

UNDERSTANDING CHRISTIAN HISTORY

Author - Publisher:

Basil C. Fisk

Calle Jorge Leguía 159,

Lima 00018 - Perú.

Tel.: (511) 444-2334

e-mail: basil@basilcfisk.com.pe

First Edition

Lima - Perú, August 2009

Second Edition

Lima - Perú, February 2010

The Legal Deposit made in *Biblioteca Nacional del Perú* N° 2010-00224

ISBN: 978-612-00-0168-4

Second Edition (First Reprint)

December 2013

Printed in Colombia:

AutoresEditores.com

Cover: Manuel Figari

Cover painting: *The Annunciation* by Sandro Botticelli,
Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence

Design and Layout: Rosalía Artadi

Published under the auspices of COMCO E.I.R.L.

© Basil C. Fisk

All texts and photographs are the exclusive property of Basil C. Fisk
Their reproduction, partial or otherwise are completely forbidden either
in electronic or graphic means.

UNDERSTANDING CHRISTIAN HISTORY

by
BASIL C. FISK



BASIL C. FISK

MEMBER OF THE ORDER OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE
CHARTERED ENGINEER, FELLOW OF THE INSTITUTION
OF ENGINEERING AND TECHNOLOGY, LONDON.

A Short Description of the Contents of *Understanding Christian History*

This book is a history book, and it is directed to those who are in search of the true history of the true events of the Christian World. It is intended to be a spring-board for further study and reflection, and it strives to give information which is not commonly available. The contents of the book may be troublesome to some readers, especially those whose understanding of Christianity is based on what they learned in their Sunday School days. For many decades academics all over the world have sought to find the truth about Christianity, and their results are reflected in the extensive amount of published material available today, whose end result is not largely different from what figures in my book. These new views now form the study material in Theological Seminaries and University Courses in Divinity, where the newly graduated ministers are fully appraised on the modern way of looking at Christianity. The book is backed up by my web-site, basilcfisk.com.pe, and it can be seen and purchased on the internet, at authorsonline.co.uk and at Amazon.com, also on the many ebook down-load sites. The book already forms part of the study material for the course on Comparative Religion at the University of Mexico.

Any book on Christian History must start with the history of the Jews, or the Old Testament of the Bible, because Christ was born a Jew, he kept the Jewish Laws and customs, and his mission, preaching and teaching were based on Jewish culture. Therefore the book begins with the Exodus from Egypt, the establishment of the Promised Land, King Solomons Temple, the Babylonian Exile, the Ark of the Covenant, Events of the Old Testament, YHWH, the Dead Sea Scrolls, and Angels and Archangels.

Events covered after Jesus Christ are King Herod of Judaea and his Temple, the Virgin Birth, the Family and Travels of Jesus Christ, the Marital Status of Jesus Christ, John the Baptist and Jesus Christ, the Teaching of Jesus Christ, Mary Magdalene, The Crucifixion and the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Apostles, the Zealots, Bible and New Testament Scholarship, Christianity, the Cult of Paul, Alexandria the Heart of Greek Egypt, Emperor Constantine, Champion of Christianity, the Great Cities of Constantinople and Ephesus,

Jews at the time of Christ, and Whatever Happened to the Treasures of the Temple at Jerusalem.

The book then makes an analysis of Christianity, comparing the Roman Catholic and Orthodox Churches, and deals with the Trinity, Heretical Deviations, The Vatican and the Roman Catholic Church, Opus Dei, the Popes, Liberation Theology, The Desposyni, or Royal Bloodline of Christ, Christian and Pagan Festivals, The Role of Women in Religion, The City of Santiago de Compostela, Freemasonry, The Symbolism of Pillars, the Planet Venus, and the Merchants of Venice.

Finally, the book makes an analysis of Islam, and compares it to Christianity, and comments on the Sharia Law, the Divisions within Islam, the Expansion of Islamic Power, and What went wrong with the Islamic World? and it finalizes with events in the present conflict of Christianity versus Islam and an account of the Islamic influence in Europe and the rest of the world.

The book concludes with two data bases for the reader, one giving the events before Christ, and the other giving the events after Christ until the present day, all in chronological order, and running to over 80 pages, and, finally, there is a full Index of Events, for easy reference.

INTRODUCTION

Summed up in four words, religion is an illusion. More than tenets and ethics, religion is mystery and magic. The ultimate conjuring act, the body and blood from bread and wine. The imposing majesty of the church, the clouds of incense, the remote elevated person of the priest in his splendid vestments at the altar, the candles, sacred art and evocative music, all are factors which create and perpetuate that illusion. Stripped bare of all but its dogma, it would be exponentially reduced to a passing fancy. And just as religious belief requires both reasoned argument and a leap of faith, so its practice requires both truth and illusion. Barely, if ever, can the spirit be reached and released by intellect alone. Religious faith comes through the heart to the head. It causes sinners to repent, the proud to humble themselves, and the powerful to bow to a higher authority. Emotions and imaginations make zealots, saints and martyrs out of clay-footed mortals.

Firstly, some comments on how this treatise came to be written. I was born in Norwich, England in 1926, and my boyhood was spent in a country village named Caister-on-Sea, where I attended the Anglican High Church as an altar server, preparing the incense, lighting candles and generally attending the Vicar in the church ceremonies. I got to know the whole of the sung Eucharist by heart and still have it memorized today. In 1946, I entered the service of an international telecommunications organization, and I was posted to Jerusalem and remained there until the State of Israel was formed in May of 1948.

During this time I visited a great number of Christian shrines and holy places, and also developed a lifetime interest in the Knights Templar, after having seen their forts and castles dotted all over Palestine. Arriving at the age of 75, I realized that I really knew very little about the true nature of Christianity and I therefore devoted myself to its study, only to find that I was not alone in my ignorance, and that the majority of my church-going friends also did not know what Christian history was based on. So, I now offer the results of my studies to those who want to know more of how our religion came to be formed and how it has evolved over the centuries to what we know today.

This treatise is therefore not meant to give a definitive view on Christianity. It is only meant to present known Christian facts against a chronological time background, to see how Christianity has evolved over the now elapsed 2,000 years of history, and, from this background, to provide a starting point for further discussion, always remembering that there are so many different ways in which we can view our Christian religion, each view meriting the utmost respect and consideration.

Whereas this treatise has been presented in a largely factual manner, there are many works now circulating which, although are based on certain historical or religious facts, are written as novels, which some readers take to be the truth, such as Dan Brown's *The Da Vinci Code*, which, as is well known, was based on the books of the authors Michael Baignant, Richard Leigh and Henry Lincoln called *Holy Blood and Holy Grail* and *the Messanic Legacy*. But they were not best-sellers however, Dan Brown took the historical theme and re-wrote it as a novel, and made millions of dollars, but he has left a dangerous legacy as, although his work has some factual content, it contains very much more fiction, which the reader assumes to be true. The Dan Brown formula has been copied by many other authors whose novels should only be read as such, and not taken to be factual.

Our faith in the Church is dependent on the Bible's divine authority, authenticity and veracity. The Christian believer must assume that the scriptures are true, because he bases his belief and faith upon them, and, if this is not so, then Christianity has no credibility. Put into today's world of cellular telephones, with instant messaging and Twittering, it is difficult for the younger readers to believe that God spoke to Moses via the Ark of the Covenant, with its golden Cherubim and Mercy Seat, and then followed it with the Ten Commandments inscribed on stone tablets, but the true believer must put this in its correct perspective, and believe.

There is no doubt that without faith none of the world's religions can make sense, and that faith is the one factor which drives people on, rightly or wrongly, in their religions. In our Christian religion, with now more than 2000 years since the birth of Jesus Christ, so many events have occurred that the original happenings of the ministry of Jesus are now veiled in such mystery that even the most talented, erudite historians and learned investigators cannot distinguish between the truths and non-truths, or even agree amongst themselves on the veracity of events which are basic to the understanding of our Faith.

The first three centuries of the Christian movement were marked with such suffering of its believers that one can only wonder how it ever grew into the religion that we know today. It was certainly very fortunate that Emperor Constantine adopted Christianity as the official religion of the Roman Empire, but once it was adopted however, the origins and the early Christian events became so distorted by the Church, and others, all seeking to direct and safeguard their personal, political and religious objectives, that today it is impossible to be sure of exactly what happened. To make it even more difficult, there is no ecclesiastical authority today who is interested in establishing what were the true roots of Christianity. These roots, of course, are well known to the Catholic Church and we can only hope that, in the future, they will release material to the public so that we may begin to understand the true history of our religion. However, this is extremely unlikely because it would undermine the established Catholic doctrine and would not further the interests of the Catholic Church.

Given that during the life of Christ a state of unrest, violence and revolt of the Jewish people was of daily occurrence, it is not surprising that when the time came to record in writing the events of his life, and those after his death, the result was one of uncertainty at the very least. Actually, this is the reason why our written accounts of Christ, his life, teaching, crucifixion, and resurrection, are so full of holes, to the extent that Christians, since the early days, have only been able to keep their beliefs by following the dogmatic, blind-faith doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church. However there are some Christians who find freedom in the lack of precision of Christianity, saying that it gives them the chance to interpret the faith in the way they feel best.

In comparison, the Islamists have, in their Koran, a much more precise guide to their religion. Luckily their prophet Muhammad was able to record the words of Allah during his lifetime, so that when he eventually died the Koran could be handed over to his successors, who have preserved it unchanged and unmodified until today. There are absolutely no holes in the Koran, it is the word of the god of Islam, and no Moslem will ever question it, let alone interfere with its content. Originally written in Arabic, it is still presented in the mosques today in the same Arabic, although there may be a simultaneous translation to the vernacular so that those present may understand.

Today, with our daily views of world events on satellite TV it is easy to think that Christianity is losing its traditional battle with Islam, especially so when we can see on the screen a mass of two million Moslem pilgrims encircling

the Kaaba in Mecca for the celebration of their Hajd. But ever since the start of television Christianity has surged in popularity, not the Roman Catholic Church, but the Protestant evangelical church, with its numerous sects, which has propelled Christianity into a multimillion-dollar business, which will never be equaled by the Roman Catholic Church.

This surge began with the creation of the Christian-related sects which have no direct Biblical or historical relation, by which I mean those groups in the USA made up of the Mormon Church of Latter Day Saints, with their American born prophet Joseph Smith, the Christian Scientists of Mary Baker Eddy, and the Jehovah's Witnesses, all of which were readily accepted by people who felt that they offered more than the regular main-line churches. This new evangelical (meaning joyful news) movement was brought to life in 1949 when Billy Graham conducted a series of revival "Tent" meetings, and he quickly became the best-known religious figure of all time. By 1997 it was estimated that he had spoken to around 210 million people in 185 countries, and to unknown hundreds of millions by TV and radio, to become the best-known preacher of the gospel in history.

This new evangelical movement quickly spread around the world, and although theologians asserted that its meaning and spirit contrasted sharply with biblical Christianity, the number of ardent followers eagerly accepted the message, full of satisfaction with what they took to be the new Christian message, which made them feel that God and Christ loved and cared for them. Evangelicism then became the very heart of the American power structure, penetrating every corner of the Establishment, to the President himself, when, in the 1970s, America elected its first Born Again President, Jimmy Carter.

Jerry Falwell who formed the Moral Majority followed this, and then evangelical businessmen formed groups such as the Business Leadership and Spirituality Network and incorporated Evangelical principles into the operation of their businesses. Add to this the impressive Protestant church coverage on Sunday TV, from the Crystal Cathedral in Anaheim to the all singing and dancing shows aimed at Black Americans, and you see surging Christianity at its most vibrant self. Meanwhile, Hollywood was quick to recognize the business potentiality of religion, and has made such blockbuster films as Ben Hur, The Lion, Amazing Grace and many others. In education the Evangelical Universities have penetrated into the Ivy League and in the American Armed Forces where there now exists growing