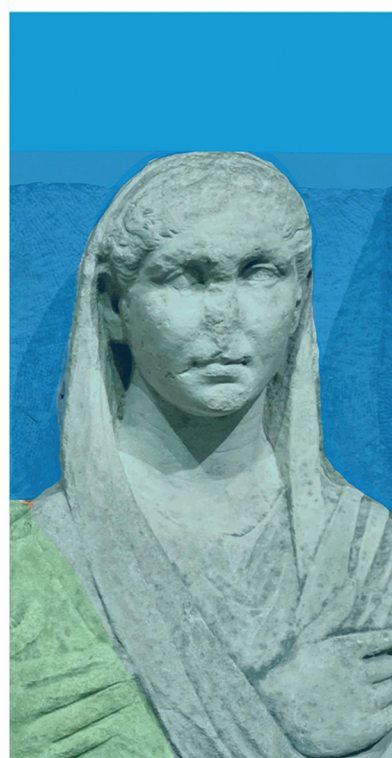
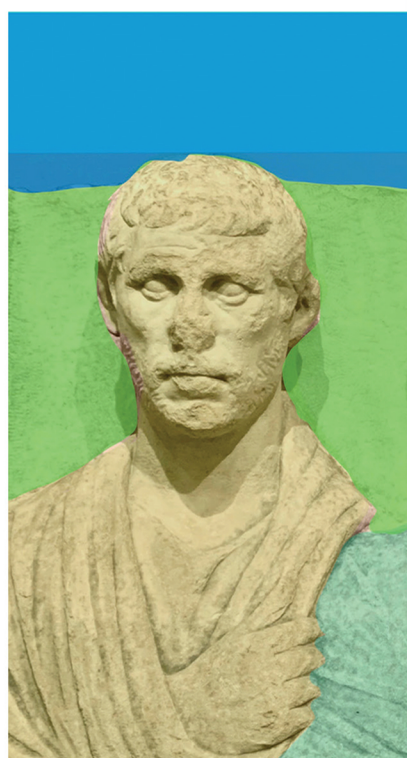


Comparing Christianities

An Introduction to Early Christianity



April D. DeConick

WILEY Blackwell

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An Introduction to Early Christianity

APRIL D. DECONICK

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WILEY Blackwell

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This book is dedicated to all yet-to-come students, wherever this textbook is read.

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Preface

Can a textbook be the culmination and pinnacle of a life's work? We often think of textbooks as summaries of a field of study, rehearsals of old material that expose students to the history of research, not as reconfigurations that challenge the way we have been doing things. But that is what this textbook is. It comes out of my own thirty-year career of teaching, studying, and writing as a woman concerned with the way that narratives about our past – religious or otherwise – are often constructed to keep certain people in power, to authenticate and legitimize their dominance, and to justify the marginalization of people who differ from them.

When I first started to teach Biblical Studies, I was young and did not understand this yet. If someone had told me this when I was in my twenties, I probably would have resisted this idea. I had not yet experienced being a woman professor peering through the glass ceiling. I had not yet experienced working in a field almost completely dominated by male voices, colleagues, and publications. Hence, when I started on my career path, I ran fairly typical courses in the New Testament, Jesus and the Gospels, and the History and Literature of Early Christianity from Paul to Augustine. I used the standard textbooks written by my male peers and supplemented with other readings to fill in the gaps.

But as the years passed and I became more exposed to the expansive literature that the early Christians left behind, I began to question why the field of Biblical Studies organizes itself into Old and New Testaments (or the Hebrew Bible and the Christian Testament) and quarantines this “authentic” and “historical” literature from the rest of the writings produced by early Christians. I became less and less certain about the way that scholars argued and maintained this quarantine by dating the composition of the New Testament literature to the first century and all other literature (with the exception of perhaps the *Didache*) to the second century.

It was not long before I began to realize that, for much of the New Testament, this early dating is a fantasy and a fallacy. As I studied various scholarly treatments of individual texts, I came to terms with the fact that the Pastoral Epistles (1 and 2 Timothy and Titus), the Catholic letters (James, 1 and 2 Peter, 2 and 3 John, and Jude), Hebrews, and even Luke-Acts are most certainly second-century texts (ca. 130–150 CE). Then there is the matter of Marcion, Valentinus, Basilides, Carpocrates, Hermas, Ignatius, and Polycarp, all Christians active in the same decades (130–150 CE), sometimes in the same locations (Rome, Alexandria, Asia Minor, and Antioch). Suddenly my picture of the New Testament was not so simple. I saw entanglement, not quarantine.

As I continued to teach the New Testament, I kept asking myself, “Whose literature was this?” And as I studied and reflected, it became clear to me that the New Testament was not just assembled, but the texts themselves were either written or rewritten by early Catholics to authorize themselves as the real Christians and their memories of Jesus and the beginnings of Christianity as the true story.

As I read and reflected on the scholarship that was produced in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, I began to wonder about the way that the New Testament and early Christianity had been carved up and leveraged to “recover” a story about a “pure” form of Christianity taught by (the historical) Jesus. How much of this standard “historical” script had actually emerged out of German theological schools to authorize their own Protestant theology and traditions? Was I effectively teaching as “history” early Catholic history and interpretation as German theologians had reconfigured it? We can certainly do better than that, I thought.

The result of my years of teaching, study, and reflection is this textbook, which is a fresh history of early Christians, the pluralistic movements that they developed, and the entangled literature they produced. This textbook is not dedicated to “lost” or “found” Christianities, as if these forms of Christianities were somehow separate from the development of early Catholicism. This textbook does not separate New Testament literature from other early Christian literature, nor does it privilege the early Catholics over other Christians. Instead, this textbook is organized into chapters devoted to regional

Christian movements as they emerged and interacted during the first five generations of Christians. I have identified these generations as 40-year periods. The beauty of this organization is that it allows for comparative work to happen as we identify the major issues that challenged each generation of Christians and come to understand their solutions.

First generation: 30–70 CE
Second generation: 70–110 CE
Third generation: 110–150 CE
Fourth generation: 150–190 CE
Fifth generation: 190–230 CE

On the first page of each chapter, I have identified the Christians and the literature that is covered in the chapter under the headings **KEY PLAYERS** and **KEY TEXTS**, respectively. Each chapter is further divided into sections which identify specific **COMPANION READINGS** that go along with the narrative in each section. These companion readings are easily accessible online at websites that specialize in biblical texts, patristic literature, and Nag Hammadi sources. Each chapter includes a timeline for the Christians covered in that chapter, as well as a table identifying their patterns of thought, practices, and ecclesiology. Included as well are the main **TAKEAWAYS** and **QUESTIONS** that can launch student discussions and be used as study guides. All illustrations are my own unless otherwise indicated. I designed the textbook to be delivered in a typical university semester and run it myself over the course of 14 instructional weeks.

This textbook has not been written before. It is the first attempt to write a comprehensive history of the first Christians as a pluralistic movement. Writing this textbook has been a journey of reflection and discovery for me. It has opened up new vistas that I am excited to share with students everywhere with the hope that, as we come to understand Christian pluralism and the consequences of the construction of orthodoxy in the past, we can challenge ourselves to examine not only Christian pluralism today, but religious pluralism more broadly; that when faced with claims of religious exclusivism and intolerance, we can learn to ask, “Who benefits from this?” and “Whose story is it anyway?”

April D. DeConick

Feast Day of Saint Thomas the Apostle

July 3, 2022

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While I want to thank many people who have been instrumental in the creation of this textbook, I want to start with the acknowledgment we usually save for last. That is my husband, Wade Greiner. This book could not have been written without your constant support and encouragement – but, even more importantly, it is better because of our endless conversations about the topics. Not only did you allow me to talk on and on about these subjects, but you asked me all the right questions, questions that many times sent me back to the drawing board, to rethink or reconceive. When I was young, before we met, I did not even dream that I would be lucky enough to marry someone who would be so sincerely interested and proud of my work, let alone someone who would challenge me to take it further. Thank you.

This textbook is about students. I wrote it for you, and I wrote it because of you. Over 30 years, I have had hundreds of students, and I am unable to name all of you. You were all important to me, pushing me to be a better teacher and to tell an honest story. And I am proud of you all. To my undergraduates from Illinois Wesleyan University (when there was still a Religion Department there), but especially: Christine Luckritz Marquis, Jaeda Calaway, Sharon Stowe Cook, Kwang Oh, Katie Stump Holt, Jenny LaBrenz, Nicole Jo Wiedman, John Betz, Joshua Evans, Laura Arnold, and Mark Lamie. To my undergraduate students at Rice University, but especially: Jake Schornick, Julia Nations, Katelyn Willis, Brett Snider, Courtney Applewhite, Kai Cowen, Suzanne Harms, Van Heitmann, Domonique Richardson, Alexa Scott, Artie Throop, Lila Frenkel, Caleb Fikes, Eli Gennis, Malcolm Lovejoy, Joshua Murphree, and Emily Quinn. To my graduate students from Rice University, but especially: Grant Adamson, Franklin Trammell, Matthew Dillon, Andriana Umana, Michael Domeracki, C.J. Schmidt, Minji Lee, Rebecca Harris, Erin Prophet, Cindy Dawson, Naamleela Free Jones, Oihane Iglesias Telleria, Zachary Schwartz, Angela Stieber, Jacob Melancon, Rochelle Willingham, Abby Crowe-Tipton, and J.D. Reiner. Thank you.

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Paul conversing with Thecla, ivory panel from casket, Rome, late fourth century, British Museum. Artist Matteo di Giovanni. **Source:** Heritage Images / Getty Images.

Sectarian Jews

“If anyone else has reason to be confident in the flesh, I have more: circumcision on the eighth day, a member of the People of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew born of Hebrews; as to the Law, a Pharisee; as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the Law, blameless. Yet whatever gains I had, these I have come to regard as loss because of Christ.”

Paul of Tarsus wrote this in his letter to the church in Philippi

KEY PLAYERS So you want to learn about the first Paul of Tarsus Christians? Get back to the roots? Discover what really went on back in the

KEY TEXTS time of Jesus and his first followers? Letters of Paul Or perhaps you have questions about how early Christianity formed. Where did it start? Who was in charge? Why did the Catholics emerge as champions at the first church Council of Nicaea (325 CE)? Is their story the whole story? Or maybe you have heard that there are other gospels than the gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John found in the Bible. You wonder about who wrote these gospels and what they have

CHAPTER OUTLINE

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- 1.2 The Christian Standard Versions 9**
- 1.3 Trajectories Through Early Christianity 13**
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to say about Jesus and the early Christians. Why isn't the *Gospel of Thomas* or the *Gospel of Mary* found in the New Testament? Or possibly you have heard that early Christianity was controversial and contentious, with some Christians and their churches identified as heresies or illegitimate forms of Christianity, while others with orthodoxy or legitimate Christianity. Who made this call? And why was it made? How did this controversy between orthodoxy and heresy relate to the rise of religious intolerance and the formation of Christianity? What does all this mean for Christianity as we know it today and its future?

These, in fact, are the very questions that are foundational to this textbook. They are questions that have compelled me, first as a student and then as a professor and scholar of early Christianity. The questions started when I was nineteen, when my mother came across a book that captured her eye in our local bookstore. After she read it, she passed it on to me. The book was a small, edited volume of early Christian gospels containing the *Gospel of Thomas*, the *Secret Book of James*, the *Gospel of Peter*, the *Infancy Gospel of Thomas*, and the *Gospel of the Hebrews*. Before I opened that book, I never knew that the early Christians wrote more literature than what we find in the New Testament. As I read those early Christian writings, I was riveted. I could not put the old gospels down and wanted to know more about them. But in 1982, there was very little published on these texts that was available to the public. It became clear to me that if I wanted to figure out why these texts were not in the New Testament, I was on my own.

At the end of my first semester in college, I left nursing school to explore the Humanities. As a Junior, I decided to major in Biblical Studies in the Department of Near Eastern Studies at the University of Michigan. I enrolled in classical Greek, and then Coptic, the ancient Egyptian language that some of these gospels survive in. I studied the New Testament alongside the Christian Apocrypha (Figure 1.1), writings that did not become part of the New Testament. I learned how Bishop Athanasius of Alexandria (ca. 296–373 CE) was the first known person to identify as a collection the 27 Christian books that became part of the Catholic New Testament (Figure 1.2) in an Easter letter he wrote to the

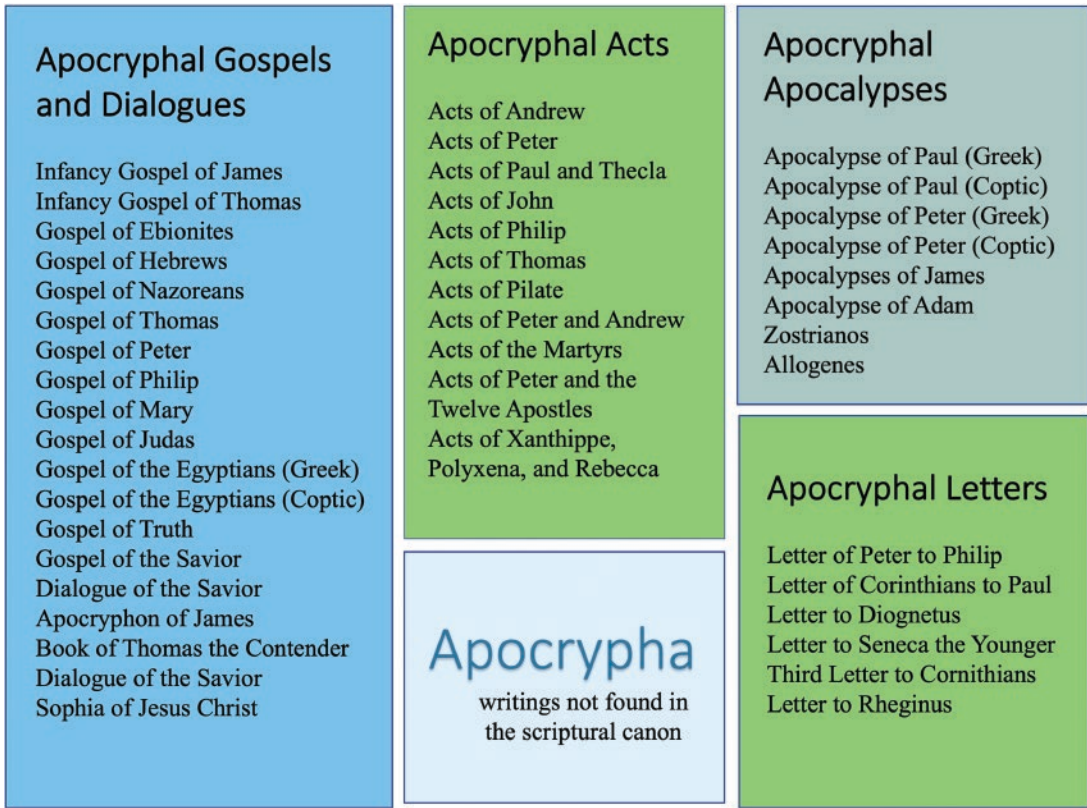


FIGURE 1.1 Examples of second- and third-century Christian Apocryphal writings.

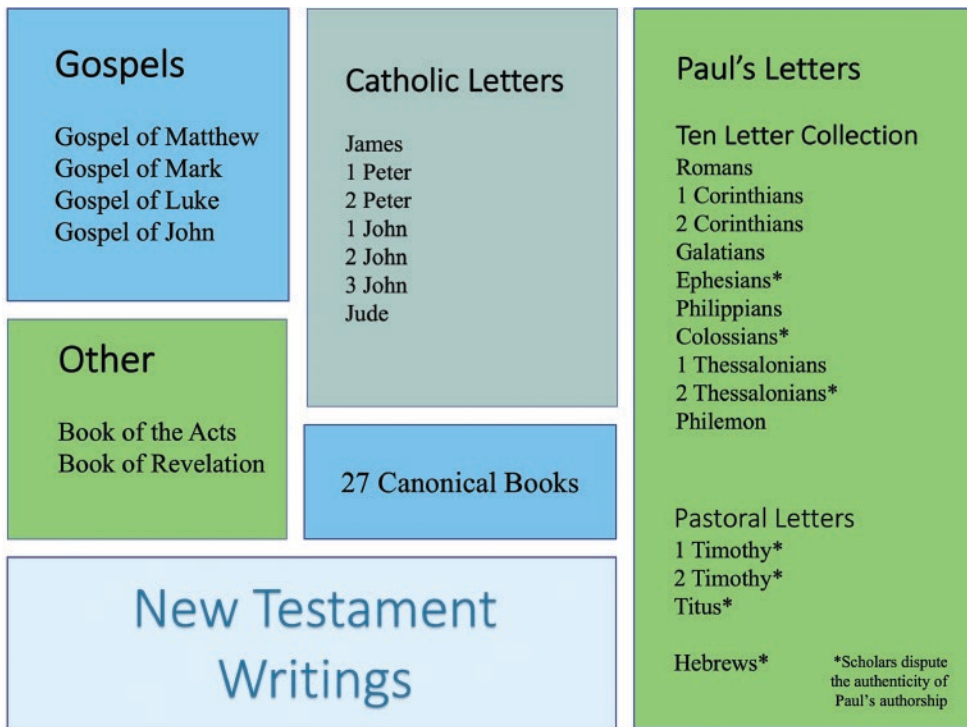


FIGURE 1.2 Books of the New Testament first listed by Athanasius in 367 CE.

bishops in Egypt (367 CE). In defining the Christian Bible as he does, Athanasius excludes many early Christian writings that were popular among Christians, disabusing them of their authority by calling them “apocrypha” or false writings. I went on to write my doctoral thesis and several books on the *Gospel of Thomas*. My fascination with the early Christian gospels and the Christianities that competed with Catholicism has resulted in the publication of several other books, including my book on the infamous second-century *Gospel of Judas* and another book on the Gnostics of antiquity.

Comparing Christianities is meant to fully engage early Christian literature inside and outside the New Testament. It is the textbook that I wished for when I was a college student back in 1982 with all those questions about earliest Christianity. As Christianity was kickstarted with the tragic death of the Jewish Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth, and was reengineered after the First Roman–Jewish War (66–73 CE) so that it was able to compete successfully as a new religious movement in Rome, numerous Christian identities and groups developed. The emergence and interaction of these multiple Christianities take center stage in this textbook and, with them, several questions. Why are there so many Christian movements in the first and second centuries? What makes them Christian? Why are their memories of Jesus and the historical Christian past different from each other? Where do all these documents and movements come from? How were they related to each other and to Judaism? Why did some of these movements survive while others failed to have a future? Did any of these movements actually have a monopoly on the truth?

1.1 Orientation to the Past

COMPANION READINGS

Philippians

Before embarking on this journey into the ancient Christian past, we need to get oriented to that past. Most helpful in this orientation is a collection of letters that Paul of Tarsus wrote to a number of early Christian churches he had established in Asia Minor and

Greece, roughly between the years 40–55 CE (Figure 1.3). They are the earliest Christian writings to survive, composed within twenty years of the execution of Jesus of Nazareth. Paul tells us that he joined Jesus’ movement after he received an ecstatic revelation of Jesus. What did Jesus reveal to him? He says he came to know the “gospel” that Jesus is the Messiah and that Jesus’ life and death are part of God’s plan to redeem the People of Israel at the eschaton or end of time.

What is the meaning of the word “gospel” or “*evangelion*” (Greek)? This is a well-known word in antiquity. It is used by emperors, for instance, to communicate abroad something exciting or noteworthy that they had done. An *evangelion* is simply a newsflash or big announcement. Paul uses the word “*evangelion*” to refer to what he considered fantastic breaking news: that God had intervened in history by sending his son to save believers from death (Gal. 1:11–12, 16; Phil. 3:8; 1 Cor. 15:1–7; 1 Thess. 1:10; Rom. 1:6). There is no sense at all that gospel refers to a text that tells Jesus’ biography. As we see later in this textbook, this usage develops much later in Christian history.

Paul never provides us with a name for the movement beyond telling us that he is aware of a distinct church community in Jerusalem that is run by James (Jesus’ brother), Peter, and John. According to Paul, the Jerusalem church had been established before his conversion. Missionaries from this church had been concentrating on converting fellow Jews not only in and around Palestine, but also urban areas outside Palestine in the Jewish Diaspora. The community of converts in Jerusalem called themselves the Poor and they required Paul to collect donations from his own churches to support their community.

It is clear that Paul considered the movement to be a Jewish sectarian movement, not a distinct Christian religion. However, in this textbook, we use the Christian label to identify the sect that Paul joins even though the name “Christian” only begins to show up in literature that was written in the second century when the movement began to distinguish itself as a religious movement that superseded Judaism. If anything, Paul mentions that some converts in Corinth were identifying themselves with the name of the person who converted them (“we are Petrine” or “we are Apollarian”), a practice Paul dislikes. Because Paul leaves us without a name for the Jewish sectarian movement he had joined, we must keep in mind that our use of the word Christian to describe the earliest movement does not signal a non-Jewish identity. Everyone who joined the Christian movement during Paul’s life were converting to a Jewish sect. They were joining the People of Israel. When exactly Christianity developed an identity as a religion distinct from Judaism is hotly contested in scholarship. As we see in this textbook, this parting of the ways happened at different times in different ways for different Christians. For Paul, however, to join this movement means that you are joining a Jewish messianic movement that identifies Jesus with the Messiah.

The title Messiah or Anointed One (Hebrew: *mashiach*; Greek: *christos*) derives from the verb “to anoint” (Hebrew: *mashach*; Greek: *chrío*) and refers to the anointing ritual that the Jews used to install priests, prophets, and kings into office. In the first century, the Jews were living under the oppressive rule of imperial Rome. Many Jews felt that their colonization was linked to behaviors like idolatry that had strained their relationship with their God, a God who had promised to protect their nation from

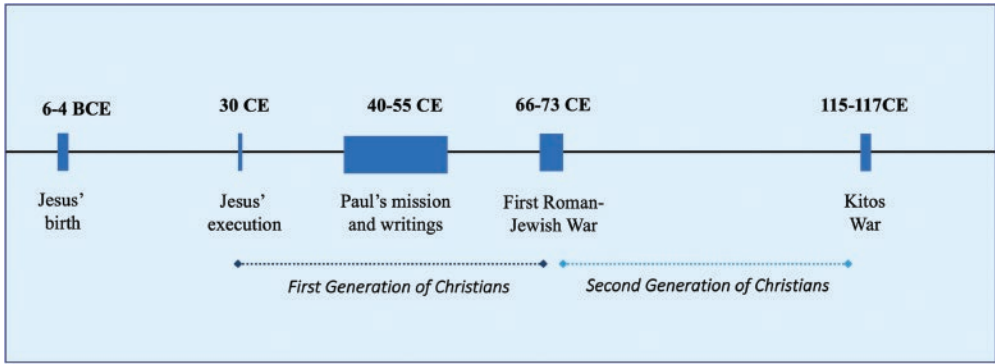


FIGURE 1.3 Timeline mapping first two generations of Christians.

foreign invasion as long as they kept God's commandments and were exclusively devoted to him.

The Jewish national God was so holy and sacred, so set apart from mundane everyday existence that even his name was considered ineffable, that it was written without vowels: YHWH. Although his name was only intoned during the Day of Atonement ceremonies in their Temple in Jerusalem by the high priests, scholars who have studied naming practices among Jews think that it was pronounced, "Yah-weh." As a national God, YHWH was worshipped in the land of Judea by Judeans, from which comes the designation "Jew." Once Jews began living outside the land of Judea in the Diaspora, the word Jew came to designate people who worshipped YHWH, the God of the Judeans, wherever they were dispersed geographically. Wherever they were, the Jews distinguished themselves from the non-Jews or Gentiles who did not share in this exclusive relationship with YHWH.

Their commitment to worshipping YHWH exclusively meant that Jews could not also worship the colonial civic Gods and Roman emperors. Nor could they consider YHWH to be Zeus or Baal by another name. He was a standout God, with a history deeply entangled with the Jews. He was a revelatory God, communicating directly to his people through his prophets. Indeed, their scripture showcases a special relationship between YHWH and the Jews. This relationship is premised on a covenant or contract that both parties consented to and is reaffirmed every time a Jewish infant boy is circumcised. YHWH, whom the Jews believed was the God who created the world and ruled it, had chosen to make an official pact with their nation. He promised to protect them as his chosen people and defend them from their enemies as long as they remained obedient servants to him and followed his rules. This covenantal agreement between the Jews and their God provided the Jews with a theological, rather than a political, explanation for their colonization. They believed that their colonization signaled the loss of YHWH's protection because they had broken their covenant with YHWH by failing to observe his rules.

These rules, which YHWH's prophet Moses delivered to them, are written in the Pentateuch or the first five books of the Bible and are known as the Torah. These rules cover almost all aspects of human life, not only cultic or ritual aspects like how to perform certain sacrifices or keep the Sabbath as a day of rest. The rules govern everything from sex, semen, and menstruation to diet, property damage, and disease. The rules govern the operation of the Temple in Jerusalem, which was the cultic center of Jewish worship and which regulated the festival calendar.

Roman authorities tended to tolerate the religions of the people they colonized unless the native religion promoted social unrest. Romans took this stance because it was good publicity and it reduced the impact of the changing of the guards once they had installed themselves as the new rulers of the regions. The local populations could continue their lives as usual, as long as they paid their taxes to their new overlords and obeyed their laws. The Romans, in fact, allowed the Jews to worship YHWH at the Temple in Jerusalem, exempted Jewish men from military service because it forced them to break the Law, and collected the tax for the Temple from Jews living in the Diaspora. The Romans tolerated the worship of the Jews because the Romans were convinced that their devotion to YHWH was their ethnic prerogative and ancestral heritage.

But religious tolerance did not mean that there was no social unrest among the Jews or anti-Jewish sentiment among the Romans. The Romans often installed client kings and governors who ruled in ways that privileged their own imperial aspirations and financially crippled the native populations. It was during Roman occupation that messianic dreams fermented among Jews. They speculated about the emergence of a national hero who would renew their obedience to the Law and, with it, the promises of YHWH's covenant. The advent of the Messiah was understood by Jews to be part of latter world events that included the defeat of their colonizers, the resurrection of the dead, the final judgment, the establishment of New Jerusalem, and the restoration of their national independence under YHWH's sovereignty. There is a wide range of opinions recorded in Jewish literature about the nature of each of these final world events or eschaton, including the description of the Messiah and his role in the inauguration of eschaton.

Messianic speculation among the Jews was caught up in a circle of unrest, resistance, and terror. While eschatological expectations grew in reaction to the horrible conditions of colonial life, providing the Jews with hope that YHWH would eventually make things right, they also spurred violent uprisings and equally violent clampdowns from the colonizers. The Jewish historian Flavius Josephus (ca. 37–100 CE) records a number of incidents in the first century of messianic contenders, who took up

arms against Roman authorities and were defeated decisively (Jos., *JW* 2.261–3, 427–434; 4.385–90, 505–513; 6.98, 434; 17.271–5, 278–85). He identifies the Zealots as Jewish nationalists and revolutionaries who urged the Jews to rebel against Rome in order to return governance of Palestine to the Jews (Jos., *JW* 18.1.6). He also tells about the Sicarii or daggersmen who sparked terror in crowds by pulling from beneath their cloaks, hidden knives (Jos., *JW* 20.9.3). They used these knives to assassinate and kidnap high-ranking Jewish authorities whom they believed were cooperating with the Romans. The violent resistance of these parties incited the Romans to take drastic measures, which led to the First Roman–Jewish War (66–73 CE), the destruction of the Temple (70 CE), and the massacre of the Jews in Jerusalem (70 CE) and at Masada (73 CE).

During the time of Jesus' activities, Pontius Pilate was alarmed by the local eschatological and messianic zeal that he confronted as governor of Judea. He felt that this apocalyptic enthusiasm threatened the fabric of Roman social order. For instance, Pilate reacted brutally to a messianic prophet who emerged among the Samaritans in the village named Tirathana. Pilate sent a detachment of cavalry and heavy-armed infantry, which killed most of the prophet's followers and took the rest prisoners. Pilate then executed the leaders of this messianic movement (Jos., *Ant.* 18.85–89). Given this reaction, it is not surprising that Jesus' activities resulted in his execution as the "King of the Jews."

From Paul, we learn that the first Christians from Jerusalem frequented synagogues in order to convince other Jews to join their movement. But, while they made some headway, they had a difficult time convincing most Jews that Jesus' messiahship was prophesized in the Jewish scriptures. The big stumbling block was the fact that Jesus not only died, but was also an executed criminal. This seemed ridiculous to most Jews who thought that their scriptures prophesized the rise of a messianic teacher, king, or priest who would be a hero. He would be victorious in his pursuit to renew the covenant and usher in the new age of Israel's glory by overthrowing Roman rule. Clearly, the executed Jesus was not this person.

While Jews were reticent to convert because of the incongruity of Jesus' life with traditional interpretations of the prophets, the missionaries found that a number of Gentiles (non-Jews) who frequented the synagogues were more easily convinced. These Gentiles had mostly converted to Judaism, following the Law except that they refused to be circumcised. They were called God-Fearers and were considered to be Jewish proselytes or recruits. This means that there was a diversity of Christians from the get-go. Some were ethnic Jews, while the majority were Jewish proselytes (uncircumcised Gentiles).

Paul tells us that he was not commissioned to convert Jews. Instead, the missionaries from Jerusalem were those responsible for working in the synagogues and bringing into their house churches Jewish converts (which included Jewish proselytes). Paul's relationship with these missionaries seems to have suffered from his terrible reputation. He admits to violently persecuting Christians before he converted, although he does not relate how or why he did this. We can imagine though that it had something to do with the fact that Paul characterizes himself as a Pharisee, who was particularly zealous about his Jewish faith prior to becoming a Christian (Phil. 3:5). The Pharisees (or Separatists) were a Jewish sect of laymen who thought that every Jew had to be as holy as a priest in order to keep ΥHWH 's Law correctly (Exod. 19:3–6). During Jesus' time, in order to maintain their stringent purity rules, the Pharisees formed segregated lay groups consisting of Jews, who ate their meals together and worshipped together. Because the Law could be ambiguous, the Pharisees fashioned a set of rules and regulations that helped them observe the Law consistently. For instance, while the Law commanded that the Jews keep the Sabbath day holy, it did not give many details about how this observation might look. For generations, the Pharisees studied the Torah and filled in these conspicuous gaps with rulings. This body of legal traditions about how to precisely observe the Law is known as the Oral Torah. It was codified and written down in the late second century CE as the Mishnah. Even later, the Mishnah was studied by the rabbis and opinions about its interpretation were recorded. In the fifth century, this larger body of material came to be known as the Talmud.

Paul's reputation as a zealous Pharisee who persecuted Christians had spread throughout the churches in Judaea and seems to have made it difficult for him to work in this region after his conversion. So he ends up going north into Syria, Asia Minor, and Greece and begins missionizing pagans rather than Jews or Jewish proselytes (Figure 1.4). Paul persuades them to join the movement by teaching them while he sewed leather goods in his portable shop. These pagan Gentiles had no former knowledge of Judaism, were not Jewish proselytes, and were not frequenting synagogues. According to Paul, the Gentile converts met in their homes. Their gathering or *ecclesia* is translated as assembly or church. Paul claims to have been commissioned to do this by Jesus himself in a revelation. Paul also relates that he traveled to Jerusalem to visit with James, Peter, and John and receive their blessing to expand the mission to the pagan Gentiles. The leaders of the Jerusalem church complied.

So, because of Paul, the Christian movement came to contain three constituencies instead of two: ethnic Jews, Jewish proselytes, *and* non-law-observant Gentiles. The latter put pressure on the movement because they were unfamiliar with the Jewish Law and did not want to memorize or follow all its prescriptions. They especially disliked the idea of having to follow the Jewish diet and be circumcised, but the rest of the 613 commandments seemed unnecessary to them as well. Since the earliest leaders of the Christian movement had not yet made a ruling about whether converts had to be circumcised or observe the Jewish diet, the Law became hotly contested among the earliest Christians. This becomes aggravated when Paul begins to teach the Gentiles in his churches that the Law is not necessary for them to observe at all because Christ brought an end to the Law which God had intended to only be a temporary custodian anyway. Besides, Paul said, as long as the Gentiles love each other, they have fulfilled the Law inadvertently. Their faith made them righteous, not the Law (Rom. 13:8–10). This teaching polarized the Christians so that Paul finds himself embattled against other missionaries who come into his communities to convince Gentiles to fully convert by being circumcised and by observing the Jewish commandments.

Paul's decision to bring non-observant Gentiles into the movement caused the movement to fracture along legal fault-lines. There was a range of opinions among Jews about the meaning and application of the Law to real life situations. There were Jews who were Maximalists, believing that fidelity to the Law and its traditional interpretation should be strictly maintained. Minimalists were Jews



FIGURE 1.4 Map of the world that Paul traveled.

who felt that there was flexibility when it came to interpreting how the Law should be observed. This flexibility allowed for innovative interpretations that would keep up with the changing times. The moderate Jews fell somewhere in between, thinking that traditional interpretation had its place, while allowing for some adaptability to new social situations.

It is important to recognize that this discussion over how the Jewish Law should be valued and applied to real life situations was integral to questions of Jewish identity. Historically, this kind of difference of opinion over the Law, typically, has resulted in the rise of separate social groups. For instance, consider the modern Jewish landscape: the Jewish community consists of Orthodox Jews (Maximalists), Conservative Jews (Moderates), and Reform Jews (Minimalists). The Christian community too has developed socially along these lines so that modern denominations are organized around their position on the Law and its importance for salvation: Catholic and Orthodox Christians (Moderates), Protestants (Minimalists), and Messianic Jews (Maximalists).

It appears that the same social phenomenon took place among the very first Christians. The trigger appears to have been the conversion of masses of non-observant Gentiles in Paul's churches—Gentiles who did not want to undergo circumcision or change their diet. This was the social crisis that got all of them thinking. How was the Jewish Law applicable to these new Gentile converts? While the Christians agreed that Gentiles ought to be brought into the covenant at the end of time to worship $\Upsilon\text{H}\text{W}\text{H}$ (Ps. 22:27; 86:9; Isa. 49:6; 60:3), they disagreed on how this ought to be done. The Maximalist Christians demanded that the Gentile converts be circumcised and fully observe all God's commandments in his Law. Moderate Christians thought that circumcision was not necessary, but that other parts of the Law need to be intentionally observed, especially the Ten Commandments or some version of the Noahide laws (a reduced set of commandments that God gave Noah). Minimalist Christians expected Gentiles to devote themselves exclusively to the worship of the one God, love one another, and live temperately so as not to sin or bring unwanted attention to themselves. They thought that it was not necessary to burden Gentiles with the Law at the end of time when believers from the nations were being gathered together to worship God. Their faith was enough, they said, to make them righteous. Some of these Minimalists took Paul's comment about Christ being the "end of the Law" to mean that they were not obligated to any moral code, but free to behave as the Holy Spirit so moved them. This is why Paul finds himself having to crack down on antinomian (lawless) and ecstatic or charismatic behaviors that begin to erode the social order of his churches.

Paul's correspondences leave us in the mid-first century CE with a picture of a Jewish messianic movement that is fractured into three social parties along these legal fault-lines. In this textbook, we refer to these parties as the Maximalists, Moderates, and Minimalists. The Christian movement is gaining the most ground among the non-observant Gentiles and the least ground among ethnic Jews. The growth of the movement is dependent upon missionaries who are either from the apostolic-run church in Jerusalem like Peter (Aramaic name: Cephas), independent operators like Paul and Apollos (missionary whom Paul meets in Ephesus), or people commissioned by their own local church like Prisca and Aquila (Jewish converts from Rome whom Paul also knows).

There is no indication from Paul's letters that there is anyone in charge of all of the churches being founded, or that there is any single authority that controlled the missionaries and their message, or that there was some overarching plan and vision for the future of the Christian movement. At best, Paul regards the Jerusalem church as a legitimate authority because it predates Paul and is run by some of Jesus' disciples. But he felt his own revelatory calling was just as legitimate. He did, however, find it strategic to link into the Jerusalem network because he thought that it would help authorize his own independent mission to the non-observant Gentiles in Asia Minor and Greece. That said, he was highly critical of the apostles when he disagreed with them, especially those who were not Minimalists, and he did not feel in any way obliged to conform to their opinions.

From Paul's letters we can glean that there are established churches in Jerusalem and Palestine, north into Syria and Asia Minor, and west across Greece to Rome. So not only is the Christian movement split into three parties along legal fault-lines, but the churches also display regional char-

acteristics, so that the churches in northern Asia Minor, for example, develop local traditions and interpretations of scriptures that are distinct from those developed in other locales, and so forth. This means that there was not a time when the Christian movement was homogeneous. It was a pluralistic movement from the start. This diversity only generates more diversity as the movement expands into the late-first and early-second centuries.

What is stable in the churches is the fact that all the churches baptize their converts in Jesus' name and share a thanksgiving meal that they call the Eucharist, with its ritual blessings memorialized as Jesus' words (variations of: "This is my body that is for you"; "This cup is the new covenant in my blood" 1 Cor. 11:23–26). The other constant is the fact that all the churches are charismatic, paradigms of religious enthusiasm. The Christians in all the churches thought that they were experiencing the fulfillment of the end-time prophecy found in Joel 2:28: "I will pour out my spirit out on every person; your sons and daughters will prophesy; your elders will dream dreams, and your youth will see visions." The Christians insisted that the Holy Spirit had descended on them at their baptisms and filled them up, making them prophets, healers, and visionaries.

Because of this charisma – the spirit filled both the sons and the daughters so that "in Christ there is neither male nor female" (Gal. 3:28) – women held positions of power alongside men in the first churches. Paul names women who preached alongside him (i.e. Euodia and Synthyche: Phil. 4:2–3), women who led churches in their homes (i.e. Nympha: Col. 4:15; Chloe: 1 Cor. 1:10–13; Prisca: 1 Cor. 16:3–4, 19; Phoebe: Rom. 16:1–2; Apphia: Philem. 1), women who were apostles and missionaries (i.e. Prisca: 1 Cor. 16:3–4, 19; Junia: Rom. 16:7), women who were co-workers (i.e. Phoebe: Rom. 16:3; Mary: Rom. 16:6; Typhena and Tryphosa: Rom. 16:12; Persis: Rom. 16:12), and women who were deacons (i.e. Phoebe: Rom. 16:1–2). Women converts were doing the same things as male converts, including traveling as apostles, presiding over house-churches, prophesying, and preaching.

1.2 The Christian Standard Versions

When did Christianity start and who started it? Did Christianity start with Jesus in Galilee as has been traditionally assumed by Protestant churches? Or Peter the apostle as Catholic doctrine has it? Or James the brother of Jesus and leader of the first church in Jerusalem as the Orthodox proclaim? Or was it the joint creation of his disciples, who after Jesus' death found themselves unemployed, in need of work, as the German Enlightenment philosopher Hermann Samuel Reimarus argued in a draft of a work which was so radical that it was kept secret until after his death (1694–1768)? Or was it invented by Saul of Tarsus turned Paul the Apostle, a Jew who, after an ecstatic experience, fashioned a message about Jesus that was wildly attractive to non-Jews, as many biblical scholars today maintain?

While these answers are all different, they are more similar than we might think. All assume that Christianity started around the time of Jesus and involved a cast of characters that were chosen by him to establish the Christian church and its legacy: Catholicism, Orthodoxy, and Protestantism. In other words, all these stories, including the academic one, do the work of authorizing our present-day Christian churches, giving them a direct line back to Jesus.

These linear stories construct the origins of Christianity by connecting the Christian church, as we know it today, with Jesus. In this way, late doctrines like the Trinity or the Two Natures of Jesus, sacraments like the Eucharist, the creation of the New Testament scriptural canon, and ecclesiastical structures like the Papacy are authorized by Jesus through a succession that occurred via his apostles and a second-century cast of characters, traditionally, called the Apostolic Fathers (the successors to the apostles), and the Church Fathers (the successors to the Apostolic Fathers) (Figure 1.5). Generally, these narratives are told as a coherent chronological story starting in Galilee or Jerusalem with Jesus and then soldiering through the New Testament documents, the Apostolic Fathers, and the Church Fathers, mining them for positivist historical information.

Apostolic Fathers <i>Third Generation</i>	Church Fathers <i>Fourth-Fifth Generation</i>
Shepherd of Hermas Didache Letters of Ignatius of Antioch Letter of Polycarp of Smyrna Letter of Barnabas Letters of Clement of Rome Letter of Diognetus Martyrdom of Polycarp Fragments of Papias of Hierapolis Quadratus of Athens Aristides	Justin Martyr Minucius Felix Melito of Sardis Hegesippus Athenagoras of Athens Irenaeus of Lyons Theophilus of Antioch Clement of Alexandria Tertullian of Carthage Hippolytus of Rome Ps.-Hippolytus Origen Cyprian Novatian Gaius

FIGURE 1.5 Classifications “Apostolic Fathers” and “Church Fathers”.

Frequently in these stories, the Fathers of the Church are in conflict with other Christians whom they identify as fake Christians masquerading as real Christians. In these stories, the fake Christians are called heretics, a label which reflects the position that they have deviated from the straight and narrow path of the truth or orthodoxy preserved by the Church Fathers. The early Catholic Church is viewed as the rightful heir and guardian of the New Testament scriptures, which the heretics have misunderstood, corrupted, and abused.

This orthodox narrative was first forged by the Church Fathers in order to displace and marginalize Christians they disagreed with at a time when what it meant to be Christian was hotly contested. This story has had a long shelf-life because it has served the purposes of Christian churches over the centuries. It has survived for two thousand years, broadcast not only within Christian churches, but also within the academic fields of Biblical Studies and Church History, which were originally located within the religious discipline of theology. There have been two basic academic versions of the story, both reflecting standard theological narratives of Church History.

The standard Catholic version presents the story as a continuous development of church institutions and doctrines that represent the outward expressions of the Holy Spirit working within the community, an idea that gained traction in the academy through the nineteenth-century work of Catholic theologian and Church historian Johann Adam Moehler (1796–1838 CE). This continuity is presented from Jesus to the Council of Nicaea as a natural progression of the maturation of Christian doctrine and practices by learned men who, in this line of apostolic succession, understood the truth of Jesus’ incarnation and worked to communicate this sacred mystery in the language and culture of the times. In other words, it was the natural process of enculturation, when the sacred truth came to be expressed in Greek philosophical jargon. While the doctrines are viewed as human constructions, they are meant to witness to the truth of the incarnation and safeguard it. The Fathers were defenders of the sacred truth against others who would try to pedal a cheap imitation. The Fathers’ well-organized defense of the truth triumphed at Nicaea (325 CE) and has been expressed ever since in official councils and creeds (Figure 1.6).

The standard Protestant version of the story developed out of Catholic–Protestant conflicts in the wake of the Reformation (1517–1648 CE). It presents the development of the orthodox doctrines of the Catholic Church as a corruption of the pure truth taught by Jesus found in the scriptures. This echoes

Nicene Creed

We believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of all things visible and invisible; And in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, begotten from the Father, only-begotten, that is, from the substance of the Father, God from God, light from light, true God from true God, begotten not made, of one substance with the Father, through Whom all things came into being, things in heaven and things on earth, Who because of us men and because of our salvation came down, and became incarnate and became man, and suffered, and rose again on the third day, and ascended to the heavens, and will come to judge the living and dead, And in the Holy Spirit. But as for those who say, There was when He was not, and, Before being born He was not, and that He came into existence out of nothing, or who assert that the Son of God is of a different hypostasis or substance, or created, or is subject to alteration or change - these the Catholic and apostolic Church anathematizes.

FIGURE 1.6 Nicene Creed (325 CE).

the Protestant doctrine of *sola scriptura*, that the New Testament is the self-contained deposit of the revelation of Jesus. This version haunts the academic work of the famous German Lutheran Church historian, Adolph von Harnack (1851–1930 CE), who said that Christianity started with the true principles taught by Jesus. Over time, these true principles were degraded under the weight of intellectual activity and Greek philosophical speculations that focused on understanding Jesus’ person and nature rather than Jesus’ teachings which were the real essence of Christianity. He calls this process the Hellenization of Christianity (when Christianity was made to conform to Greek thought) which, he says, transformed the “living faith” into creeds that had to be believed and ceremonies that had to be followed.

Why did the Hellenization of Christianity occur in the first place? Harnack gives this first-place honor to the heretics who, out of their pagan fascination with Greek culture, hellenized Christianity to the extreme. Harnack says that the Catholic Fathers remedied the acute enculturation program of the heretics, putting its own teachings, worship, and practices into fixed forms and ordinances that tried to keep the worst of pagan culture, like polytheism, at bay, while still speaking the language of the Greek world. When all is said and done, Harnack presents a picture of the origins of Christianity rooted in Jesus’ original message minus all the Catholic accoutrements which, he explains, were analogous to the Hellenization program of the pagan heretics anyway.

In 1934, the German Church historian, Walter Bauer (1877–1960 CE), published the first history of early Christianity which aimed to deconstruct these standard narratives because, Bauer explains, he had recognized that they were more theological stories than historical accounts. By examining regional Christian literature and legends, Bauer investigates whether there was a primary Christian church with an ecclesiastical teaching from which heresies diverged. As a historian, he says that he felt

compelled to set aside his theological biases and to let the other side also be heard. By casting aside his preconceived ideas about what ancient Christianity was supposed to look like, he started his project by remaining open to all possibilities.

In his book, Bauer ponders where to start. He realizes that his project cannot start with the New Testament because the majority of texts cannot be arranged confidently either chronologically or geographically. Nor can the precise circumstances of the origins of these texts, including their authors, be sufficiently determined. He instead offers to write a retrohistory, starting at a later time when information about early Christians is better known, then working backward to figure out what is less known. As he works backward through the materials, he demonstrates how orthodox Catholic authors construct legends and forge texts to create, authorize, and distribute their truth across the Mediterranean into regions that were not originally orthodox but non-Catholic to begin with. In the end he determines that there was no original unity of thought or practice among the Christians – orthodoxy was not the original Christianity – but instead, there was a great diversity that, beginning in the second century, was disciplined and restrained by Catholics who cast themselves as the original Christians. Bauer had dropped a bomb: early Christianity was plural and orthodoxy was constructed.

But the bomb did not detonate immediately. It was only decades later, when scholars began in earnest to study newly discovered Christian writings from Nag Hammadi, that Bauer’s thesis finally gained an audience. For these scholars, the vast diversity of non-orthodox thought and practices reflected in the Nag Hammadi collection destabilized the standard story of orthodoxy (Figure 1.7). Bauer’s insistence on Christianity’s original plurality rang true even when some of his specific arguments had become dated and his interpretation was shown to carry on the project of Liberal

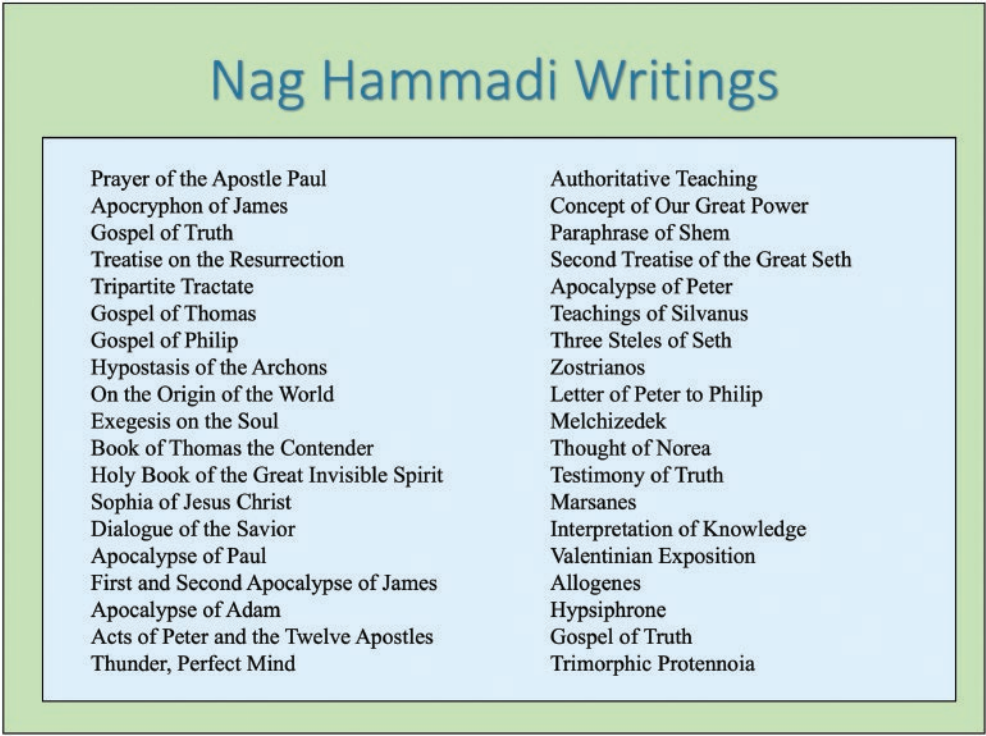


FIGURE 1.7 Contents of Christian books found in the Nag Hammadi Codices.

Protestantism from the nineteenth century. The Liberal Protestant project arose in order to sync Christianity with modern intellectual knowledge. Liberal Protestants took seriously Darwin and the scientific method, so that, for instance, the Bible and church creeds came to be understood by Liberal Protestants as human cultural products. Orthodoxy was also viewed as a human cultural construction, set into motion by the apostles. Orthodoxy was seen as only one way among many diverse ways to frame Christian truth. So, while Bauer made many historical advances in our understanding that early Christianity was plural and orthodoxy constructed, he continued the theological Protestant project of his era by writing a history that left Jesus as the sole authority of the Christian church and truth.

1.3 Trajectories Through Early Christianity

If Christianity was originally diverse and orthodoxy constructed and secondarily imposed to limit and control this diversity, then the model of a linear progression of the Church from Jesus to the Apostles to the Apostolic Fathers to the Church Fathers to Nicaea was fractured, if not split open. In place of this narrative, New Testament scholars Helmut Koester (1926–2016 CE) and James Robinson (1924–2016 CE) offered the model of trajectories through early Christianity. Their idea was simple. Investigate the earliest Christian texts – the New Testament texts and a select number of non-canonical sources – and map the variant forms of Christianity represented in them. Then demonstrate how these variant forms of early Christianity produced other types of Christianity that moved through history in a variety of trajectories.

Using this model, they emphasized that early Christianity was not randomly plural but the plurality developed along trajectories that were traceable. For instance, they suggested that an orthodox trajectory can be traced from Paul to Ephesians to 1 Peter to Luke-Acts to the Pastorals to the emergent Catholic Church. Another trajectory went from Paul to certain heterodox (not conforming to orthodox standards) second-century Christians, from Colossians to Valentinus, Basilides, and Marcion. As they mapped the trajectories, they brought into question the privileging of New Testament texts so that the study of New Testament texts, in their work, was bundled together with the study of second-century Christian literature. Their model resisted telling the story of the history of the Christian church. Instead, they created a history-of-ideas model that showed how Christian thought developed along different thought paths among early Christians.

The trajectories model had ties with earlier scholarship which had determined that there were two major Christian movements represented in the New Testament texts and which became significant players in early Christianity. In this way early Christianity was divided into Jewish Christianity and Pauline or Gentile (non-Jewish) Christianity. Today, this terminology is considered dated because it coded Jewish Christianity as legalistic and backward, while also inaccurately suggesting that Jewish Christians were ethnic Jews, which was not always the case. Some were Gentile converts. In addition, as we already learned, earliest Christianity was a Jewish sectarian movement that brought Gentiles into the People of Israel alongside ethnic Jews.

The trajectories model has been influential because it created space for imagining early Christian diversity outside the traditional stories. Yet it has been criticized for not going far enough beyond the traditional story because it simply multiplies the old teleological narrative of the Catholics into many similar narratives with beginnings that determine the endings (or vice versa). More problematic is the understanding of individual trajectories as representatives of different forms of Christianity developing in isolation of each other, with little allowance for multiple trajectories in a single geographical location. Because individuals and texts are placed within single trajectories, it has been difficult to imagine individuals or texts participating in multiple trajectories.

In the end, we are left in a mire with no real answers to the simplest questions. What does the plurality of early Christianity mean for our understanding of early Christianity history? How did early Christian diversity originate? What did the various movements look like and where were they located? How did the various movements relate to each other? What made the movements different from each other? What made the movements Christian? What factored into the intergenerational survival of some and the failure of others?

1.4 Family Networks of Christian Movements

This textbook aims to answer these questions, but to do so by implementing a different model based on the concept of family networks. Modeling early Christian movements in networks of religious families decenters the standard Catholic and Protestant stories so that the products of history (Catholicism, Orthodoxy, and Protestantism) do not determine the telling of the stories. This model also allows us to map the emergence of Christian pluralism in a relational rather than isolationist way, so that we can come to understand the connections between different groups as well as the multivocality (multiple authorial voices) and the multivalency (multiple meanings) of the Jewish and early Christian texts they used (Figure 1.8). This means that different groups could use the same texts but interpret them in remarkably distinct (and even opposite) ways.

This model has its roots in the rise of taxonomy or classification that developed in the biological sciences in the eighteenth century in order to describe, identify, and name organisms systematically based on shared characteristics. Carl Linnaeus (1707–1778 CE), a Swedish botanist, is considered the father of modern taxonomy, since he introduced the formal system of naming organisms with two Latin names: the first identifies their genus (e.g. *Homo*) and the second their species (e.g. *sapiens*).

After Charles Darwin published *On the Origin of Species*, scientists retooled the old taxonomies to reflect Darwin's principle of common descent. When they began to diagram evolutionary trees or cladograms, they realized monophyletic (single arrangement) groups, like “mammals” or “birds” defined by a set of shared attributes with a recent common ancestor, were not always the case. Groups of organisms existed that were not defined with reference to a recent common ancestor and a property which was necessary and sufficient for membership in that group. This led researchers to talk about polyphyletic (multiple arrangement) groups like marine mammals or flying vertebrates that are composed of organisms that share a large number of similarities, yet no property is necessarily shared by all individuals in the group, and no individual has all the properties generally characteristic of members of its group.



FIGURE 1.8 The difference between multivocality (multiple authors) and multivalency (multiple meanings).

Consider this possible polyphyletic scenario illustrated below (Figure 1.9). There are six individuals who can be grouped according to seven attributes A–G. In this case, one grouping (Species 1) includes individuals 1–3 and a second grouping (Species 2) includes individuals 4–6. Each grouping shares a majority of attributes. In Species 1, each member shares at least one of the attributes C or D, neither of which is present in the second grouping. In Species 2, each member shares at least one of the attributes E, F, or G and none of these are present in the first grouping. We might imagine that the individuals could be arranged so that the individuals resemble their nearest neighbors very closely and their further neighbors less closely. Those individuals nearest the extremes would resemble each other hardly at all.

Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889–1951 CE) famously applied this concept to philosophy using the concept of a *GAME* as an example. What makes Solitaire, Chess, Ring-Around-The-Rosie, and Minecraft games? There are no “essential” attributes of games, Wittgenstein said, but rather there are overlapping characteristics shared by individual games. The category *GAME* is heterogenous, so that individual games share many but not all the properties that games have in common (Figure 1.10). Wittgenstein called these similarities family resemblances. Games, he said, form a family whose members have family resemblances

Species 1			Species 2		
1	2	3	4	5	6
A	A		A	A	
B	B	B			B
C		C			
	D	D			
			E	E	
			F		F
				G	G

FIGURE 1.9 Table laying out possible polyphyletic scenario.

Board Games			Computer Games		
1	2	3	4	5	6
A competitive	A competitive		A competitive	A competitive	
B solo	B solos	B solo			B solo
C cards		C cards			
	D dice	D dice			
			E video avatar	E video avatar	
			F map		F map
				G video cars	G video cars

FIGURE 1.10 Example of *GAME* grouping based on family resemblances Series 1 (1–3): Board Games; Series 2 (4–6): Computer Games.

which overlap. The members of a family are related to each other in different ways. Families are complicated networks of similarities that overlap and crisscross. When we study games, Wittgenstein advised, we should not think that there must be something in common or they would not be called “games.”

Rodney Needman (1923–1996 CE) applied Wittgenstein’s idea to the field of social anthropology when he reflected on the concept of KINSHIP which he understood to be the allocation of rights (i.e. group membership, succession to office, inheritance of property, locality of residence, type of occupation, etc.) and their transmission from one generation to the next. He resists defining KINSHIP prescriptively but instead wants to think about it as a category with possible features that are related to each other and vary from case to case.

J. Gordon Melton (1942– CE), scholar of American religions, used the idea of family resemblances and networks to successfully chart the modern religious landscape in his massive *Encyclopedia of American Religions*. He organized various groups into 26 religious families based on common heritage, thought worlds, and lifestyles, while recognizing that aspects of these features would vary and overlap from group to group within each family. His organization helps us see the emergence of various movements, as well as understand the various movements and their families in relationship to each other.

This textbook likewise organizes the diversity of early Christianity into families. Groups in each family may share many similar features, but not all, and they share in common some features that are distinct from other families. The features that are studied in the following chapters include each group’s theology (beliefs about God), Christology (beliefs about Christ), cosmogony (beliefs about creation), cosmology (beliefs about world structure), anthropology (beliefs about humans), soteriology (beliefs about salvation), devotional patterns (worship activities), ecclesiastic (church) organization, scriptural usage, and remembered heritage, especially when it comes to their understanding of Judaism and their ties to it. The families that they belong to are comprehensively mapped out in the final chapter of the textbook, after all the evidence of the individual groups is presented in the preceding chapters. In this way, our understanding of the early Christian landscape is created out of the sources rather than superimposed on them.

1.5 Rethinking How We Talk About Religious Movements

While it is essential to understand the broad families of early Christian movements, it is also important to understand the nature of each of the movements within the different families. The sociology of religious movements has gained ground in recent years with the recognition that the traditional terminology that relies on church (conventional religious organization), sect (deviant religious organization with traditional beliefs and practices), and cult (deviant religious organization with novel beliefs and practices) is not sufficient to describe religious movements, but is a product of the Protestant worldview and authorizes Christian denominationalism. Consider how problematic this typology is when we are analyzing a religious landscape like second-century Christianity that does not have a conventional religious organization yet. Also consider how this typology organizes religious movements in relationship to the categories of what is normative and what is deviant, which immediately values or devalues particular movements. Sociologists of religion have tried to adjust this typology, but their adjustments have mainly served their purposes in describing new religious movements in relationship to their tension with society and secularism, how world-affirming or denying they are. This also is not sufficient for trying to describe early Christian plurality.

In this textbook, we use a new typology to describe the types of religious groups that make up early Christian sectarianism (Figure 1.11). Here sectarianism denotes independently organized groups that claim to be the authentic representatives of the same religious tradition. Within this sectarianism, we observe five types of religious movements based on the ways in which they form or emerge. A CONSOLIDATED RELIGIOUS MOVEMENT is a group created when two or more independent religious units form a single network with common religious leadership. A modern example is the merger of the American Unitarian Association and the Universalist Church of America, in 1961, to form the Unitarian Universalist Association. A REFORMED

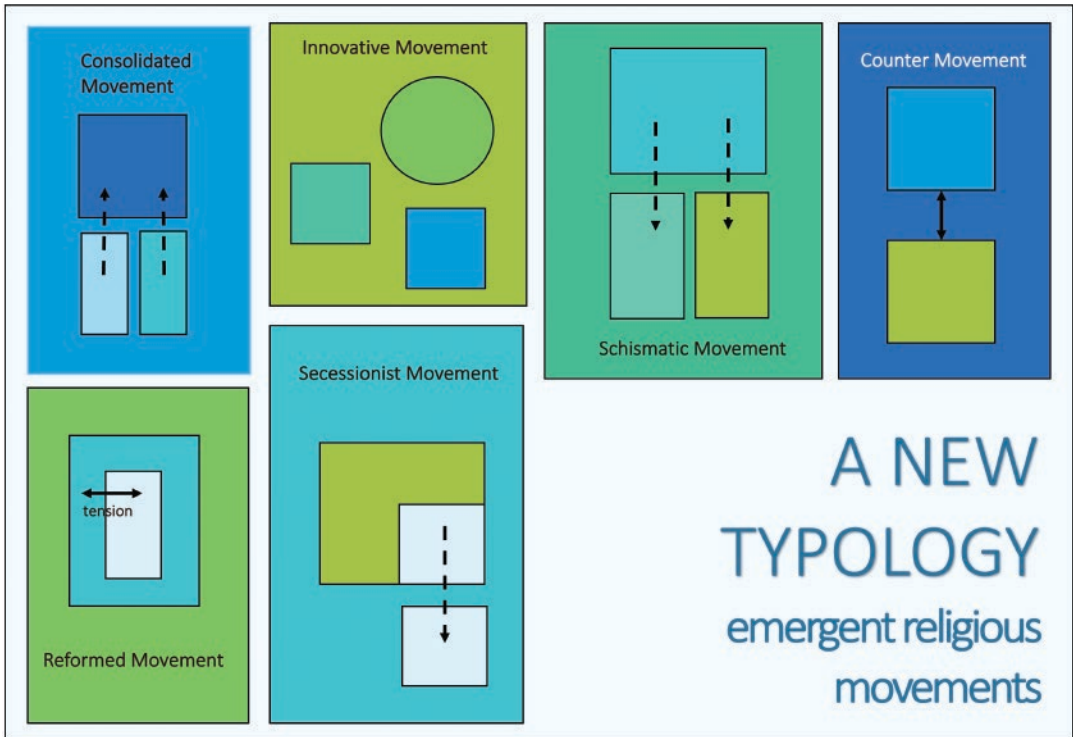


FIGURE 1.11 Diagram illustrating how new religious movements emerge.

RELIGIOUS MOVEMENT is a group which has changed something about the religious group with which its members are already affiliated. Usually the reformed group perceives itself as a restoration of the ideal form of the tradition and operates tensely within the tradition to make these reforms. If opposed, they often secede and form an independent and competing organization as happened during the Protestant Reformation. In a SECESSIONIST RELIGIOUS MOVEMENT an independent religious group is formed when a segment splits off from a religious group and starts an alternative form of the parent group. An example of a secessionist movement is the Pilgrims who left the Church of England which they perceived to be corrupt. A SCHISMATIC RELIGIOUS MOVEMENT is created when a single religious movement splits into smaller segments, such as what happened in 1054 when the Catholic Church split into the Roman Catholic and the Greek Orthodox Churches. A COUNTER RELIGIOUS MOVEMENT is a group formed in opposition to another religious group because it disagrees with the other group and attempts to compete with it for converts. A modern example is Mormonism or the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. AN INNOVATIVE RELIGIOUS MOVEMENT is a group that emerges as a novel religious organization, generated as a product of innovation. The Church of Christ, Scientist is a contemporary example of an innovative religious Christian movement that emerged when Mesmerism and the teachings of Phineas Parkhurst Quimby informed Mary Baker Eddy's interpretation of her personal visions and study of the Bible.

1.6 All that Jazz

To write a history of early Christianity is to grapple with the extreme diversity among early Christians. If we were to put this history to music, the composition would not be a symphony in four movements with brisk and lively beginnings in Jesus' mission to the slow and lyrical development of the early church to the contrast and clash with the heretics to the climatic triumph of the Catholic Church in the finale. Nor would