

HISTORY, BELIEFS, AND PRACTICES OF THE CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN – SYLLABUS

INSTRUCTOR: Paul Bozman

address – 10289 Carlswood Ave NE, Hartville, OH 44632

telephone –CELL 330-354-7559

e-mail – pbozman78@gmail.com

DATES & TIMES: (All Fridays) October 23; November 6, 20; 9:30am to 3:30 pm.

LOCATION: In person: Northern Ohio District CoB, District Office
1107 East Main Street, Ashland, OH 44805, or Zoom

PURPOSE: This course will examine the theological concepts that led to the development of the Church of the Brethren, particularly as understood by historical Anabaptism and Pietism. We will also study how those concepts have evolved and influenced the Brethren movement into becoming the church we know today.

OBJECTIVES: By the end of this unit, the student will:

1. Be able to recount the origin and development of the Brethren from 1708 to the present day including important historical figures. This includes familiarity with the history and activity of the Brethren in his or her particular community or region.
2. Be able to articulate the beliefs, basic values, and special emphases that are characteristic of Brethren faith and life.
3. Become familiar with the way these values and beliefs have expressed themselves in organization and ecumenical expressions.
4. Be able to describe and conduct the various ordinances of the Church of the Brethren

REQUIRED TEXTS:

1. **The Bible**

2. **Fruit of the Vine: A History of the Brethren, 1708-1995**, by Donald F. Durnbaugh, 1996, Brethren Press, ISBN: 978-0871780034 [Available at Brethren Press for \$49.95] You may want to check your church libraries before purchasing.

GENERAL COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

- ☐ **attendance at all classes**
- ☐ **engaged participation in all class activities**
- ☐ **complete reading assignments as scheduled**
- ☐ **complete the three writing assignments to be submitted as scheduled**

SPECIAL NOTE: All students (for credit or as an auditor) taking this class to fulfill the Ministry Commission requirements for receiving credentials (Ordination or Commissioned) in the Church of the Brethren **MUST** complete assignment #3.

HISTORY, BELIEFS, AND PRACTICES OF THE CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN – SYLLABUS (*continued*)

PLANNED COURSE SCHEDULE:

1. FIRST CLASS: (October 23, 2026)

Morning Session - Influences that shaped and formed the Brethren Movement

Afternoon Session - Pennsylvania through the Revolution

In our first class, we'll look at the historical and theological influences that developed in Europe during the 17th century that impacted Alexander Mack and resulted in the creation of the Brethren Movement. We will also look at how the Brethren adjusted to life in the colonies and the events of the movements first 100 years.

b. reading assignment #1 - read chapters 1-8 prior to class, ***Fruit of the Vine: A History of the Brethren, 1708-1995***, by Donald F. Durnbaugh.

c. writing assignment #1– Due via email attachment (pbozman78@gmail.com)

Due by 8am, October 30, 2026

Based on the reading of the first few chapters, and the discussion we had in our first class, write a 2-3 page essay (double-spaced, Times New Roman font, size 12) which outlines and describes the initial influences and issues that led to the beginning of a new movement by Alexander Mack.

2. SECOND CLASS - (November 6, 2026)

Morning Session - Developments of the 1800s and the Civil War

Afternoon Session - What really happened to cause the great schism?

In our second class, we'll look at how the Brethren began to organize as the movement grew and began to move across the new country. What issues developed among the Brethren? Where did they take a stand and how did that affect the movement? Why did the great schism occur and was it avoidable?

b. reading assignment #2 - read chapters 10-14 prior to class, ***Fruit of the Vine: A History of the Brethren, 1708-1995***, by Donald F. Durnbaugh.

c. writing assignment #2– Due via email attachment (pbozman78@gmail.com)

Due by 8am, November 13, 2026

In a 2-3 page essay (double-spaced, Times New Roman font, size 12), identify some of the theological issues and/or people you believe had great influence during the first 200 years of the Brethren movement in America. This paper will discuss two (2) topics or people. This paper can include how the Brethren interacted with society at large on issues such as war and the political forces of their day. Other ideas include the leaders such as Henry Kurtz, John and Sarah Major, George Wolfe, John Kline, who modeled the ability to live within the order while also helping the Brethren move forward as society changed. What issues concerned them? How did their Brethren beliefs and Practices influence their interaction?

HISTORY, BELIEFS, AND PRACTICES OF THE CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN – SYLLABUS (*continued*)

3. THIRD CLASS – (November 20, 2026)

Morning Session - Rebounding from the great schism

Afternoon Session - World War II and beyond

In our third class, we're going to look at how the Brethren adjusted to the aftermath of the great schism. What were the new developments in how the Brethren focused their mission as a church body for the future?

b. reading assignment #3 - read chapters 15-18, 22-24 prior to class, ***Fruit of the Vine: A History of the Brethren, 1708-1995***, by Donald F. Durnbaugh.

c. writing assignment #3– Due via email attachment (pbozman78@gmail.com)

Due by 8am, December 2, 2026

Choose two unique practices of the Church of the Brethren (e.g. believers' baptism, peace, the simple life, footwashing, etc.) and write a 3-5 page essay (double-spaced, Times New Roman font, size 12) discussing the practices you've identified, i.e. analyze it, defend it, criticize it, relate it to other specific issues or developments that we've discussed.

SPECIAL NOTE REMINDER: All students (for credit or as an auditor) taking this class to fulfill the Ministry Commission requirements for receiving credentials (Ordination or Commissioned) in the Church of the Brethren **MUST** complete assignment #3.

MISSED CLASS POLICY:

In case a participant needs to miss a class (due to illness or scheduling), to receive credit for the class the participant will need to watch the class recording (all classes are recorded via Zoom). Additionally, the participant will have to choose three (3) points from the class discussion to react to and share their reaction in a paper.

If a participant has to miss more than one class (2) they will not receive credit for the course and will be required to retake the course.

This course complies with the Brethren Academy and BBI Policy on Citation Style and Plagiarism as described below:

"Integrity is central to life in community. In the Christian academic community, integrity means giving proper credit to people for the ideas and information we receive from them. It also means that the work we submit and represent as our own is really work we ourselves have done.

The Church of the Brethren 2008 Annual Conference Ethics in Ministry Paper (2008) Part III Code of Ethics for Ministerial Leaders states: I will give credit for all sources quoted or extensively paraphrased in sermons and prepared papers. I will honor all copyrights (p. 8, Letter M).

“Plagiarism is using the work of other people without giving them credit, whether in written assignments, oral reports and sermons. The consequences for plagiarism will vary according to the extent of the offense. These may range from rewriting the assignment, non-crediting the assignment, or non-crediting the course.”