



September Study Guide

Subject: Church History: The Early Church

Instructor: The Rev. David Goldberg

Class: Middlers

Reading Assignment: The Story of Christianity – Volume I, Revised Ed. 2010 by Justo L. Gonzalez, pp. 1-126.

Review the Chronology on pp. 7-10

I. Introduction pp. 1-6

What is Gonzalez's approach to history and tradition?

II. The Fullness of Time pp. 13-23

How does Gonzalez describe the relationship between Judaism and Hellenism in Palestine?

What was the Diaspora of Judaism?

III. The Church in Jerusalem pp. 25-30

What characterized the religious life of first century Christianity?

Why did the Jewish Church wane in importance?

IV. Mission to the Gentiles pp. 31-39

What was the scope of the mission?

How did the Church survive after the death of the apostles?

V. First Conflicts with the State pp. 40-48

How did the first persecutions of the Christians arise?

Why did persecutions become more widespread during the reign of Domitian?

VI. Persecution in the Second Century pp. 49-57

What is the historical significance of the correspondence between Pliny, the Younger and the Emperor Trajan?

How did Christians revere the martyrs of the faith?

How and why did the persecutions continue throughout the second century?

VII. The Defense of the Faith pp. 58-68

Who were the first apologists and why did they attempt to defend the faith in a pagan classical culture?

VIII. The Deposit of the Faith pp. 69-81

What gave rise to the standards of Canon, Creed and Apostolic Succession?

What is the origin of the words, Catholic and Orthodox?

IX. The Teachers of the Church pp. 83-96

Who emerged as the prominent teacher of the Church?
What was important about such texts as: The Didache, The Shepherd of Hermas and other works by these teachers of the faith?

X. Persecution in the Third Century pp. 97-104

Why did the persecutions in the 3rd century become so widespread throughout the Roman Empire?

How did the church deal with those who lapsed in their faith?

XI. The Christian Life pp. 106-117

What were some of the characteristics in the life of the early Church?

How did their worship differ from ours?

How was the groundwork laid for the organization of the church?

XII. The Great Persecution and the Final Victory pp. 119-127

What was so horrific about the persecution of the 4th century?

What was happening in the Roman Empire that led to the conversion of Constantine?