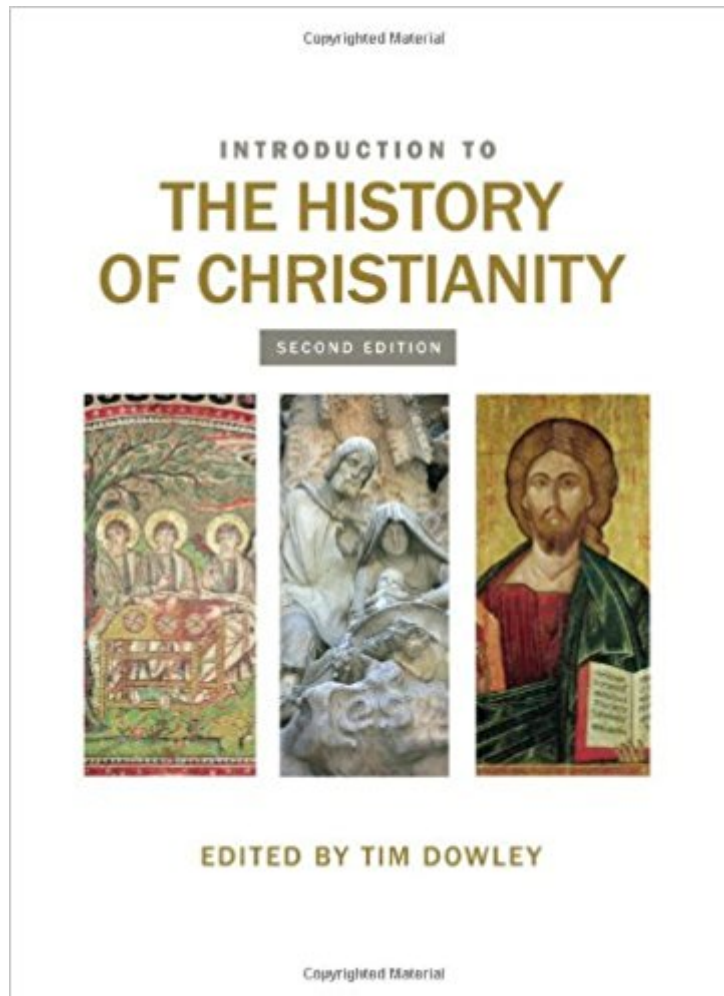




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Introduction To The History Of Christianity



Synopsis

Combining the accuracy and readability of the first edition of this highly acclaimed text, Dowley has enhanced the second edition with new contributions from Pheme Perkins on "The Thought–World of Early Christianity" and Richard Burridge on "Jesus and the Gospels" as well as updated and revised contributions from Ward Gasque, Richard Pierard, John H. Y. Briggs, and more. With many new photographs, illustrations, maps, charts, and timelines, the inviting new full–color format tells the dramatic, intriguing, and often surprising story of Christians in their 2000–year journey to the present day.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"This fine handbook... with its charts, maps, diagrams and colour illustrations, will help readers through the maze of complex Christian history." The New York Times "If you have only one church history book, this should be it." Christianity Today "This is a book whose honesty, scholarship, and general attractiveness commend it even to the non-religious reader." Publishers Weekly --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Tim Dowley is author of The Christians: An Illustrated History (2008) and The Student Bible Atlas (1990), among many other titles on history of Christianity and the Bible.

Although I had to have for a history course, I really enjoyed this book. Covers the history of

Christianity clearly and succinctly.

Every edition of the work is worth using it. Outstanding, well documented and very informative

Useful tool, but had to synthesize for my graduate studies.

Shipped very quickly! I would definitely recommend.

Nice book! Well bound, sturdy materials. Exactly the book required for my Summer Ethics class! Easy to read, nice reference section.

Writing history is something of a difficult task, in no small measure due to the incredible amount of information that historians must sift through and subsequently leave out when offering their account of the past. Even a rote retelling of a single day in the life of a human leaves out certain contexts and events which occurred; how much harder is summarizing hundreds or thousands of years filled with the lives of millions of human beings and condensing their stories into mere pages. And yet, this is the task to which historians devote themselves. And it is the historical project of the Christian Church to which Tim Dowley and his team of contributors turn to in the second edition of the *Introduction to the History of Christianity* (Fortress Press: Minneapolis, 2013). Beginning with Jesus and his earliest followers and tracing the growth and development of Christianity across time and place, the *Introduction to the History of Christianity* provides a detailed historical reading of the highlights (and lowlights) of Christianity throughout the ages. This introduction reads more like a “chronological encyclopedia” than a typical introductory survey, with over fifty scholars weighing in on various persons and events in the church’s history. This is perhaps this *Introduction to the History of Christianity*’s greatest strength, as it helps alleviate the common critique of scholarly bias by providing a voice to numerous viewpoints and specialists. For example, in the discussing the Protestant Reformation (pg. 304-25), one contributor notes the influence of the Reformation in Ireland, and another offers insight into Post-Reformation Church Architecture, two topics which one rarely sees in an introductory work. This is but one example of the impressive breadth and depth this volume offers. The *Introduction to the History of Christianity* comes full of useful maps and charts, with excellent illustrations and pictures throughout. Perhaps most helpful to an introductory student are the several timelines within this book, which offer a chronological look at how important Christians and historical events line up with each other and

world history more broadly. Even more beneficial are the numerous topical and personal periscopes which fill the pages of this work, offering in-depth insights into the context of the church, the lives of great Christians, and various theologies and events of importance. As a soft-cover book weighing in at just over 600 pages, this work seems to offer the best combination of efficiency and sturdiness, making it a cost-effective tool for classroom use. While the first few chapters of this survey perform admirably in summarizing the earliest followers of Jesus and the dissemination of the Christian message within the Greco-Roman context, more attention could have been given to the historical and theological background of Christianity. Most useful would have been a brief history of Second Temple Judaism. Obviously one must draw the line somewhere on what to include in a survey such as this, but leaping directly into someone as important as Jesus without any back story seems less than ideal. After all, not even our canonical gospels do that. Another concern is that the Introduction to the History of Christianity displays a fairly typical “Western Christian” bias in its presentation of church history. While occasional forays into eastern Christianity are made, relatively little space is devoted to non-Western Catholicism and Protestantism after the Great Schism. It would have been nice to see a full section or two on eastern forms of Christianity, especially that of Africa and Asia. Of additional note are the suggested resources and reflection question at the end of each section. As this work is intended as a true introduction to the history of Christianity, these resources seem like a good starting points for future learning. It may have been beneficial, however, in the “Further Resources on The History of Christianity” section (pg. 590) to have included a more extensive collection of suggested resources, or at least a bibliography summing the suggested resources throughout the entire work. These minor issues aside, the Introduction to the History of Christianity is highly recommended. This work serves as a superb introduction to church history, and even specialists and historians will glean useful information from this tome. Personally, I will continue to use this work as a resource for my own work, and will strongly consider it as a candidate for year-long courses on the history of Christianity. I received this work from Fortress Press in exchange for my honest review. All opinions expressed are my own. For more reviews, visit [...]

(This review applies to the Kindle edition.) Many of the interesting and informative essays found in the the First edition have been shortened or eliminated altogether in the Second (2013) edition. Also, it appears that perhaps 65% of the photographs have been omitted, which is a shame because the photographs that are included look great on my ipad and iPad mini, via my Kindle app. The Second edition, as the author indicates in his Preface, is a complete revision of the First edition.

Alas, I much prefer the First edition, and wish it was available on Kindle. I give it 3 1/2 stars overall for the above reasons.

Good quick reference that can answer most questions but inspires you to do more if so inclined.

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