



A History of Christianity: The First Three Thousand Years

By Diarmaid MacCulloch

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A History of Christianity: The First Three Thousand Years By Diarmaid MacCulloch

The National Book Critics Circle Award-winning author of *The Reformation* returns with the definitive history of Christianity for our time

Once in a generation a historian will redefine his field, producing a book that demands to be read—a product of electrifying scholarship conveyed with commanding skill. Diarmaid MacCulloch's *Christianity* is such a book. Breathtaking in ambition, it ranges back to the origins of the Hebrew Bible and covers the world, following the three main strands of the Christian faith.

Christianity will teach modern readers things that have been lost in time about how Jesus' message spread and how the New Testament was formed. We follow the Christian story to all corners of the globe, filling in often neglected accounts of conversions and confrontations in Africa and Asia. And we discover the roots of the faith that galvanized America, charting the rise of the evangelical movement from its origins in Germany and England. This book encompasses all of intellectual history—we meet monks and crusaders, heretics and saints, slave traders and abolitionists, and discover Christianity's essential role in driving the enlightenment and the age of exploration, and shaping the course of World War I and World War II.

We are living in a time of tremendous religious awareness, when both believers and non-believers are deeply engaged by questions of religion and tradition, seeking to understand the violence sometimes perpetrated in the name of God. The son of an Anglican clergyman, MacCulloch writes with deep feeling about faith. His last book, *The Reformation*, was chosen by dozens of publications as Best Book of the Year and won the National Book Critics Circle Award. This awe-inspiring follow-up is a landmark new history of the faith that continues to shape the world.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Where does Christianity begin? In Athens, Jerusalem, or Rome? How did the early creeds of the church develop and differentiate? What was the impact of the Reformation and the Catholic Counterreformation? How have vital Christian communities emerged in Asia, Africa, and India since the 18th century? Award-winning historian MacCulloch (*The Reformation*) attempts to answer these questions and many more in this elegantly written, magisterial history of Christianity. MacCulloch diligently traces the origins and development of Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant Christianities, and he provides a more in-depth look at the development of Christianity in Asia and Africa than standard histories of Christianity. He offers sketches of Christian thinkers from Augustine and Luther to Desmond Tutu and Patriarch Bartholomew I. Three appendixes contain a list of popes, Orthodox patriarchs, and a collection of Christian texts. Assuming no previous knowledge on the part of readers about Christian traditions, MacCulloch traces in breathtaking detail the often contentious arguments within Christianity for the past 3,000 years. His monumental achievement will not soon be surpassed. (*Mar.*)

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From [Booklist](#)

Starred Review MacCulloch signals the parameters of his prodigious scholarship when he brackets the Resurrection as a riddle no historian can resolve, then marvels at how belief in the Risen Lord has transformed ordinary men and women into martyrs—and inquisitors. Despite his refusal to affirm the faith's founding miracle, MacCulloch demonstrates rare talent for probing the human dynamics of Christianity's long and complex evolution. Even when examining well-known episodes—such as the Church Fathers' fight against Gnosticism or the stunning conversion of Constantine—this capacious narrative opens unexpected perspectives. Readers encounter, for instance, surprising connections between Christian doctrine, on the one hand, and ancient Greek philosophy interlaced with Roman politics on the other. As the chronicle fractures into Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant strands, MacCulloch exposes unfamiliar but unmistakably human personalities who have shaped the worship of the divine. Readers meet, for instance, Gudit, a savagely anti-monastic Ethiopian queen, and Filofei, an irrepressibly ambitious Russian monk. Much closer to our time, we confront Christian enthusiasms that militarists harnessed in World War I, Christian hatreds that Nazis exploited in World War II. Concluding with the perplexities of evangelists facing an implacably secular world, MacCulloch leaves readers pondering a problematic religious future. A work of exceptional breadth and subtlety. --Bryce Christensen

Review

"A landmark contribution ... It is difficult to imagine a more comprehensive and surprisingly accessible volume than MacCulloch's."

-Jon Meacham, *The New York Times Book Review*

"A well-informed and - bless the man - witty narrative guaranteed to please and at the same time displease every single reader, if hardly in identical measure.... The author's prose style is fluent, well-judged and wholly free of cant ... You will shut this large book with gratitude for a long and stimulating journey."

-*The Washington Times*

"A prodigious, thrilling, masterclass of a history book. MacCulloch is to be congratulated for his accessible handling of so much complex, difficult material ... He keeps the reader engaged with wit and choice

anecdotes and throughout the entire book he retains his own distinctive, slightly irreverent perspective, and an unerring instinct for when to go from macro to micro history."

-John Cornwell, *Financial Times*

"He brings an insider's wit to tracing the fate of official Christianity in an age of doubt, and to addressing modern surges of zeal, from Mormons to Pentecostals."

-*Economist*

"A triumphantly executed achievement. This book is a landmark in its field, astonishing in its range, compulsively readable, full of insight even for the most jaded professional and of illumination for the interested general reader. It will have few, if any, rivals in the English language."

-Rowan Williams, Archbishop of Canterbury

"*Christianity* is a tour de force: it has enormous range, is gracefully and wittily written, and from page one holds the attention. Everyone who reads it will learn things they didn't know."

-Eamon Duffy, author of *Saints and Sinners*

"The great strength of the book is that it covers, in sufficient but not oppressive detail, huge areas of Christian history which are dealt with cursorily in traditional accounts of the subject and are unfamiliar to most English-speaking readers ... His analysis of why Christianity has taken root in Korea but made such a hash in India is perceptive and his account of the nineteenth-century missions in Africa and the Pacific is first-rate and full of insight."

-Paul Johnson, author of *The Quest for God*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Lenore Ryan:

A History of Christianity: The First Three Thousand Years can be one of your beginner books that are good idea. We all recommend that straight away because this publication has good vocabulary that could increase your knowledge in terminology, easy to understand, bit entertaining but still delivering the information. The copy writer giving his/her effort to put every word into joy arrangement in writing A History of Christianity: The First Three Thousand Years yet doesn't forget the main position, giving the reader the hottest in addition to based confirm resource info that maybe you can be one among it. This great information can certainly drawn you into fresh stage of crucial pondering.

Cora Morrell:

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