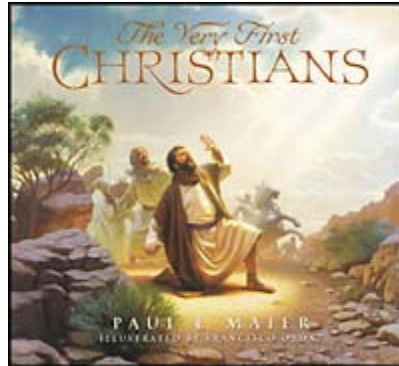


Author: Paul L. Maier  
Illustrator: Francisco Ordaz  
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I wanted to extend a word of thanks to the kind folks at Concordia Publishing House for sending me a review copy of Paul L. Maier's *The Very First Christians*.

Paul L. Maier is the Russell H. Seibert Professor of Ancient History at Western Michigan University. His areas of research include manuscript and text analysis, archaeology, and the comparison of secular and sacred sources from the first century A.D. Dr. Maier also serves as the second vice-president of the Lutheran Church –Missouri Synod. Two of his more well known, recent publications are *More Than a Skeleton* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2003) and (with H. Hanegraaff), *The Davinci Code-Fact or Fiction?* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale, 2004). In addition to these works, Dr. Maier has written over 250 scholarly articles and has nine other books to his credit.

Francisco Ordaz is an accomplished illustrator. He has worked in the movie industry with George Lucas' Company, Industrial Light and Magic illustrating for the films *E.T.* and *Return of the Jedi*. Francisco has also worked with Dr. Maier on both of the earlier books in this series, *The Very First Christmas* (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1998) and *The Very First Easter* (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1999).

*The Very First Christians* is the third book in the "Very First" series that began with *The Very First Christmas* and was followed by *The Very First Easter*. This story begins with the familiar character of Chris who we find fishing with his Grandfather. His Grandfather is described as a professor who knows a lot about ancient history, not unlike Dr. Maier. Chris asks a simple question about the fish over his Grandfather's license plate, which leads into his Grandfather recounting the story of the early church. One of the things I thoroughly enjoyed about this story is that it's told in the context of a conversation between Chris and his Grandfather. Chris comments and asks questions, while his Grandfather answers the questions as he shares the story. The story touches on the following important events found in the book of Acts:

- The arrival of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost
- The preaching of Peter
- The martyrdom of Stephen
- Philip's encounter with the Ethiopian Eunuch
- The Conversion of Saul on the road to Damascus
- Paul's missionary journeys

**Originally published July 1, 2008 at [www.shauntabatt.com](http://www.shauntabatt.com).**

This and other children's books by Dr. Maier have become a treasured favorite amongst my own children. Christian parents and grandparents will appreciate the integrity with which the story is told as it stays true to the accounts of the early church found in the book of Acts. That is what makes this book a quality resource for parents who want to introduce their children to either the book of Acts or the life and story of the early church. The conversation between Chris and his Grandfather is sure to draw both adults and children into the story. Also, Francisco Ordaz's beautiful illustrations are nearly lifelike and make the story of the early church come alive like never before. Like Dr. Maier's other children's books, this too is a story that is a joy to read and visually a beauty to behold. For more stories of this quality, please see Dr. Maier's other children's books listed below:

- *The Very First Christmas* (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1998)
- *The Very First Easter* (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1999)
- *Martin Luther: A Man Who Changed the World* (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 2004)
- *The Real Story of the Creation* (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 2007)
- *The Real Story of Flood* (St. Louis, Mo: Concordia Publishing House, 2008)