

Introduction to the History of Christianity, 2nd ed., ed. by TIM DOWLEY, with a study companion compiled and edited by BETH WRIGHT. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2013. 688 pp. \$55.00.

There seems to be a never-ending supply of new surveys of church history, and this revised offering from Fortress provides another example of a traditional set of foci: a geographical emphasis culminating with the modern West and a topical focus on Christian thinkers and doctrine. One is therefore not surprised to find here, among other things, a robust section on the Christological controversies, a strong discussion of the Reformation, and plenty of material on Christianity in Western Europe and North America. Many secondary-school or college teachers of Christian history who desire a conservative/traditional approach will find these emphases helpful in using the book for lesson planning and/or as a textbook.

The structure and aesthetics of the book are also helpful for learners. The overall timeline is divided into seven eras, broken out in largely intuitive ways based on important events and movements. Each section contains numerous sidebars on important thinkers and groups; these sidebars provide useful information on things such as the subject's biography, works (where appropriate), and significance. There are also abundant supplemental resources such as timelines, study questions, bibliographies, and high quality, full-color maps and images.

In fact, the new maps and images are just one of the updates in this second edition, an update of the 1977 original from Lion Publishing, which was released in the USA by Fortress in 1995. Additionally, some early material was removed (e.g., some introductory material on historiography and a couple of sidebars), some was added at both ends of the timeline (e.g., a new chapter on "Jesus," and a new conclusion on the future), and the whole was re-edited and

updated. Finally, other user-friendly changes were made, such as giving dates for important thinkers and providing a glossary of terms.

Less user-friendly is the division of various supplemental materials into their own chapters. As a result, one encounters, for example, a 23-page chapter on the councils and creeds of the fourth and fifth centuries, followed by four brief topical chapters of approximately five pages each. This arrangement gives the odd impression that general information chapters on broad subjects are equal in weight and/or importance to specific chapters on focused topics. The set-up of the original edition made more logical sense.

For the most part, the kinds of updates that were given to the original are a real strength of the volume. However, the extent of the changes is a weakness; beyond the revisions to the beginning and end of the book, and the occasional edits here and there in the body of the text, there are not thoroughgoing changes where they might be welcome. For example, it is understandable that a book published in 1977 would not have much material about the place of Islam in the history of Christianity. But it is highly surprising that a new edition of that book would not include much on that score, especially given how the events of September 11, 2001, have changed the attitudes and knowledge of many Christians regarding Islam. Similarly, recent studies in church history have opened our eyes in powerful ways to the marginalized voices of that history—those of the poor and women, for example. Those kinds of voices are not to be found in abundance in this volume. Finally, Christians in the West are increasingly aware of the global spread of Christianity, especially in the East, but one does not find much material on this geographic area here.

A last word must address the study companion that accompanies the volume. Here Beth Wright provides guides to each of the seven main sections of the book, including definitions of key terms, very brief biographies of key personalities, selections from and questions on primary sources from those key personalities, further bibliography, summaries on each individual chapter, selections from relevant secondary sources, and helpful online resources. There is even a primer on how to read historical texts, as well a set of suggestions on writing research papers on church history. While lay readers might not be as interested in these resources, students using the book as a textbook will find them very helpful.

All in all, the greatest potential for this book lies in its use as a textbook in a class that takes a traditional approach to church history, or for interested lay readers who simply want a good, readable introduction. Scholars may not find it as necessary for their own bookshelves since the content is not particularly new and the images and maps can often be found elsewhere.