

# A Historical Exploration of the Origins of Christianity

Posted on **April 9, 2009** by **Jessica Sinn**



In religious tradition Easter commemorates the resurrection of Jesus. But how well do historical findings match up to the stories Christians have long told each other?

According to **L. Michael White**, the Ronald Nelson Smith Chair in Classics and Christian Origins, stories of Jesus' resurrection originated from memories and storytelling by followers who sought to create a unified religion and tell the story of Jesus's life.

Drawing upon historical evidence and archaeological finds, White reveals new insights into the life of Jesus and the rise of Christianity in "**From Jesus to Christianity: How Four Generations of Visionaries and Storytellers Created the New Testament and Christian Faith**" (Harper Collins, 2004).

Examining the process of the gospels' storytelling, White contends that each story of Jesus may reflect the influences and concerns that came from the time of the author rather than from the days of Jesus himself.

The book, which won the university's prestigious Hamilton Book Award in 2006, provides a detailed portrait of Jesus' world, as told by the people who lived in that world. It is filled with illustrations, photos of ancient art and artifacts, informative sidebars, charts and maps.

White is the director of the Institute for the Study of Antiquity and Christian Origins. He was featured in two award-winning PBS Frontline documentaries, “[From Jesus to Christ: The First Christians](#)” and “[Apocalypse!](#),” for which he also served as principal historical consultant and co-writer. He has published six books and more than thirty articles and book reviews on Christianity and has received numerous awards and honors, including two National Endowment for the Humanities research fellowships.

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2 THOUGHTS ON “A HISTORICAL EXPLORATION OF THE ORIGINS OF CHRISTIANITY”



Mary Margaret

on **February 6, 2010 at 6:01 pm** said:

This is a great review of the life of Christ and then discussing how Christianity came about.



Janina Horniak

on **September 27, 2011 at 1:03 am** said:

This is great! Thank you for sharing this informative write-up.

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