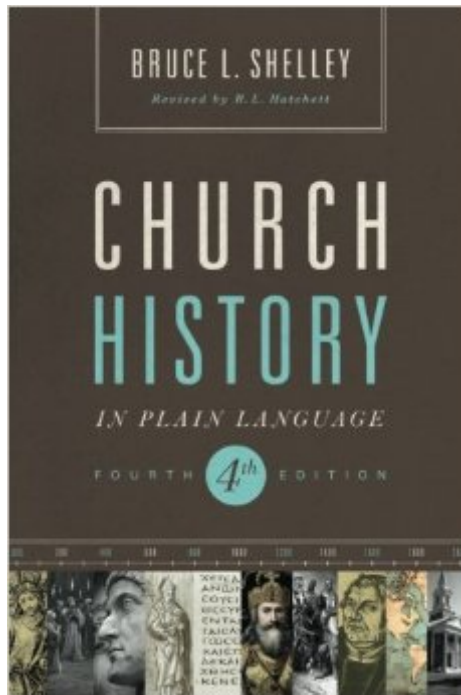


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Church History In Plain Language: Fourth Edition



Synopsis

With more than 315,000 copies sold, this is the story of the church for today's readers. The fourth edition of Shelley's classic one-volume history of the church brings the story of Christianity into the twenty-first century. This latest edition of the book takes a close look at the rapid growth of evangelical and Pentecostal Christianity in the southern hemisphere, addresses the decline in traditional mainline denominations, examines the influence of technology on the spread of the gospel, and discusses how Christianity intersects with other religions in countries all over the world. This concise book provides an easy-to-read guide to church history with intellectual substance. The new edition of Church History in Plain Language promises to be the new standard for readable church history. Features include: Includes contemporary developments related to the spread of the gospel Discusses how technology has an impact on how the church worships and grows Covers the explosion of Christianity in the southern hemisphere

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Customer Reviews

I bought the "Updated 2nd Edition" of this book several years ago, as I was really curious to learn more about church history. Despite growing up in the evangelical church environment, there was a huge gap in my knowledge between what happened after the early church in Acts and the modern church today. I knew vaguely of something called the "Reformation" and that somewhere along the way the Crusades happened. I had no idea why the Crusades occurred, why the Reformation was so important, how the books of the Bible were chosen, why there are so many denominations today, and why there's a giant mosque sitting over the site of the temple in Jerusalem. This book was a

fantastic introduction into church history, covering a huge span of time yet maintaining enough detail in each chapter that keeps you wanting to find out more. I'm not normally a reader (averaging maybe 1-3 books per year), but this book had me hooked all the way through it. The author tries to maintain a neutral non-judgemental tone throughout his text, providing a variety of views of how church historians have interpreted events over the years. Of course, recounting history can never truly be an "objective" exercise, but the author does (in my opinion) present his material very thoughtfully without adding too much of his own subjective views. I've since started studying at Bible College and looking into church history more formally. This book was a huge help in giving me a basic framework to structure my learning around now. I highly recommend this book, and personally cannot wait to see what's been updated two editions later.

I first became familiar with "Church History in Plain Language" in its second edition. By the time I began teaching church history on the college level the third edition was available, and I used it as a background text for the course. It served its purposes well, since it gives a nice overview of the history of Christianity, and works well with a one-semester class in the subject (which, because of time constraints, will also necessarily be an overview). This fourth edition is an updating of the late Bruce Shelley's work by R.L. Hatchett. Hatchett has done an excellent job of preserving the purpose of Shelley's work (that is, as a general overview rather than as a detailed or scholarly text) while adding material where necessary (e.g., a more detailed discussion of Gnosticism) and bringing the text up to date as of the early twenty-first century. I consider this book most beneficial as a first introduction. Those already familiar with church history will find that most events, movements, trends, and the like, are treated fairly briefly, but without undue simplification. One thing I would like to see handled in more detail is a discussion of Orthodox Christianity, which (as is true of many church histories for the Western reader), is given very little space after the time of the Great Schism in the eleventh century. Other than this, I find the book an excellent text for the person becoming familiar with the history of the church for the first time.

This book is a very concise overview of 2000 years of church history. It meets its goal of setting forth a complex history in plain language. It is not a scholarly work, but one intended to educate the lay person who wants to know more about church history and doctrinal differences among the various Christian denominations. The book also does a good job of setting forth church history, without drawing judgments about the merits of various differences between Catholic and Protestant theology.

This book is excellent for the layperson or the student who wants general yet deeper church history from the time of Christ's resurrection to almost today. I have used it for many things and have encouraged many students to have this in their library. I know that it has been used by Denver Seminary. The writing is for "regular" people rather than the grad-student. It answers many questions of creeds, history, heresies, church splits, journeys, missions and so on. If you want a good introduction to church history, get this one!

I learned a lot of fascinating things about Christianity's development throughout its history. Now I know the origin of the Pharisees, Sadducees, Zealots, Essenes, Apostles, Glossolalia, Deacon, and even Christians. I especially liked the early period within the Roman empire.

This is by far one of the very best books written on church history. It takes you from the 1st Century to the present. If you are interested in this subject, don't hesitate to purchase for a good read.

If you want to learn about the church and how we are where we are today this is the book to read. This covers the history of the church from the beginning not skipping any details. In fact this book gives more details than you may want. I would put this book at the college level for content but someone who is interested in history could read this in High-School. It is a very thick book and a good read. Recommend for those looking for a history of the church.

This update is very easy to read. The chapters aren't too long, but provide a great deal of information. I'd like to see a wider scope personally, but that wasn't Dr Shelley's purpose. This leaves several threads loose in Christian History, namely the Eastern Church and the roles of women in ministry. I use this as a main textbook and have no serious complaints about it.

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