

***A Quick Look at Christian History. A Chronological Timeline through the Centuries.* Kurian, George Thomas**

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George Thomas Kurian was a member of the World Academy of Arts and Sciences and the president of the Encyclopaedia Society. He wrote (or rather edited) close to 70 books and—taking this into account—one would expect high quality work. Unfortunately the book is a disappointment due to inaccuracies, sloppiness and an interesting interpretation of what Christian history is considered to be. The format of the book (252 pages) correctly suggests that the content is very selective and not really covering global developments in Christianity (as this would have resulted in an encyclopaedia of several volumes). The focus is mainly on Europe and Catholicism, with America and the British colonies and Asia also included through some events and people.

If the compilers had added some kind of referencing to the listings, it would have improved the value of this work tremendously and made it useful to academia, but as it stands it only provides the reader with a general idea of when certain events happened, without any pointers to where the reader can find more information on the topics or the seminal works on it. Some of the information included is not related to church history at all (such as the reference to the invention of the electric telegraph). Some of the statements are incomplete; sentences that do not make sense (bottom of page 228) and there are also some grammatical errors (top of page 61).

As the title suggests, this book provides a timeline of Christianity, breaking history down into short chapters on each of the centuries in chronological order. This type of work provides an overview of developments and is generally useful to undergraduate theology students to provide them with a tool to become familiar with the bigger picture of church history. It also introduces them to one of the genres used in church history.



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Each section or century is named and then the status of the church is discussed, indicating numbers, the predominant race of Christians (white and non-white), and the number of languages in which Scripture was available—without listing them. It is understandable that this could cause a problem in the later centuries but in the early centuries when the numbers were low, a list of the languages could easily have been added. Next, the names of some influential Christians are listed (without any reference to why they are listed and what their contributions were) and a summary of significant events and influences is briefly discussed before the actual chronological list of events is given. The book ends with appendixes on a timeline of Christian literature, the texts of the Christian Creeds and the “100 most consequential events in Christian History.” Despite all the above points of critique, I enjoyed reading the book and still consider it valuable for all interested in the development and history of Christianity.