

## What is the Lightbearers Institute?

The Lightbearers Institute is the primary teaching element in the Lightbearers Discipleship Community. It is a classroom setting where over the span of two years, students attend over fifty class sessions and complete two courses: Biblical Survey and Theology and Practice. The Institute seeks to give students Biblical literacy and sound doctrine, equipping them as church members for a lifetime and then stepping away to allow their churches will build upon this introductory foundational knowledge. In addition to participating in the Institute, students in a Lightbearers Discipleship Community live in intentional small groups led by a house leader, meet regularly with a mentor from their local church and are exposed to the work of the body of Christ among the nations. Our prayer is that these commitments connect students for life with Jesus, his people and his plan for the ends of the earth while we use their rental income to fund mission projects in Asia and northern Africa.

Lightbearers is not the church but, rather, exists to serve the local church. This conviction has impact in many areas, including the fact that the Lightbearers Institute is primarily taught by local pastors in order to emphasize to students our ministry's subordinate role and to introduce students to several healthy local churches. Remaining classes are taught by Lightbearers staff members and, in some instances, church laymen and laywomen.

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## Week 23: Church History 2 - 1500-2018

**Thesis:** The last five centuries have been dramatic ones in the history of the church. The advent of increased technology, global exploration and industrialization (among other things) radically changed the way in which individuals lived and practiced their faith. The printing press and overseas missions are prime examples but they are by no means the only ones. In addition, the church crossed a continental divide of sorts in 1517 when Martin Luther's posting of 95 theses set off the Protestant Reformation and began a worldwide split into innumerable denominations as well as a renewal of devotion to the Gospel of salvation by grace. As we see all this change, however, we recognize that there is nothing new under the sun, and so the story of the last five hundred years in the church is the same old story of man's failings and victories and Christ's faithfulness and ultimate victory.

**Primary Objectives:** At the conclusion of this session, students should understand: 1) The basics of the Reformation—the doctrines at play, the major players, and the implications on world and church history; 2) The worldwide spread of the church over the past few centuries, including the rise of modern missions through figures such as the Moravians, William Carey and others; 3) Denominational differences among the global church today; and 4) God was at work in the church during the last five centuries.

**Key Readings:** Acts 17, Romans 1-5 (**Romans 4**), James 2

### Things to Remember:

- The Lightbearers Institute aims to teach Biblical literacy and doctrinal soundness. Christian unity and a love of Scripture should be displayed above the ability to win an argument. On potentially contentious doctrines, we primarily want to emphasize to students the bounds of historical evangelical orthodox faith. You are free to outline your particular opinion on these doctrines, but please acknowledge to students where there is notable legitimate debate on an issue.
- Class sessions usually run for 90 minutes and take place in an academic setting (students seated at tables), but please communicate with your local campus staff for exact details and location.
- In an effort to encourage students to engage with Scripture, students have assigned key readings (listed above), so it is wise to reference some of these readings. We do not ensure students have completed the assigned readings but mentioning and/or discussing these readings, particularly the bolded chapter, during class reinforces to students the need to complete these readings.
- Lightbearers Theology and Practice course follows an outline loosely based on Wayne Grudem's Systematic Theology. Please note, however, that students have not read Systematic Theology by Wayne Grudem.
- Please prepare an outline for students. A sample outline follows, but please note that this material is suggestive rather than prescriptive. Please use this sample to whatever extent is helpful to you, and communicate with local campus staff with any specific questions you have.
- Our most successful instructors consistently do three things: 1. Demonstrate clearly that their teaching and opinions are based in Scripture; 2. Communicate with students in an engaging manner; 3. Have a passion for the Scriptures and the God who inspired them

**Proposed Teaching Outline**

TOPIC		TIME
<b>I.</b>	<b>The Protestant Reformation</b>	<b>(30 min.)</b>
A.	Causes and context	(10 min.)
B.	Luther and the 95 Theses	(10 min.)
C.	The Reformation spreads across Europe	(10 min.)
<b>II.</b>	<b>The Westward Spread of the Church</b>	<b>(30 min.)</b>
A.	Christianity and the colonies	(10 min.)
B.	Christianity in the United States—1775-1900	(10 min.)
C.	Christianity in the United States—1900-2018	(10 min.)
<b>III.</b>	<b>The Eastward Spread of the Church</b>	<b>(30 min.)</b>
A.	The church in Africa	(10 min.)
B.	The church in Asia	(10 min.)
C.	The church in the Middle East	(10 min.)

**Spring Class Sequence**

WEEK	DOCTRINES
(1)	Fall Review
(2-3)	Sanctification
(4)	Disciplemaking
(5-7)	Ecclesiology
(8)	Missions
(9-10)	Church History
(11-12)	Eschatology
(13)	Spring Review

**Resources**

TITLE	AUTHOR
The Reformation: A History	Diarmaid MacCulloch
The Unquenchable Flame	Michael Reeves
Life & Diary of David Brainerd	Jonathan Edwards
Perspectives on the World Christian Movement	Winter, Hawthorn

**Additional Web Resource**

Biblical Training
<a href="https://www.biblicaltraining.org/foundations/essentials-church-history/gordon-isaac">https://www.biblicaltraining.org/foundations/essentials-church-history/gordon-isaac</a>