



# The Story of Christianity

*David Bentley Hart*

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## **The Story of Christianity** David Bentley Hart

The story of Christianity is an immeasurably fascinating one. A faith that began in Roman occupied Palestine, as a small and fugitive faction within Judaism, grew, thrived and finally "conquered" the empire that had sought to exterminate it. Then, over many centuries and in many lands, it became the vital source from which new civilizations sprang. At times, its geographical range expanded mightily, at others contracted perilously. At times, the church proved heroically true to its deepest moral principles; at others, inexcusably traitorous to them.

But, by the beginning of the 21st century, this faith that began in such fragility, and that became so powerful--even though its temporal power has now receded in its historic homelands--is the most widespread and diverse of all religions. Christianity is rapidly taking root in cultures very different from those in which it was born and in which it once flourished, and is assuming configurations that could not have been anticipated a century ago.

In *The Story of Christianity*, the distinguished theologian David Bentley Hart provides a broad picture of Christian history. Presented in 50 short chapters--each focusing on a critical facet of Christian history or theology, and each amplified by timelines, quotations, and color images--his magisterial account does full justice to the range of Christian tradition, belief and practice--Eastern Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Anglican, Presbyterian, Evangelical, Coptic, Chaldean, Ethiopian Orthodox, Armenian Orthodox, Malankaran, to name but a few of the many possibilities.

From the persecutions of the early church to the papal-imperial conflicts of the Middle Ages, from the religious wars of 16th and 17th-century Europe to the challenges of science and secularism in the modern era, and from the ancient Christian communities of Africa and Asia to the "house churches" of contemporary China, *The Story of Christianity* triumphantly captures the heterogeneous richness of Christian history.

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