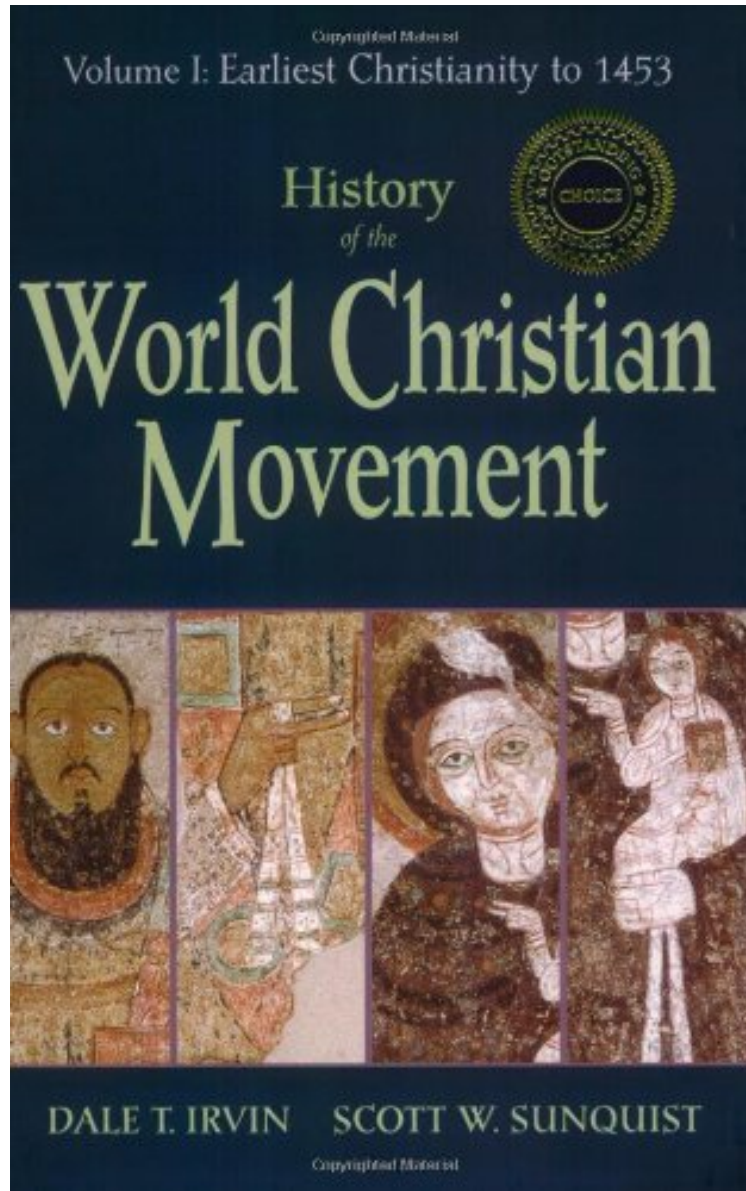


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History of the World Christian Movement: Earliest Christianity to 1453

Dale T. Irvin, Scott W. Sunquist

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Dale T. Irvin, Scott W. Sunquist : History of the World Christian Movement: Earliest Christianity to 1453 before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised History of the World Christian Movement: Earliest Christianity to 1453:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. If you want a book on Christian history to 1453, look no further. By Rev. Dr. C.H.E. Sadaphal In short, History of the World Christian Movement is a comprehensive, insightful, and eye-opening look into the people, politics, cultures, and many other forces that helped to shape early to medieval Christianity. The book truly takes a global lens to analyze the development of Christianity from its beginnings in Palestine to North Africa, Nubia, the Middle East, India and the rest of Asia, Russia, and modern day Europe. The broad approach is very inclusive yet also very complete and does an excellent job of highlighting all the major themes, individuals and sociopolitical forces at play in the development of the faith. As the book very eloquently demonstrates, religion never operates in a vacuum and often is steered by secular forces. No stone is left unturned and all the chief issues in all the major regions are covered in the text. The book moves in a sequential format from the first century after Christ's death to the capture of Constantinople in 1453. This happens after first giving the reader an expansive snapshot that describes civilization at the time of Christ and how the dynamics in antiquity further paved the way for Christianity's development. Along the timeline, the authors detail the major themes in each geographic area of the world. This book stands apart from other books on Christian history for four reasons: (1) It does not constrain its outlook to a Eurocentric focus and instead analyses Christianity for what it is: not a uniform mold but a global phenomenon with many ideological, liturgical, and ecclesiastical formulations. (2) The chapters on Constantine and Muhammad alone are worth purchasing this book, but as the book describes, the history of Christianity has very much to do with war, politics, Islam and trade than most people realize. For example, the fact that 100 years after Muhammad's death nearly half of the world's Christians came under Muslim rule has had pervasive and cataclysmic effects that still reverberate today. (3) The book introduces the reader to an awesome sampling of ancient texts, writers and theologians (e.g. Origen, Tertullian, Athanasius, Augustine, Aquinas, The Heliand, and Anselm) that most contemporary Christians have never heard of. (4) The text also analyzes the myriad of religious disputes that have shaped Christian history, and how we now live in a world where the winners of those ancient battles have managed to still shape current opinion. Accordingly, it's important to know, but it's even more important to know why you believe it. As an aside, the reader must understand that reading this book will give you little as far as application in everyday ministry but it will yield large dividends in the process of formation. That is, by learning the history and development of certain trends, ideologies, practices and cultural idiosyncrasies, you will be better equipped to engage those in contemporary ministry by knowing the legacy of many religious practices and dogmas. The only negative thing I have to say about this book is that there are a few grammatical and structural errors. I used the Kindle version and do not know if this applies to the print version but these extremely minor blips did not pose any major problems. The book is very easy to read and at times is surprisingly an exciting page-turner (applies only to church history nerds). I used this book as part of a graduate level seminary course and I certainly will refer back to it many times in the future. Although this book by itself is more than adequate to get the general idea, those who wish to dive deeper into the historical documents should pick up Readings in World Christian History, the companion text to this book. I think History of the World Christian Movement proves an invaluable and necessary part of any seminarians education, and academics, church historians, and theologians will likely also find this book worthwhile. Read this book and expand your mind.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. An enjoyable read, great content, slightly lacking in truly 'global' aspects. By Alexander T. Johnson A standard text in many history of Christianity courses, Irwin and Sunquist present an engaging overview of the history of Christianity which is very enjoyable to read. It is one of the more enjoyable history books to read and incorporates interesting and relevant anecdotes. The "World Christian Movement" does a better job than most text at incorporating the 'world' component, with several chapters dedicated to the role of Christianity outside of the Western world. While understandably, the majority of Christian history has developed in the West, yet much more could be said about Global Christianity. For individuals wanting a general overview of how Christianity arrived to them today in its present form, Irwin and Sunquist's book does just that.

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Great for a balanced approach, but with an Evangelical slant. By Stinekey This book was the first required reading for my "foundations of church history" course in a theological studies master's program at University of Dayton. I can see why my professor chose it - the book does indeed strive to offer a balanced approach to Christian History, including not just the West and Mediterranean but Syria, India, China and Northern Africa as well. The authors collaborated with a wide range of different "flavors" of scholars in the text's creation. Furthermore, the authors also include the experience of women in their text in such a way that it both gives voice to ancient women without overwhelming the entire narrative. However, Catholic readers should note that this text is written by Evangelical authors, and thus their understanding of ecclesiology is radically different from what Catholics and Mainline Protestants may be used to. For example, the authors make very little use of the word "church" - it hardly exists in the text! Christianity instead is seen as a movement (not that there's anything wrong with that). Furthermore, the authors note their surprise at the fact that there are relatively very few first hand accounts of conversion from the first century...something that may be disconcerting if one's understanding of Christianity is based on personal, defined experiences of conversion. But overall this is a fine book, balanced, and truly diverse. It's a great starting point for any Christian looking to learn more about the history of Christianity.

This first comprehensive account of Christianity as a world religion is a landmark, offering the work of five years of a team of 43 international scholars and consultants. For the first time, the peoples of Asia, Africa, and the Near East take their rightful place in the account of the unfolding of the Christian story from its beginnings to the 15th century.

"Well-researched and very readable." -- Methodist Recorder, 2 May 2002 "a lucid and informed account of the universal expansion of the Christian Churches...accessible without compromising intellectual integrity." --Church Times, 5 April 2002 Hands Down, this is the most balanced, comprehensive survey of pre-Reformation church history yet published...I have taught church history for a long time but I gained new insights from every chapter. --George Harper, in Journal of Asian Mission About the Author Scott W. Sunquist (PhD, Princeton Theological Seminary) is dean of the School of Intercultural Studies and professor of world Christianity at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California. He previously served as professor of world Christianity at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary. Sunquist is the author of "The Unexpected Christian Century" and the "Christianity Today" Book Award winner "Understanding Christian Mission". He is also coauthor of the multivolume "History of the World Christian Movement" and coeditor of "A Dictionary of Asian Christianity".