Angels: A Very Short Introduction
David Albert Jones

Angels: A Very Short Introduction outlines prominent stories and speculations about angels in Judaism, Islam, Christianity, and post-Christian spiritualities. What are angels? Where were they first encountered? Can we distinguish angels from gods, fairies, ghosts, and aliens? And why do they remain so popular? Angels have been portrayed in art as young men in the Hebrew Scriptures, androgynous winged creatures of the pre-Raphaelites, and as the masculine statue of the Angel of the North. Examples are provided of angels in films such as Wings of Desire, and It's a Wonderful Life, as well as angels in literature.

Anglicanism: A Very Short Introduction
Mark Chapman

Anglicanism: A Very Short Introduction highlights the diversity of contemporary Anglicanism by exploring its history, theology, and structures. Although originally united by location and a common belief, Anglicanism has gradually lost its pre-eminence as the English state religion due to increasing pluralism and secularization. Whilst there are distinctive themes and emphases which emerge from its early history and theology, there is little sense of unity in Anglicanism today. Putting the history and development of the religion into context, this VSI reveals what holds Anglicanism together despite the recent crises that threaten to tear it apart.

Thomas Aquinas: A Very Short Introduction
Fergus Kerr

Thomas Aquinas: A Very Short Introduction is an introduction to this early thirteenth century Italian Catholic priest's work. Placing Aquinas in an historical context, it explores
the Church and culture into which he was born. A controversial figure, often engaged in conflict, Aquinas was, and still is, considered to be one of the great Christian thinkers. He continues to have a profound influence on Western thought. Recently scholars have begun to insist on the importance of studying his biblical commentaries. This VSI is centred on *The Summa Theologiae*, his greatest and most discussed single work, and some of the debates it has given rise to.

**Augustine: A Very Short Introduction**

Henry Chadwick

Augustine: A Very Short Introduction traces the development of Augustine's thought, discussing his reaction to the thinkers before him, and themes such as freedom, creation, and the trinity. By his writings, the surviving bulk of which exceeds that of any other ancient author, Augustine came to influence not only his contemporaries but also thinkers in the West since his time. He was a key figure in the transition from pagan to specifically Christian philosophy. How did Augustine's thought develop? What were the key influences upon his thought? How important were themes such as free will, time, and ethics to him?


Brian Cummings

The Book of Common Prayer is one of the most influential books in history. For nearly six centuries, it has formed the order of worship for established Christianity in England, and is now printed in many languages around the world. The Book of Common Prayer: A Very Short Introduction tells the fascinating history of the book, from medieval to modern times, and explains why it is easily misunderstood. Changing in meaning and context over time, the Book of Common Prayer has acted as a cultural symbol, affecting the everyday conduct of life as much as the spiritual, and dividing conformity from non-conformity, in social terms as well as religious, from birth to marriage to death.

**The Book of Mormon: A Very Short Introduction**

Terryl L. Givens

The Book of Mormon: A Very Short Introduction examines the Book of Mormon primarily in terms of the claims that its narrators make for its historical genesis, its purpose as a sacred
text, and its meaning for an audience which shifts over the course of the history it unfolds. Five governing themes — revelation, Christ, Zion, scripture, and covenant — serve as vectors for analysis of the Book's central doctrines and teachings, particularly in relation to familiar nineteenth-century religious preoccupations. This VSI samples characters and representative passages from the Book and surveys its contested origins and addresses questions of the record's historicity.

Calvinism: A Very Short Introduction
Jon Balserak

Calvinism: A Very Short Introduction explores major ideas associated with the Calvinist system of thought. Beginning during the Protestant Reformation in cities like Zurich, Geneva, and Basel, Calvinism—also known as Reformed Theology—spread rapidly throughout Europe and the New World, eventually making its way to the African Continent and the East. This VSI examines how Calvinism spread and took root, helping shape church, society, and much of contemporary thought, especially Western thought, on everything from theology to civil government, economics, the arts, work and leisure, education, and the family. The common misconceptions and objections to Calvinism are examined, along with a Calvinist understanding of God, the world, humankind, and the meaning of life.

Catholicism: A Very Short Introduction
Gerald O'Collins

Despite a long history of external threats and internal strife, the Roman Catholic Church remains a vast and influential presence in our modern world. But what were its origins, and how has it changed over the centuries? Catholicism: A Very Short Introduction covers the history of the Catholic Church and considers some of the key issues facing Catholicism today, such as the recent clerical abuse scandals and the impact of the growth of Islam. It also shows how Catholics are being increasingly challenged by tensions between their traditional Christian values and rights endorsed by the secular world, and considers the future for the largest and oldest institution in the world.

Christian Ethics: A Very Short Introduction
D. Stephen Long

Christian Ethics: A Very Short Introduction
Christian Ethics: A Very Short Introduction presents a discussion of the relationship between Christian ethics, modern, and postmodern ethics, and explores practical issues including sex, money, and power. What are the inherent difficulties in bringing together ‘Christian’ and ‘ethics’? Christian ethics is not a precise science; rather, it is the cultivation of practical wisdom from a range of sources. This VSI looks at the failures of the Christian tradition, including the crusades, the conquest, slavery, inquisitions, and the Galileo affair. These events raise challenges for modern Christian ethics. They have implications in the modern era, that affect our lives in the present age.

Christianity: A Very Short Introduction
Linda Woodhead

At a time when Christianity is flourishing in the Southern hemisphere but declining in much of the West, Christianity: A Very Short Introduction offers an important overview of the world's largest religion. Exploring the cultural and institutional dimensions of Christianity, and tracing its course over two millennia, it provides a candid portrait of Christianity's past and present. Addressing topics including the competition for power between different forms of Christianity, the churches' use of power, and its struggles with modernity, this VSI includes up-to-date information on the growth and geographical spread of Eastern Christianity, reflecting the global nature of Christianity in our ever-shifting contemporary culture.

The Devil: A Very Short Introduction
Darren Oldridge

Focussing specifically on the Christian Devil, The Devil: A Very Short Introduction explores the many guises and roles he played in the Bible. He has fascinated writers and theologians since New Testament times, and inspired many dramatic and haunting works of art. Today he remains a potent image in popular culture. According to the principle of ‘demonic inversion’, the Devil represents the mirror image of goodness. While belief in him has declined, the idea of an abstract force of evil is still remarkably strong. Today we are more likely to speak about ‘demonological’ ways of thinking, including allegations of ‘satanic ritual abuse’ and the on-going ‘war on terror’.
Jesus: A Very Short Introduction
Richard Bauckham

Jesus: A Very Short Introduction explores the figure of Jesus through the four Gospels of the New Testament. These ancient texts provide historical evidence for his life and teachings, with each Gospel portraying Jesus from different perspectives. Eyewitness accounts by those who knew Jesus show how he was perceived by those who were close to him and shed light on his character and motivations. How did Jesus come to be the object of Christian faith and worship? And why do two billion people today identify as Christians? The Gospels provide knowledge about the man that may help to answer these questions.

Martin Luther: A Very Short Introduction
Scott H. Hendrix

Martin Luther: A Very Short Introduction details Luther's life, writings, world, and legacy. It explains the religious reformation and his importance, emphasizing the political and cultural forces that led the reformation down paths Luther could neither foresee nor influence. How do historians view Martin Luther? What effect did his self-righteous attitude have on contemporaries? What place did his anti-Judaism play in Nazi propaganda? This introduction presents Martin Luther as historians now see him and emphasizes the context in which Luther worked, the colleagues who supported him, and the opponents who adamantly opposed his agenda for change.

Methodism: A Very Short Introduction
William J. Abraham

Methodism: A Very Short Introduction traces Methodism from its origins in the work of John Wesley and the hymns of his brother, Charles Wesley, in the 18th century, right up to the present, where it is one of the most vibrant forms of Christianity. Considering the identity, nature, and history of Methodism, it provides a fresh account of the place of Methodism in the life and thought of the Christian Church. Describing the message of Methodism, and who the Methodists are, it also considers the practices of Methodism and discusses its global impact and its decline in the homelands. Finally, looking forward, this VSI considers the future prospects for Methodism.
Mormonism: A Very Short Introduction
Richard Lyman Bushman

Mormonism: A Very Short Introduction sets out to examine a religion with over 12 million adherents that still baffles outsiders nearly 170 years after the founder's death. How can twenty-first-century Americans believe in a prophet who translated gold plates and claimed constant revelations? The emergence of eminent Mormon politicians, business leaders, and entertainers only deepens the mystery. Sane, useful, upright members of society hold beliefs that others find difficult to understand, much less believe. The jarring contradiction raises the questions: Why does Mormonism exercise such a powerful influence on the lives of Mormons? How can a religion that runs against the grain of modern secularism evoke such strong loyalties?

Orthodox Christianity: A Very Short Introduction
A. Edward Siecienski

To many in the West, Orthodoxy remains shrouded in mystery, an exotic and foreign religion that survived in the East following the Great Schism of 1054 that split the Christian world into two camps—Catholic and Orthodox. However, as the second largest Christian denomination, Orthodox Christianity is anything but foreign to the nearly 300 million worshippers who practice it. For them, Orthodoxy is a living, breathing reality. Whether they are Greek, Russian, or American, Orthodox Christians are united by a common tradition and faith that binds them together despite differences in culture. Orthodox Christianity: A Very Short Introduction explores the enduring role of this religion, and the history, beliefs, and practices that have shaped it.

Paul: A Very Short Introduction
E. P. Sanders

Paul is the most powerful human personality in the history of the Church. A missionary, theologian, and religious genius, in his epistles he laid the foundations on which later Christian theology was built. Paul: A Very Short Introduction provides a highly original introduction to Paul's life and thought and pays equal attention to Paul's fundamental convictions and the sometimes convoluted ways in which they were worked out. Topics covered include Paul's missionary strategy and message, the return of the Lord and
the resurrection of the dead, monotheism and providence, the Galations, the Romans, Christology, and the salvation of Israel.

**Pentecostalism: A Very Short Introduction**

**William K. Kay**

Pentecostalism: A Very Short Introduction outlines the origins and growth of Pentecostalism, looking at the theological aspects of the movement and also the sociological influences of its political and humanitarian viewpoints. In religious terms Pentecostalism was probably the most vibrant and rapidly-growing religious movement of the 20th century. Starting as a revivalistic and renewal movement within Christianity, it encircled the globe in less than 25 years and grew in North America and then in those parts of the world with the highest birth-rates. Characterised by speaking in tongues, miracles, television evangelism and megachurches, it is also noted for its small-group meetings, empowerment of individuals, liberation of women, and humanitarian concerns.

**Protestantism: A Very Short Introduction**

**Mark A. Noll**

Protestantism: A Very Short Introduction presents a history of Protestantism beginning with the founding of Lutheran, Reformed, Anglican, and Anabaptist churches in the 16th-century Reformation. What importance do Martin Luther and John Calvin have on the story? What part does the recent expansion of Protestant movements in Africa, China, India, and Latin America have on the on-going and rapidly expanding story of Protestantism worldwide? Why have Protestant energies flagged recently in the Western world yet expanded so dramatically elsewhere? Protestant commonality includes the message of Christian salvation, reliance on the Bible, and organization through personal initiative, which explains Protestantism's extraordinary diversity and durability.

**Puritanism: A Very Short Introduction**

**Francis J Bremer**

Puritanism: A Very Short Introduction traces the development, triumph, and decline of the Puritan world and examines the Puritan legacy in American history. It charts the rise of Puritanism in the English Reformation, the struggle of the reformers to purge what they
viewed as the corruptions of Roman Catholicism from the Elizabethan church, and the struggle with the Stuart monarchs that led to a brief Puritan triumph under Oliver Cromwell. It also explores puritan theology, views on family and community, beliefs about the proper relationship between religion and public life, the limits of toleration, and the balance between individual rights and one's obligation to others.