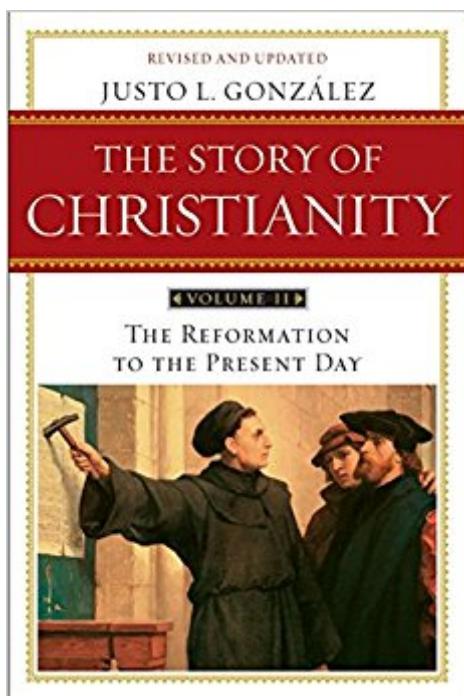


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# The Story Of Christianity, Vol. 2: The Reformation To The Present Day



## Synopsis

From Justo L. Gonzalez, author of the acclaimed three-volume History of Christian Thought, The Story of Christianity Volume II: The Reformation to the Present Day is the fully revised and updated second volume of The Story of Christianity. Gonzalez's astute scholarship, lucid prose, and impassioned focus tell the narrative history of Christianity, beginning with the Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century and leading all the way up to present day.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This highly informative, narrative history covers the events, persons, external influences, and formative ideas of Christian history.

Beginning with the Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century, this fully revised and updated second volume of The Story of Christianity continues the marvelous history of the world's largest religion. Award-winning historian Justo Gonzalez bring to life the people, dramatic events, and theological debates that have shaped Protestantism, Catholicism, and Orthodoxy. From the monk Martin Luther, who dared to stand up to a corrupt pope, to the surprising spread and growing vitality of today's church in Africa, Asia, and South America, The Story of Christianity offers a complete and up-to-date retelling of this amazing history. With new information on the important contributions of women to church history as well as the latest information on Christianity in developing countries, Gonzalez's richly textured study discusses the changes and directions of the church up to the twenty-first century. The Story of Christianity covers such recent occurrences

as the fall of the Soviet Union and the return of the Russian Orthodox Church; feminist, Africa-American, and Third-World theologies; the scandals and controversies facing the reign of Pope Benedict XVI; interfaith dialogue; and the movement toward unity of all Christian churches. This revised and updated edition of *The Story of Christianity* concludes with a thoughtful look at the major issues and debates facing Christianity today.

Naturally, there is an overwhelming abundance to write about concerning 500 years of the turbulent times and consequential changes in the Christian religion. This book, along with Volume 1, is written in a fairly simplistic manner and imparts to the reader the fundamental ideas, concepts, and changes in Christianity. Personally, as a Westerner more exposed to Roman Catholicism and Protestantism, I would like a bit more discussion in the book regarding Eastern Christianity. However, when I reached the end, overall I felt more confident in my understanding of Christian history. As is the case with Volume 1, there appears to be typos in the text on a few pages.

There are several good, and one or two "great" histories of Christianity, and there are probably dozens which rank would fare as "good home cooking". Nourishing, but not impressive. Gonzales' history is mashed potatoes with meat, as prepared by Joel Robuchon. It is the things we want to know about the people and the movements, primarily in European and American Christianity, even though the main action in Christian expansion in the 20th century and later will be in the global south (Latin America, sub-Saharan Africa, and East Asia. For that, go to Philip Jenkins' book, "The Next Christendom."Gonzales' book is NOT about theology. You will get very little on the differences between Luther and Calvin and Wesley and the Council of Trent in this book. You will get much about the effects of these theologies on the social directions of Catholicism and various varieties of Protestantism. One of the most interesting threads in this discussion is the revelation that the United States was the hothouse of religious experimentation. The separation of church and state provisions in the constitution were dramatic in a time when every Christian country had a state religion, including England. But they were necessary, since each of the 13 colonies had a different religious foundation. From that diversity comes most of the major changes, many of the biggest ones today grew from American Wesleyism, even though the Methodist movement started in England. Even so, there are many topics in early American Christianity which get no mention. Increase and Cotton Mather between them get only one page and Jonathan Edwards gets only four mentions on widely separated pages. Appropriate to a target audience of non-professionals, the writing is brisk and easy to follow. Appropriate to the title, it reads like a "Story". The down side to that is that there are very

few notes (two pages for 552 pages of text) about sources. For that, you would need to go to Jaroslav Pelikan's History of Doctrine. For a more authoritative social history, you would need to go to the 8 volume Cambridge History of Christianity, which costs about \$200 per volume. If I were to do one thing to improve the book, it would be to put a Bibliography at the end of each chapter. Gonzales, I'm sure, could hire a Grad student to do that for him. If it had such a Bibliography, I would give it a higher rank, because then it would be useful as a reference volume, where you could read the chapters which interest you, and find books to elaborate on that interest. One reviewer believed he saw a Spanish slant to the writing in this book. Frankly, I read the whole book and detected no such "prejudice". If there were, Gonzales did it very, very poorly, because neither I nor the seven other members of my class, nor the instructor, mentioned anything about it. If Gonzales was less critical of the Spanish Inquisition that we have been lead to believe it deserves, just maybe we have been mislead about the relative horrors of that versus so much else we have seen since the Reformation began.

This second volume of Gonzalez's two volume work continues his readable narrative style of recounting the history of the church and picks up at the start of the Protestant Reformation and covers later church history and its various developments to the present day. However, recent trends within the church over the past half decade did not make it into this latest edition. On account of this, perhaps another revision will be required in the near future or perhaps a supplementary edition.

Gonzalez is a great historian and makes reading history very interesting. This is a scholarly work but one that most people will find interesting to read.

Very detailed. The only two issues that I have found is the index is incomplete and it jumps around in the timeline from chapter to chapter.

I was given a hard copy of this book, but I have enjoyed having this version available wherever I am with my iPad. I was surprised to find the chapters in a different order from the hard copy. I had been careful to check that I was downloading the revised edition (same as the hard copy). The contents. The three chapters I have read so far were thorough and scholarly. It can be a bit heavy and sometimes lifeless in its recitation of events. I think this would be difficult for those with little or no background in history, especially church history. Gonzalez writes well. I am looking forward to the rest of the book.

I find church history to be a highly underrated topic. They drive each other, and there are far too many students of each that have no respect for the other. Religion gives rise to history, and history dictates the traditions of the church. Therefore I think it is highly astute of a person to be educated in this field. This text does a good job of reporting the facts, but interprets them with a bit of political bias. The writing gets a little dense at times, but it is very informative.

This work started with the Protestant reformation and continues the marvelous history of Christianity. Friendly to read and covers the events in an accurate way.

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