

# High School Course – World Civilization – Christianity

**To my brother pastors:** A concerned parent gave me this text and asked for my comments. After reading the text (and spending some time in prayer) I made the following observations. Before doing anything further, I would appreciate your input.

## **Observations:**

- Not grossly offensive
- Seemed “thrown together” without much thought
- Broad claims, but no documentation
- Without argumentation the text leads students to certain conclusions, e.g. Buddhism & Christianity are same: “similarities...salvation and guidance of saints” (!)
- Later form of Buddhism presented Buddha as “divine savior” – “Jesus of Nazareth, believed by Christians to be the son of God...”
- Jesus “sent to earth to redeem human sin” (!)
- Jesus call “Christ...through his sacrifice to prepare his followers for widespread possibility of an afterlife and heavenly communion with God.”

And so it goes: about three pages of statements and claims with no precision (or even much apparent thought) and no documentation.

The text is full of clichés: e.g. that Christianity is “exclusive” and “intolerant.” (Astronomy is “exclusive” of astrology and psychology is “intolerant” of phrenology.) But the same text mentions Christianity’s ability to integrate a variety of practices and philosophical viewpoints – with no sense of the difference between organic development and “syncretism.”

The text suggests the old canard about Paul being the founder of the church and inventor of its doctrine (authors seem unaware of Gal 2:2).

Text mentions “complex doctrine of Trinity” and proceeds to give an incorrect statement of that teaching.

**Conclusion:** Our students are poorly served this text. Christianity is central to Western Civilization and continues to play a huge role in our nation and our world. It is important for all students to have a basic understanding of Christian origins. This text seems more like propaganda than an honest and thoughtful presentation of Christianity

**Suggestions:** Students would be better served by the Wikipedia article on Christianity. But even better, why don’t we pastors offer a presentation on basic Christian beliefs, e.g. by using Mere Christianity or other statement of core Christian teachings?

I would welcome your observations and suggestions.

--Fr. Phil Bloom  
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