questions 5.1 &amp; 5.2</p>	Gonzalez, Vol. 1, p. 345-356

9	<p>Christianities in Asia II</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Non-Chalcedonian Churches II: The Church of the East (Nestorians) in Persia</li> <li>● The Nestorians in China</li> </ul>	<p>Lecture MCQ Questions 6</p> <p>Short Questions 6 (on Chinese Nestorian texts)</p>	<p>Readings from Chinese Nestorian Texts</p>
10	<p>Medieval Christianity in the West I</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The Rise of the Medieval West</li> <li>● The Conversion of the West</li> <li>● Papal-Frankish Alliance/ Carolingian Renaissance</li> <li>● The Church in Disarray and Year 1000 AD</li> </ul>	<p>Lecture MCQ Questions 7</p> <p>Short Questions 7 (on Bede's <i>Ecclesiastical History</i>)</p>	<p>Gonzalez, Vol. 1, p. 357-386</p>
11	<p>Medieval Christianity in the West II</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Monastic and Papal Reforms</li> <li>● The Crusades</li> <li>● The New Religious Orders of 12<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> Centuries</li> </ul>	<p>Lecture MCQ Questions 8</p> <p>Short Questions 8 (on the Crusade readings)</p>	<p>Gonzalez, Vol. 1, p. 407-466</p> <p>Readings from the Crusade Texts</p>
12	<p>Medieval Christianity in the West III</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Black Death and Purgatory</li> <li>● Avignon Popes and Papal Schism</li> <li>● Medieval Scholasticism</li> <li>● The Renaissance</li> <li>● Medieval Church on the Eve of the Reformation</li> </ul>	<p>Online Reflection 3 (on Avignon Popes and Papal Schism)</p> <p>Online Reflection 4 (on Medieval Scholasticism)</p> <p>Online Reflection 5 (on the Renaissance)</p> <p>Short Questions 9 (on Bernard of Clairvaux's <i>On Humility and Pride</i>)</p>	<p><i>Pp. 357-386</i></p> <p>Bernard of Clairvaux's <i>On Humility and Pride</i></p>

## Course Requirements

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1. **Video lecture MCQ questions:** Complete all video lecture MCQ questions.
2. **Online short questions:** Complete all 9 online short questions.
3. **Online reflections:** Complete all 5 online reflections.

4. **Book review:** Read Robert Wilken's *The Spirit of Early Christian Thought: Seeking the Face of God*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003. Write a book review of 1,200 - 1,500 words. With regard to the structure of the book review, it should consist of (a) a short introduction of the title and thesis / book outline (10%), (b) short summaries of each chapter (50%); (c) an evaluation of the strengths / weaknesses and your likes/ dislikes of the book (40%).
5. **Reflection paper:** Write a 1000-word Reflection Paper discussing how church history has benefitted your spiritual formation, informed your understanding of work and vocation, and your understanding of how the Christian faith relates to culture.
6. **Essay:** Write an essay on a topic of your choice (3,000-3,500 words), based on a specific event, theme or doctrine from a specific period(s). To do well, students are advised to expound first from the primary texts related to the topic and then from the secondary literature related to your subject (including the views of specialist scholars). For example, if you are working on a teaching of Augustine, you are expected to interact with the Augustinian scholars on the topic. The aim of this assignment is to help students learn how to engage with the primary sources and differing historical interpretations, before arriving at their preferred position.

Suggested topics:

- a) **Early Christian martyrdom**, with a focus on specific martyrdom literature.
- b) **Christian monasticism**, with a focus on either specific monastic texts or the writings of a prominent Christian author, such as Bernard of Clairvaux or Athanasius' *Life of Antony*.
- c) **Christian liturgy and sacraments**, as taught in a specific historical period or by a Christian author, such as Augustine or John Chrysostom.
- d) **Christian theology and exegesis**, such as doctrine of salvation, Trinity, eschatology and so on as taught by specific Christian authors, such as Irenaeus, Augustine, Athanasius or the Cappadocian Fathers.
- e) **Christian historical and cultural phenomena**, such as asceticism, relics, discourse about demonic temptations, role of women, views on marriage, use of rhetoric in Christian discourse, the significance of the Crusades, papal reform and so on.

## ASSIGNMENTS BREAKDOWN

S/N	Assignments	Grade Percentage
1	Video Lecture MCQ Questions	10%
2	Online Short Questions	15%
3	Online Reflections	5%
4	Book Review	20%
5	Reflection Paper	10%
6	Essay	40%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

## GUIDELINES FOR ESSAY-WRITING

1. The paper must reflect graduate-level research skills. There must be a minimum of five sources in your bibliography (not including the Bible).
2. The paper must reflect academic integrity in that due credit must be given to every source quoted or used. Footnotes should be used to document the sources. Every source cited should also appear in the bibliography. Please abide by the Turabian or Chicago Style for all your footnoting and bibliography.
3. The paper must reflect a good command of English and organisation of thought. Writing must be concise and clear. Please proof-read your paper before submitting it.
4. The paper must reflect the customary hallmarks of academic writing: treat those who hold different opinions from you with respect, and avoid colloquialisms and slang.

## COURSE ASSIGNMENT POLICIES

1. For **style and formatting** of assignments, please refer to the section on “General Formatting for all Assignments” available on the BGST Online Student Manual.
2. ALL assignments are to be submitted by uploading via Moodle. Alternatively, assignments can be sent via email to [assignments@bgst.edu.sg](mailto:assignments@bgst.edu.sg) without the need to cc. the lecturer (unless requested by the lecturer).
3. Students must submit all their assignments **6 months** after the course registration date

Students are advised that BGST **strongly discourages plagiarism**. For more information on this point (what plagiarism is, how BGST penalises it), please consult the BGST ‘Guidelines for Academic Papers’.

## Course Bibliography

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### REQUIRED READINGS

#### Core Texts

\*Gonzalez, Justo L. *The Story of Christianity: On Volume Edition*. S.F.: Prince Press, 1994, 1999.

\*Wilken, Robert. *The Spirit of Early Christian Thought: Seeking the Face of God*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003.

### RECOMMENDED READINGS

Clark, Gillian. *Christianity and Roman Society*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.

Logan, F. Donald. *A History of the Church in the Middle Ages*. London: Routledge, 2002.

Lynch, Joseph H. *The Medieval Church: A Brief History*. London ; New York: Longman, 1992.

MacCulloch, Diarmaid. *A History of Christianity: The First Three Thousand Years*. London: Allen Lane, 2009.

Moffett, S. H. *A History of Christianity in Asia Volume 1: Beginnings to 1500*. Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1998.

## **General Texts**

### ***General***

Bradley, James E., and Richard A. Mueller. *Church History: An Introduction to Research, Reference Works, and Methods*. Michigan: Eerdmans, 1995.

### ***Patristic Period***

#### i) Primary Sources

The Fathers of the Church Series

Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers Series.

#### ii) Secondary Sources

Algra, Keimpe. *The Cambridge History of Hellenistic Philosophy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

Ayres, Lewis. *Nicaea and Its Legacy: An Approach to Fourth-Century Trinitarian Theology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004.

Barclay, John M. G. *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora : From Alexander to Trajan (323 Bce - 117 Ce)*. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996.

Behr, John. *The Way to Nicea Formation of Christian Theology*. Crestwood, N.Y.: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2001.

\_\_\_\_\_. *The Nicene Faith*. 2 vols. Formation of Christian Theology. Crestwood, N.Y.: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2004.

Brown, Peter. *Augustine of Hippo : A Biography*. London: Faber, 1967.

Cameron, Averil. *The Later Roman Empire, Ad 284-430* Fontana History of the Ancient World. London: Fontana, 1993.

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

Chadwick, Owen. *Western Asceticism : Selected Translations* The Library of Christian Classics. London: SCM, 1958.

Daley, Brian. *Gregory of Nazianzus* The Early Church Fathers. London ; New York: Routledge, 2006.

Drobner, Hubertus R., and William Harmless. *The Fathers of the Church : A Comprehensive Introduction*. Updated ed. Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2007.

Frend, W. H. C. *Martyrdom and Persecution in the Early Church : A Study of a Conflict from the Maccabees to Donatus*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1981.

Harmless, William. *Desert Christians : An Introduction to the Literature of Early Monasticism*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2004.

Harrison, Carol. *Augustine : Christian Truth and Fractured Humanity* Christian Theology in Context. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000.

Holmes, Michael William. *The Apostolic Fathers*. 2nd ed. Leicester: Apollos, 1990.

Kelly, J. N. D. *Early Christian Creeds*. 3rd ed. London: Longman, 1972.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Early Christian Doctrines*. 5th revised ed. London: A. and C. Black, 1977.

Louth, Andrew. *The Origins of the Christian Mystical Tradition: From Plato to Denys*. 2nd ed. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989.

McDonald, Lee Martin, and James A. Sanders. *The Canon Debate*. Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 2002.

Metzger, Bruce M. *The Canon of the New Testament : Its Origin, Development, and Significance*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987.

Meredith, Anthony. *The Cappadocians*. Crestwood, NY: St. Valdimir's Seminary Press, 1995.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Gregory of Nyssa* The Early Church Fathers. London: Routledge, 1999.

Musurillo, Herbert. *The Acts of the Christian Martyrs* Oxford Early Christian Texts. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972.

Origen, and Henry Chadwick. *Contra Celsum*. Cambridge: University Press, 1953.

Pelikan, Jaroslav Jan. *The Christian Tradition : A History of the Development of Doctrine. 2, the Spirit of Eastern Christendom (600-1700)*. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago P., 1974.

Plato, and John M. Cooper. *Complete Works*. Indianapolis, Ind.: Hackett Pub., 1997.

White, Carolinne. *Early Christian Lives*. London: Penguin, 1998.

Wilken, Robert Louis. *The Christians as the Romans Saw Them*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984.

Young, Frances Margaret. *Biblical Exegesis and the Formation of Christian Culture*. Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 2002.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Brokenness and Blessing : Towards a Biblical Spirituality* Sarum Theological Lectures. London: Darton Longman & Todd, 2007.



### ***Byzantine Empire & Eastern Orthodoxy (Medieval East)***

Cameron, Averil. *The Byzantines*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006.

Hussey, J.M. *The Orthodox Church in the Byzantine Empire*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986, 2010.

Kennedy, Hugh. *The Prophet and the Age of the Caliphates: The Islamic Near East from the Sixth to the Eleventh Century*. London: Pearson-Longman, 2004.

Louth, Andrew. *St John of Damascus: Three Treatises on the Divine Images*. Crestwood, New York: St Vladimir's Press, 2003.

\_\_\_\_\_. *St John Damascene: Tradition and Originality in Byzantine Theology*. Oxford Early Christian Studies. Edited by Gillian Clark and Andrew Louth. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002, 2009.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Greek East and Latin West: The Church AD 681-1071*. Crestwood, New York: St Vladimir's Press, 2007.

Palamas, Gregory. *The Triads*. The Classics of Western Spirituality. Translated by Nicholas Gendle. Mahwah, New Jersey: Paulist Press, 1983.

Papadakis, Aristeides and John Meyendorff. *The Christian East & the Rise of the Papacy*. Crestwood, New York: St Vladimir's Press, 1994.

Symeon. *Symeon the New Theologian: The Discourses*. Translated by C.J. deCatanzaro. New York: Paulist Press, 1980.

### ***Medieval Period (Western)***

Allen, S. J., and Emilie Amt. *The Crusades: A Reader Readings in Medieval Civilizations and Cultures*. Peterborough, Ont.: Broadview Press, 2003.

Bede. *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*. Translated by Bertram Colgrave Oxford World's Classics. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1963.

Brown, Alison. *The Renaissance*. 2nd ed. Seminar Studies in History. Harlow, England: Longman, 1999.

Clairvaux, Bernard of. *Selected Works* Classics of Western Spirituality New York, Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1987.

Deanesly, Margaret. *A History of the Medieval Church, 590-1500*. 9th ed. London: Methuen, 1991.

Jordan, William Chester. *Europe in the High Middle Ages*. London: Penguin Books, 2002.

Julian of Norwich. *Showings*. The Classics of Western Spirituality. New York: Paulist Press, 1978.

Lawrence, C. H. *Medieval Monasticism : Forms of Religious Life in Western Europe in the Middle Ages*. 3rd ed. Medieval World. Harlow, England ; New York: Longman, 2001.

- Logan, Donald. *A History of the Church in the Middle Ages*. London: Routledge, 2002, 2009.
- Lynch, Joseph H. *The Medieval Church: A Brief History*. London ; New York: Longman, 1992.
- Madden, Thomas F. *The New Concise History of the Crusades Critical Issues in History*. Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006.
- McGrath, Alister E. *The Intellectual Origins of the European Reformation*. 2nd ed. Malden, Mass.; Oxford: Blackwell Pub., 2004.
- Nauert, Charles Garfield. *Humanism and the Culture of Renaissance Europe*. Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995.
- Riley-Smith, Jonathan. *A History of the Crusades*. New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1987, 2005.
- Southern, R. W. *Western Society and the Church in the Middle Ages*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1970.
- Southern, R. W. *Saint Anselm: A Portrait in a Landscape*. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. P., 1990.
- Whitlock, Keith. *The Renaissance in Europe : A Reader*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000.

### ***Other Christianities***

- Brock, Sebastian P. *The Luminous Eye : The Spiritual World Vision of Saint Ephrem*. Rev. ed. Cistercian Studies Series. Kalamazoo, Mich.: Cistercian Publications, 1992.
- Moffett, Samuel Hugh. *A History of Christianity in Asia*. 2 Vols. San Francisco: Orbis Books, 1992.
- Palmer, Martin. *The Jesus Sutras*. London: Piatkus, 2001.
- Saeki, P. Yoshio. *The Nestorian Documents and Relics in China*. [2d ed. Tokyo: Maruzen, 1951.