



A Nonprofit Education Corporation  
P.O. Box 23228  
Santa Barbara, CA 93121-3228  
(805) 967-6030  
Web: [vistaslifelonglearning.org](http://vistaslifelonglearning.org)  
Email: [vistas@silcom.com](mailto:vistas@silcom.com)

**CHRISTIAN BEGINNINGS:  
FROM CULT TO CREED**  
Presenter: Howard Clarke

Three Wednesdays, November 3, 10, & 17  
9:30am—12:30pm  
Valle Verde Social Room  
900 Calle de los Amigos

Our favorite classical scholar returns!

“Christian Beginnings” is now a hot topic in scholarship as historians revisit the early Church and look for new ways to understand the greatest phenomenon in western history—how a small Syrian cult became a state, indeed universal, religion. Prof. Bart Ehrman of Chapel Hill has brought this subject to a wider audience with his best selling books, popular lectures, and TV appearances, in which he expresses considerable doubt—to say the least—about the historicity of Jesus’ ministry, the reliability of the Gospels, and the motives of early Christians. He has recently been featured in a series of four DVDs in which he airs his controversial views. So ours will be a kind of “Point—Counterpoint” program, in which we will watch his DVD presentations and compare them with the traditional and orthodox understandings of the early Church. Subjects to be “debated” will be the Passion Story, Biblical authority, Paul and the Church’s missionary outreach, relations with Jews and Romans, early heresies, persecutions, and the aftermath of Constantine’s conversion.



*Mural painting from the catacomb of Commodilla*

---

**ENROLLMENT FORM: *Christian Beginnings***

**VISTAS Members \$30 per person — Non-members \$45 per person**

**Amount Enclosed \$\_\_\_\_\_**

**Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_**

**Address: \_\_\_\_\_**

**Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_**

**Mail to: VISTAS Lifelong Learning, Inc., P.O. Box 23228, Santa Barbara, CA 93121-3228**

**Deadline for registration: October 22, 2010**

## BIOGRAPHY

Dr. Howard Clarke is a professor emeritus of Classics and Comparative Literature from UCSB. His Ph.D. is from Harvard, and when specializing in ancient epic he authored and edited five books on Homer and Vergil. Since his retirement in 1991 he has worked in early Church history and in 2003 published a book on Matthew's Gospel.



*Early Christians used the Greek word ichthus, "fish," as an acrostic based on the initial letters of the words "Jesus Christ, Son of God, Saviour."*



*Feeding Christians to the lions was thought to be entertainment in Ancient Rome*

## VISTAS Fall 2010 Calendar

Seminar/Event	Inclusive Dates	Time	Venue
Congressional Elections	Wed, Oct 6, 13, 20	1:30-4:30pm	Valle Verde Theater
Water: Our Thirsty World	Mon, Oct 11, 18, 25	1:30-4:30pm	Valle Verde Theater
Documentary Film Club	Thursday, Oct 28	2:00PM	Maravilla Theater
Lewis Carroll & Frank Baum	Mon, Nov 8, 15, 22	9:30am-12:30	Goleta Library
Americans in Paris: Jazz's Influence on Modern Classical Music	Tues, Nov 9, 16, & Dec 1	1:30-4:00pm	Valle Verde Theater



Lifelong Learning  
P.O. Box 23228  
Santa Barbara, CA 93121-3228