

(4) applying history to the present realm of life.

We will not be able to master these aspects but we should be aware of them and they should be weighed carefully in any conclusions to which our history reading leads us.

I.8. Church  
History  
in  
particular

Church History in Particular

In definition

Our subject is the account of the life of the body founded by the Lord in the New Testament economy. It is the study of a company of persons committed to a sacred trust and how they both honored and dishonored their pledge. With the completion of the canon the work of redemption moved into the church age and the church contains the ongoing record of the program of redemption. A history of the church is, therefore, the continuing record of God's reaching out to man. Church history is distinct from "denominational history" in that it focuses on the body politic and not the segments of that body.

Purposes in the Study

We best express them in contrasting ways:

NEGATIVELY: We do not study church history:

- 1) to learn Divine Truth
- 2) to see models to copy
- 3) to learn the specifics of God's will
- 4) to defend ourselves apologetically on Bible understanding or practice
- 5) to learn what is correct in the appropriation of Scripture to the life of the church.

We may study about these things and history may offer us some guidelines (pragmatic) but it is not the source of information of this sort.

POSITIVELY: We study church history to meet some of these pragmatic needs in life and the church: