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*Reformation*  
& **REVIVAL**  
**JOURNAL**

THE EARLY  
CHURCH

*A Quarterly for Church Renewal*

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VOLUME 13 · NUMBER 4 · FALL 2004

## ***A SELECT ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY***

*Phillip Luke Sinitiere*

- \*Bercot, David. *A Dictionary of Early Christian Beliefs*. Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson, 1998. A tremendously helpful resource with quotes from the church fathers on every imaginable doctrine and topic. This should be on every pastor's and layperson's shelf.
- Chadwick, Henry. *The Early Church*. New York: Penguin, 1990 (revised edition). A classic work on early Christian life and thought by a noted church historian.
- Davis, Leo. *The First Seven Ecumenical Councils, 325-787: Their History and Theology*. Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 1990. A thoroughly academic and theological analysis of Christianity's formative councils.
- \*Ehrman, Bart, editor. *The New Testament and Other Early Christian Writings: A Reader* (1998; second edition, 2004); *After the New Testament: A Reader in Early Christianity* (1998); *Lost Scriptures: Books That Did Not Become the New Testament* (2003); *Christianity in Late Antiquity: A Reader* (2004). All are New York: Oxford University Press. This leading New Testament scholar provides helpful introductions and readable translations of the foundational texts of Christianity. It is well worth the investment.
- Ferguson, Everett. *Backgrounds of Early Christianity*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003 (third edition). This is a readable and helpful textbook with important discussions of Hellenistic, Roman, and Jewish influences on early Christianity that is ideal for personal or small group study.
- Gambero, Luigi. *Mary and the Fathers of the Church*. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1999. A scholarly look at devotion to

Mary in the early church that includes brief selections of primary documents. It is ideal for classroom use.

- Guy, Laurie. *Introducing Early Christianity: A Topical Survey of Its Life, Beliefs, and Practices*. Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity, 2004. Recently published, this intentionally topical and readable examination of the first six centuries of Christianity should be read alongside of Ferguson and Hinson. It has a commendably rich use of primary sources.
- \*Hall, Christopher. *Reading Scripture with the Church Fathers* (1998); *Learning Theology with the Church Fathers* (2002); and *Praying with the Church Fathers* (forthcoming). All are Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity. Christopher Hall's work is a helpful and engaging introduction to the doctrine and life of the early church.
- Hinson, E. Glenn. *The Early Church: Origins to the Dawn of the Middle Ages*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995. This is a very readable and accessible textbook-style introduction to the growth of Christianity. Like Ferguson, it is ideal for personal or small-group study.
- Kelly, J. N. D. *Early Christian Doctrine*. San Francisco: Harper-Collins, 1991 (revised edition). Another classic work that concisely explains what early Christians believed.
- \*Louth, Andrew, editor, and Maxwell Staniforth, translator. *Early Christian Writings: The Apostolic Fathers*. Penguin, 1987. This is an affordable collection of the most important post-apostolic documents, including the *Didache*, the letters of Ignatius, and the martyrdom of Polycarp.
- McKechnie, Paul. *The First Christian Centuries: Perspectives on the Early Church*. Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity, 2002. This book gives an informative look at early Christianity which could be profitably read alongside of Patzia's work.
- Meeks, Wayne. *The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003

- (Second edition). A unique examination of Paul and his world that focuses on the lived, everyday experience of some of the earliest Christians.
- \*Oden, Thomas, general editor. *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture*. Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity (1998-). With fourteen volumes currently available, this series is the most important resource for students interested in patristic exegesis.
- Patzia, Arthur. *Emergence of the Church: Context, Growth, Leadership and Worship*. Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity, 2001. Patzia's detailed introduction considers where, why, and how Christianity grew and engages the practical issues with which early Christians dealt.
- Pelikan, Jaroslav. *The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition, Volume 1* (1971) and *The Spirit of Eastern Christendom, Volume 2* (1947). Chicago: University of Chicago Press. This is rigorous historical theology that examines the doctrinal and ecclesiastical developments in Christianity's first millennium. *Credo*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003. An exhaustive analysis of when, where, why, and how creeds have shaped both doctrine and devotion in the history of Christianity.
- Schnabel, Eckhard. *The Early Christian Mission Set*. 2 volumes. Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity, 2004. These forthcoming volumes recast early Christianity as a missions movement.
- Skarsuane, Oskar. *In the Shadow of the Temple: Jewish Influences on Early Christianity*. Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity, 2002. An academic study of the transitional phases between Judaism and Christianity.
- \*Stark, Rodney. *The Rise of Christianity: A Sociologist Reconsiders History*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1996. This is a fresh and readable account of early Christian growth that employs the tools of social science. It responsibly challenges long held assumptions about the birth of Christianity.

Tomasino, Anthony J. *Judaism Before Jesus: The Events and Ideas That Shaped the New Testament World*. Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity, 2003. Like Skarsuane, this volume examines Jewish influences on early Christianity and includes helpful illustrations and glossary.

Wilken, Robert. *The Christians As the Romans Saw Them*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003 (second edition). Like the title suggests, this work adds a richer perspective and understanding to the world of ancient Christianity.

Wilken, Robert. *The Spirit of Early Christian Thought: Seeking the Face of God*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003. This is an erudite yet readable account of the ideas that shaped early Christian worship and devotion.

\*Williams, D. H. *Retrieving the Tradition and Renewing Evangelicalism: A Primer for Suspicious Protestants*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999. In this academic but understandable work, Williams makes a cogent and compelling case for rigorous Protestant engagement with ancient Christianity. Above all he seeks to make the early church accessible to Protestants.

\*Highly recommended

It is right that those ancient doctrines of heavenly philosophy should, as time goes on, be cared for, smoothed, polished; but not that they should be changed, not that they should be maimed, not that they should be mutilated.

VINCENT OF LERINS, *A COMMONITORY*

Exhort you to leave alone the foreign fodder of heresy and keep entirely to Christian food.

IGNATIUS OF ANTIOCH (A.D. 115)

You must continue, then, to do nothing apart from the bishop. Be obedient, too, to the presbyters as to the apostles of Christ. . . . The deacons should please all in every way they can; for they are not merely ministers of food and drink but the servants of the church of God.

IGNATIUS OF ANTIOCH (A.D. 115)

The alien status of Christians meant that they were not at home in the empire. Confessing Christ as Lord, they rejected the gods of Hellenistic Roman religion. Their monotheism had a political character, for it excluded them from public life and led society to view them as fanatic enemies of the human race. The situation was one of latent persecution. Occasional outbreaks of popular hatred and denunciations demanded a readiness for discipleship in martyrdom.

EKKEHARD MÜHLENBERG,  
*THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF CHRISTIANITY, VOLUME 2*