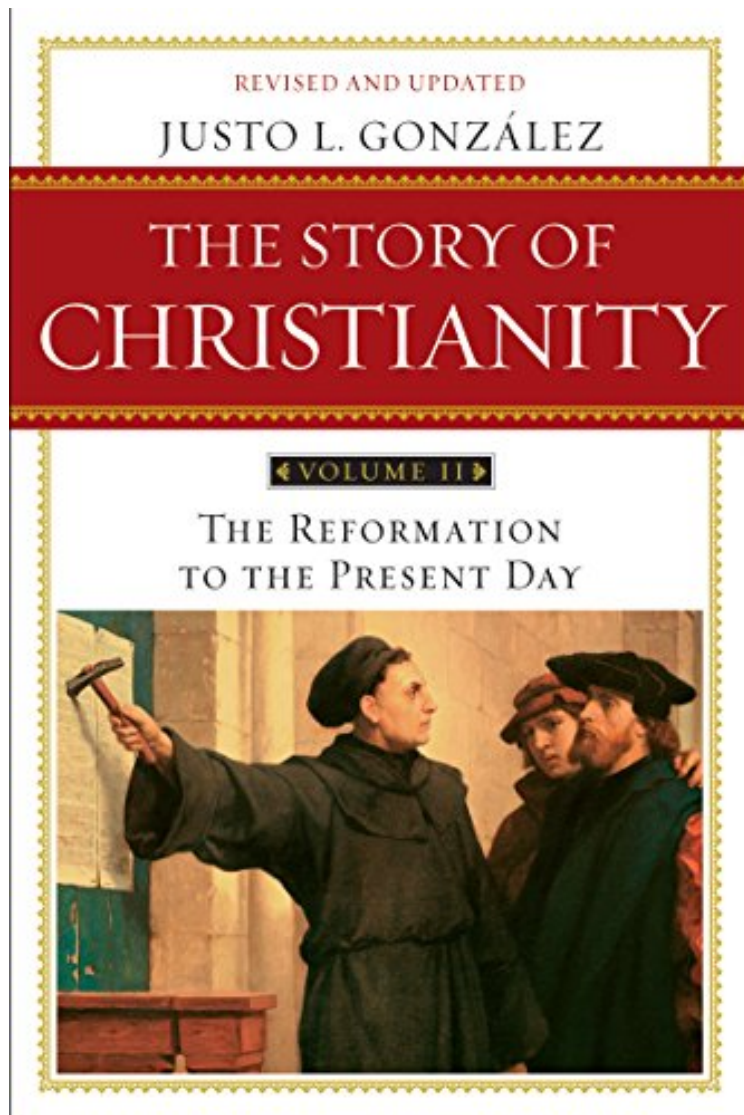


[Download pdf ebook] The Story of Christianity: Volume 2: The Reformation to the Present Day

The Story of Christianity: Volume 2: The Reformation to the Present Day

Von Justo L. Gonzalez
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Von Justo L. Gonzalez : The Story of Christianity: Volume 2: The Reformation to the Present Day before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Story of Christianity: Volume 2: The Reformation to the Present Day:

KundenrezensionenHilfreichste Kundenrezensionen0 von 0 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. Tell me a story...Von FrKurt MessickIn another text ('The Changing Shape of Church History'), Justo Gonzalez writes about

the shift away from a Eurocentric focus on the history of Christianity to a recognition that Christianity is a global phenomenon, not just due to Western missionary activity, but rather has been since its earliest day. Gonzalez keeps this global perspective in mind in his two volume narrative history, 'The Story of Christianity'. Gonzalez' presentation of the Reformation period concentrates on significant people, primarily Martin Luther, Ulrich Zwingli, and John Calvin, bringing in other people as appropriate (Tetzel, various popes, etc.). However, Gonzalez does not confine himself to a 'story of great men' approach, combine the history of ideas, events, and institutions together with the biographical narratives of the people involved. Gonzalez is also the author of a three-volume history of Christian thought, and draws material from that series into this more general church history text. Gonzalez' approach to the Reformation includes the standard Luther/Zwingli/Calvin triad, with information about the reformations in Britain, the Benelux (Low) countries, France, Anabaptists, and influences in the Catholic church. Gonzalez uses the term 'Catholic Reformation' rather than Counter-Reformation, for as he states, 'the Catholic Reformation was well under way when Luther was still a young boy.' Gonzalez highlights some earlier controversies that influenced Luther (Hus and others), as well as so-called 'minor' actors in the unfolding historical events. This is standard for Gonzalez - he addresses the major events and people while incorporating a good deal of information about the influences and people that normally do not get 'topping billing' in historical narratives. His task at recovering these neglected voices puts new perspectives to the overall flow of the history. The second part of the text deals with the various events leading past the Reformations into the Enlightenment. Denominations began to solidify established patterns of belief and practice into orthodox structures, and the general Reformation continued to diversify into Spiritualist, Pietist, and other Movements, which Gonzalez describes as options. Sometimes these had direct political motivations, and other times they were more theological in tone. Gonzalez concludes this section with the Great Awakening and Jonathan Edwards, in the thirteen colonies. In the third section, the political dimensions of religious institutions and their attendant belief and practice structures is readily apparent as the rise of nation-states, the independence movements away from colonial powers, and the increasing independence of church institutions from state control (and vice versa) takes centre stage. Christianity becomes a truly global phenomenon during this period (the late 1700s through the 1800s), but not always in the best ways. Gonzalez highlights good and bad points of the expansion of church power and missionary activity, as well as the way church justifications have been used in aid of colonial authority. In the final section, Gonzalez describes the twentieth century as an era of 'drastic change'. This includes not just the Western traditions of Catholic and Protestant, but also the Orthodox traditions, on the one hand emerging from centuries of Muslim domination in Middle Eastern and North African lands, but then submerging for a time under Communist rule in Russia and East Europe, the centre of Orthodoxy after the fall of Constantinople. In a century that included world wars, expansion of trade, ecumenical and openness movements (such as Vatican II), Gonzalez sees the century ending whereby the former missionary lands of the global South are becoming themselves the evangelizers to the historically Christian North - 'Thus, the lands that a century before were considered the "ends of the earth" will have an opportunity to witness to the descendents of those who had earlier witnessed to them. Each major section is introduced by a chronology; while generally acceptable, more detail here would be helpful, particularly as it relates to the history of ideas. Incorporation of authors, artists, philosophers and others apart from the specifically political and church-related figures would be helpful for the overall context. Each major section also includes a list of suggested readings, but these lists do not include many recent works of merit - Gonzalez himself admits that this text is due for a revised edition. Gonzalez has a broadly ecumenical and open approach, striving to cover a massive amount of material with fair attention both to major topics and oft-neglected voices. He does a very good job at this, and despite some minor shortcomings, this remains one of the better general church history texts available. 0 von 0 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. An excellent "big picture" summary of the period. Von Ed Smither (esmith@compuserve.com) Dr. Gonzalez provides the history student with an excellent point of entry into the period of the Reformation to the present. While his writing style is inviting, calling the reader to engage with the figures and events, it is also quite readable. To be sure, the volume does not attempt to go into great depth, however, it does provide a necessary overview and structure for the period. I felt like I got a good grasp on the period at large providing a foundation for deeper study. Overall, I have nothing but praise and appreciation for Dr. Gonzalez's work. A number of aspects in his work struck me as significant and will be considered in this short review. Among them include the excellent "color video" of the lives of key figures like Erasmus, Luther, and George Fox. Secondly, the history of ideas and philosophy of the period given in Part II of the book gave great insight into the diverse thinking that undergirded the Reformation and its subsequent movements. Thirdly, while I have always viewed the Reformation as a revolution of theology and Christian practice, I was somewhat surprised at its strong affect on the politics of the period. Finally, Gonzalez does an excellent job of showing how the various movements and traditions began and developed. The key religious figures of the period were presented with much color and clarity. I found it insightful that Erasmus was the illegitimate son of a priest and physician's daughter. This must have had an impact on not only his own self esteem and place in society but on how his theology developed. For instance, his reformation leanings had much to do with obedience. Gonzalez writes, ". . . he insisted that righteousness was more important than orthodoxy, and he frequently attacked friars who were capable of subtle theological discussions, but whose lives were scandalous." I cannot help but conclude that such

convictions were born not simply out of his head, but out of his life experience. One's theology cannot be totally divorced from his life, culture, family, and experiences. Hence, I appreciate Gonzalez's insight to include such a detail. Similarly, one can see how Luther's strict and severe family upbringing contributed to his struggle to understand God. In his early career as a monk, he trembled over the mass and quickly aged his personal confessor because he regarded God mostly as a harsh judge. Certainly, Luther's view of God was directly related to his earthly father and family. How all the more delightful and liberating it must have been for him to read Romans 1:17, "the just shall live by faith." Again, the personal life, family, and psychology of the particular reformer contributed to his theology and work. Gonzalez does a great service to the reader by bringing some of these background details to us. Part II of the volume was very stimulating as our author lays down the history and development of the ideas for the period. Certainly people shaped the Reformation and centuries that followed, but it was ideas that shaped the people! Many have pointed out that the Protestant aspect of the Reformation was not a unified effort nor did it have a unified result and this section of the book accentuates that point. Gonzalez, in giving the array and inter-relatedness of theologies allows the reader to understand the tensions in thought that existed between Calvinists and Arminians or Jansenists and Jesuits. Following Gonzalez's objective presentation of the various schools of thought, I personally came away with a greater appreciation and compassion for the thinking of groups that I tend to disagree with. I think it is also noteworthy the fair treatment the author affords Protestant theology in light of his Roman Catholic faith. Gonzalez ably integrates the history of Christianity through its Reformers and theologies but also in the context of the real world of politics, kings, and princes. As a twenty-first century American having lived my whole life in a society where Church and State are separate, it is rather amazing to observe the effect of the Reformation on governments and secular leaders. The help and protection Frederick the Wise of Saxony gave Martin Luther in the German Reformation is foreign to the modern student. The saga of events in England regarding the official Church beginning with Henry VIII to Mary to Elizabeth and so forth also proves remarkable. One of the underlying reasons a Reformation was needed was that the Roman Catholic Church had become too political and hungry for power. Church and State were battling for power and position constantly. Yet Luther, Calvin and Zwingli seem to further their reformation communities in the Church-State together paradigm. Calvin's church in Geneva indeed acted as a key agent of righteous, positive social change. This is certainly the goal of any church in any period in history. While we have learned over and over throughout Christian history of the corruption and abuse that occurs when the Church becomes political, we should not too quickly "Christianize" the separation of Church and State. We must not forget that God ordained Old Testament Israel to be a theocracy. Nevertheless, Gonzalez paints a vivid picture of the political leaders and governments who are effected by the Reformation because of the Church's close tie to the State. Today in America there are Baptists of many sorts as well as Mennonites. The groups seem very different and in fact do possess many differences. Dr. Gonzalez does a nice job of recounting how such groups originated and then began developing so that the modern reader can understand their history in a simple manner. In the case of the Baptist/Mennonite development, the Anabaptists were founded on the principles of being completely scripture oriented and that the Church was to be distinct from the State. This first generation of Anabaptists were scholars and initially were followers of Zwingli. Yet the second generation Anabaptists, in response to the persecution by the Catholic Church and other Protestants, became more revolutionary. A third generation went the other direction and embraced pacifism under the leadership of Menno Simons and ultimately developed into the Mennonites. Like many movements, the Anabaptists often changed drastically from generation to generation and even birthed new splinter movements such as the case of the Mennonites. In summary, Gonzalez consistently provides systematic detail for how significant Reformation movements like the Anabaptists, Lutherans, or Pietists developed. As previously noted, I was very happy with this text of Reformation Church History and found it to be enjoyable reading at the introductory, "big picture" level. Gonzalez succeeds in bringing many of the key figures of the period-- both religious and political-- to life while clearly explaining how various schools of thought and movements developed. He also includes a nice balance of illustrations depicting the key leaders and movements as well as a time line for each section of the book so that the reader may easily know the context from which he is reading. Finally, the quotes given by great leaders at the beginning of each chapter were well selected and provided a window into the chapter. I highly recommend this text for any Church history course focusing on the Reformation to the present.

KurzbeschreibungBeginning 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.

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Synopsis A look at Christianity covers Martin Luther, Zwingli, Calvin, the Reformation, the Puritans, and the influence of politics on the modern church.