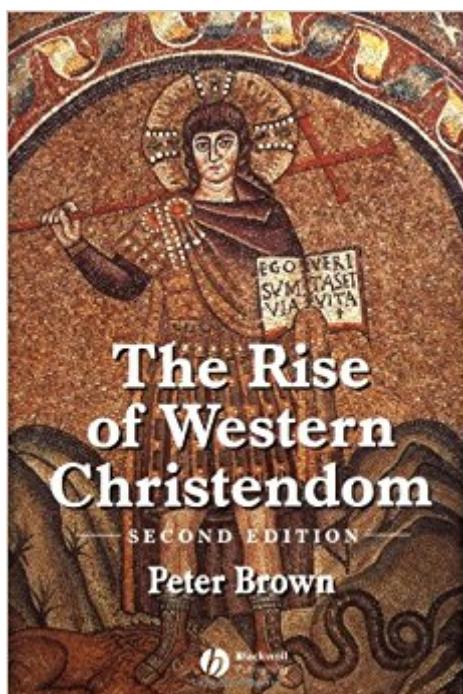


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# The Rise Of Western Christendom: Triumph And Diversity, A.D. 200-1000, 2nd Edition (The Making Of Europe)



## **Synopsis**

This book offers a vivid, compelling history of the first thousand years of Christianity. For the second edition, the book has been thoroughly rewritten and expanded. It includes two new chapters, as well as an extensive preface in which the author reflects on the scholarly traditions which have influenced his work and explains his current thinking about the book's themes. New edition of popular account of the first 1000 years of Christianity. Thoroughly rewritten, with extensive new preface of author's current thinking. Includes new maps, substantial bibliography, and numerous chronological tables.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

"Most scholars would have been content to let a book as fine as the first edition of *The Rise of Western Christendom* rest on its laurels. Not so Peter Brown. He has taken note of the recent outburst of scholarship in this field, and has produced a yet richer work, which, with its extended notes and bibliography, will prove to be a mine for scholars and students for years to come." Ian Wood, University of Leeds "This outstanding revision of *The Rise of Western Christendom* will make this the book for the next generation and will stimulate countless revisions of long-accepted interpretations of the period 400-1000." Thomas F. X. Noble, University of Notre Dame "[The first edition] was a historical masterpiece before. But the author's mind has moved on: The second edition contains further development, has filled out a great deal of detail, revised much in the light of more recent work, and, especially, has made it very much more useful for serious students by providing references and notes." Robert Markus, University of Nottingham "A new book by Peter

Brown always makes my heart beat faster...The addition of a dazzling range of new scholarly material makes the book a far more thorough treatment...My students will be reading it." Bryn Mawr Classical Review "In the second edition of his *The Rise of Western Christendom: Triumph and Diversity, AD 200-1000*, Brown sets shimmering fragments of historical insight into a mosaic that is all the more splendid for its well-judged architecture, resulting in what may come to stand as the most satisfying contribution of an unusually distinguished career. With time, *The Rise of Western Christendom* may emerge as a milestone in the search for an account of the fall of Rome that genuinely breaks free of Gibbon's spell." Kate Cooper, *Times Literary Supplement*. "With its dexterous and confident handling of an array of subjects and disciplines, and its exhaustive and detailed endnotes and bibliography, this book has encapsulated and synthesized a burgeoning field of scholarship at the point of perhaps its greatest creativity and imagination" *The Atlantic Monthly* "The *Rise of Western Christendom* is a work of uncommon originality, prodigious learning, and literary grace." Robert Louis Wilken, *National Review* "It is an ashtonishing story, told in a way that keeps general themes clearly in sight while lovingly attending to the particularities of people, practices and beliefs" *First Choice*

This book offers a vivid, compelling history of the first thousand years of Christianity. Ranging across the Christian world from China to Iceland, the narrative illustrates the diversity of Christian beliefs and practices. It also places the rise of Christianity in the context of other religious traditions, especially Islam. The author draws penetrating portraits of individuals and communities, from St Patrick and the Irish church to the Christian communities of Armenia and Mesopotamia. For the second edition, the book has been thoroughly rewritten and expanded. It includes two new chapters, on monasticism and Irish Christianity. The author has also added an extensive preface in which he reflects on the scholarly traditions that have influenced his work and explains his current thinking about the book's themes. The new edition contains new maps, a substantial bibliography, and a number of chronological tables to orient the reader.

If there is one academic historian I would recommend to a non-academic audience, it would be Peter Brown. I do believe he is one of the greatest historians in any field in my lifetime, and I have never been anything but delighted by his works. His textbook, "*The Rise of Western Christendom*," surveys the transformation of the antique world from the second century to the ninth, roughly the period when Christianity became a historical force. It is simply the best narrative and description of how Christianity came to transform the Roman world that there is. It may perhaps be a bit too

detailed for the general reader, and someone with no knowledge whatsoever of ancient Rome or early Christianity might find it tough sledding. But otherwise, there is simply no excuse for anyone interested in the period or early Christianity not owning the book.

I considered calling this book a rewriting of history, but the more I read of it, the more it seemed like the much more complex task of "writing history," something which really has not been done for the period under discussion (Western Europe from 200 AD through 1000 AD). Peter Brown is an eminent historian, and for good reason. He reads widely, and he has good eyes and an excellent brain. His history of "The Rise of Western Christendom" upsets multiple historical cliches, the most famous perhaps being Edward Gibbon's boast that he had described "the triumph of barbarity and religion." One can understand how Gibbon came to this conclusion, but Peter Brown can describe what actually happened. There is a huge difference. I'll give you one example of my own historical goof, when I wrote the following: "In December of the year 406, a bitter winter chill enabled hordes of barbarian warriors--some 15,000--to walk with their horses, wives and children across the Rhine River. Once across the river, they plundered and destroyed at their leisure, seizing the city of Rome four years later." This is entirely wrong. The "barbarians" were coming under attack from Attila and his Huns, and so they wrote to Rome for permission to cross the river in self-defense. The Romans consented, only requiring that the new refugees accept military service. This sensible policy ended in disaster: famine broke out, and the refugees resorted to raiding the local farms for food to eat. In the end, they finally attacked Rome itself. But it was not a deliberate and planned invasion. Like so much in human history, it was something that "just happened." That is just one sample of the erudition on display in this wonderful book. To the best of my knowledge, it has no serious competition. I should note that Peter Brown gives good attention to the expansion of Christianity in the East, and that he was so dedicated to the truth about this era that he revised the original book and issued a second edition only seven years after the first edition appeared. Why? Because discoveries about this era are suddenly pouring in at a huge rate. This is your go-to book for the era. Period.

I ordered both editions of this book--one on Kindle and one in softcover so my review covers both. If you're up to a wonderful romp through the history of the early church, read this book, read parts of it a second time and then put it on your reference shelf because there isn't a better early Church history resource available. The title is misleading since the author spends as much time discussing the Eastern Church as he does the Western one and that's okay because in so doing he is able to

paint a more complete picture of what was happening in the different geographical regions and diverse cultures Christianity entered. The author debunks a lot of myths and we learn that great hoards of barbarians did not sweep down from the North and in one mighty and overwhelming swoop conquer Rome. Beards, unleavened bread and the "Holy Spirit proceeding from the Father" and not the "Father and the Son" were not the only reasons for the split between the Eastern and Western Church and that split was a long time coming and a long time taking effect. Forget an exact date. It does not exist. Clarifying historical events aside, Dr Brown provides the reader a well researched and clear picture of early Christianity and the major players who had a part in it. The sensitive student of the early church will wonder how God got so much accomplished during such a messy period. If you are a student of world or Christian history, this is a must read book. .

A great read for history buffs who need an newer look at the "fall" of Rome, the "barbarians" who were supposedly "at the gates," and other myths of the years from 200 AD to 1000 AD, the years when Christianity in its several forms spread from the Mediterranean Middle East to Rome by way of Monasteries in Ireland, Scotland, and Northumbria in England. Conflicts between the "Roman" way and the "Celtic" way that re-appear even in our own day. And this is only the first half of the book! An excellent trip through the early years of Christianity and the European politics and history with which it interacted, the diversities of its beliefs, practices, and personalities of those who came to be revered as its saints. A rich journey into the early years of Western Culture that illuminates much about current religious and political conflicts, partnerships, hopes, successes and failures. Superbly written, fun to read!

A very well written book detailing Christianity in the years +/- 200 C. E. to 1000 C. E. filled with new (to me) information, especially about the Eastern Christian church. not the easiest read which is why it gets only 4 stars from me.

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