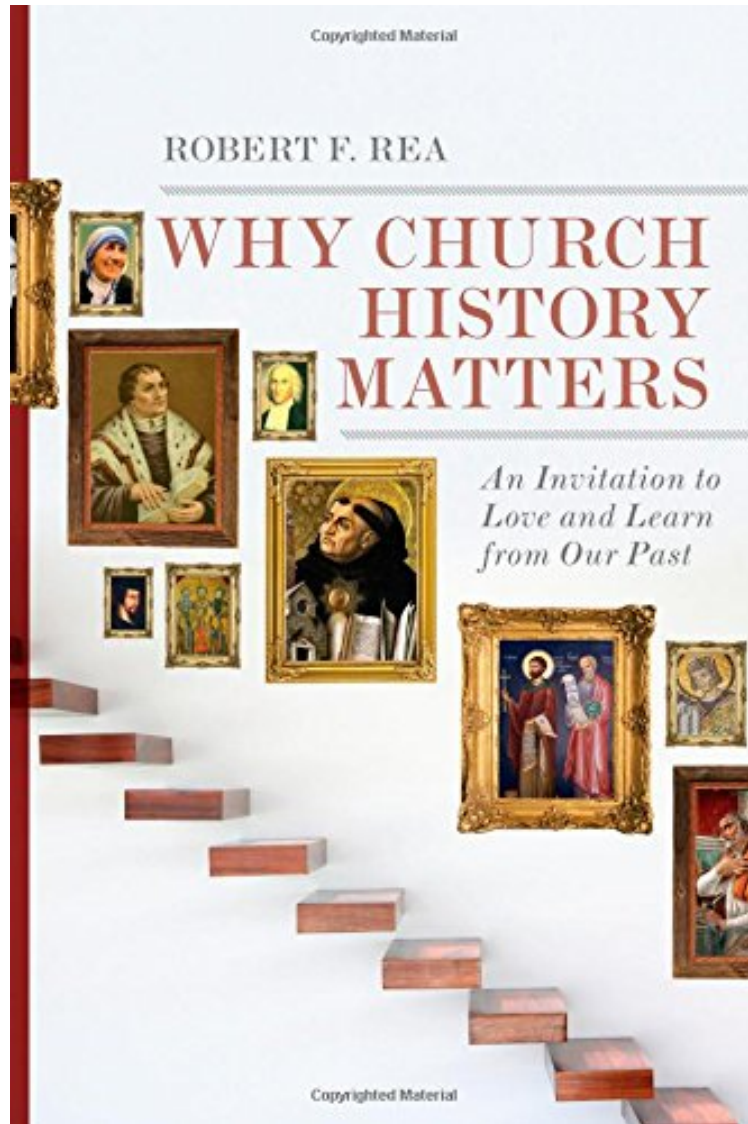


(Read free) Why Church History Matters: An Invitation to Love and Learn from Our Past

Why Church History Matters: An Invitation to Love and Learn from Our Past

Robert F. Rea

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Robert F. Rea : Why Church History Matters: An Invitation to Love and Learn from Our Past before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Why Church History Matters: An Invitation to Love and Learn from Our Past:

7 of 7 people found the following review helpful. A Valuable Starting Point By Ken Christensen This small book

attempts to answer an important question about a very big topic, church history. It is not a church history book itself, but one that can serve as a valuable embarking point prior to a serious study of church history. The author writes from the perspective of a Bible-focused Christian, an inclusive term composed of evangelicals, mainstream Protestants, Roman Catholics, and Eastern Orthodox Catholics who hold the Bible dear and study it in order to know God and God's truth. Throughout, Bible-focused is used, and the author makes it clear that the ideal reader of the book would be one who is Bible-focused. (p. 17) There are three major parts to the book: Part One: How We Understand the Tradition is composed of three chapters which discuss what is tradition, how we have understood tradition historically, and how tradition is understood today. Part Two: Expanding Circles of Inquiry includes four chapters which discuss Christian history and identity, Christian identity across the centuries, sharing accountability with historic Christians, and why historic Christians broaden our perspectives. Part Three: Tradition Serving the Church is composed of two chapters which discuss the concept of rightly dividing the word of truth and practical application of tradition and ministry. Practical suggestions are made at the close of each chapter. As one reads along, the author successfully keeps the discussion related to the book's theme as stated in the title, Why Church History Matters. The book is well-researched and documented. There are 268 end notes. An excellent bibliography, Recommended Resources for Ministry, is categorized by History of Christianity, Preaching and Teaching, Systematic Theology, Christian Spirituality, Expanding Mission, Ethics, Compassion, Unity, and Cultural Engagement. I appreciate that the author denotes resources that are more easily accessible works for introductory students. A helpful index is included. This book could very well serve as a textbook in an undergraduate or possibly even seminary class that is a prerequisite for subsequent studies in church history. It also could nicely serve as a resource for persons studying individually or in small groups who are interested in learning more of church history and Why Church History Matters. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Church history/historical theology finally able to wholly embrace with passion By Jennifer Walker I could not put the biblical historic pieces together until now. This wonderfully flowing read will help not only those who teach this subject but also those seeking understanding of the whole overview of both the early Church and historical history. I firmly believe now, this understanding is a must in the exegesis of scripture. This reading has created a foundation for me to work with and sparked a passion to continue to understand more about the Christians that were before me. Jennifer Walker 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars By Esther Robles A very comprehensive look at history yet simple and thought provoking at the same time. It is a keeper.

Does it matter how Christians in other times and places thought? If the Bible alone is God's revelation, why spend time studying church history? Aren't history and tradition more of a problem than a solution? For many Christians who believe the Bible is the ultimate authority for faith and life, questions about the role and value of the church's traditions can be difficult to tackle. But let's be honest: even those of us who admit that church history is important are often too intimidated or busy to delve into it deeply. And for students, it is sometimes difficult to see how church history matters in practical ways for future vocations inside and outside the contemporary church. In this wide-ranging book, veteran teacher Bob Rea tackles these barriers to understanding and embracing the significance of the faith and practice of our spiritual forefathers. In three parts he covers how Christians understand church tradition, why it is beneficial to broaden our horizons of community and how tradition helps us understand ministry. Rea not only skillfully explains why church history matters he shows why it should matter to us.

"Rea explores how the church has understood its tradition throughout history and how it's understood today. He explains why the study of Christian history is essential to forming personal and corporate identity, experiencing broad Christian community, providing contemporary accountability and bringing theological balance by expanding horizons and filling theological gaps. He identifies specific ways church history can help in the study of the Bible and in other ministry areas. . . . Recommend Why Church History Matters especially to pastors and seminary and Bible college students." (Daniel Johnson, CBA Retailers + Resources, July 2014) "Robert Rea has done something unique in this volume. He has dispelled the false notion that knowing the Bible makes understanding church history irrelevant. He has made church history a vital cornerstone for those who desire to serve the church well today and into the future. He has done this by taking the time to tie it deliberately and directly to the local church and practical ministry. Written by a veteran of the classroom and the church, this volume serves both venues well." (William R. Baker, professor of New Testament, Hope International University, and editor of Stone-Campbell Journal) "Robert Rea provides us with a passionate yet reasoned defense of church history in this thought-provoking study. Having been formed both intellectually and spiritually in a Protestant tradition that prioritized the Bible as the source of God's revelation to humankind, Rea discovered the wisdom of the church fathers and their successors in the course of his academic training. He presents in this book the fruit of years spent studying and teaching the ideas of Christian thinkers who flourished in the centuries after Jesus Christ and his apostles, with close attention to their historical circumstances. This is essential reading for all who teach or study church history or historical theology two fields which Rea would prefer not to separate since it offers not only an overview of the methods and concerns of theologians in the past but also important insights into how their work is received by Christian commentators in the present day." (Mary

Cunningham, lecturer in historical theology, University of Nottingham, England)"Church history is the most important subject in the theological curriculum. I say this not only because I am a church historian but simply because it is true. Without a good grasp of the history of God's people through the ages one cannot understand the Bible, doctrine, ethics, ecumenism, spiritual formation or any other topic related to the life of faith. Robert Rea has given us here a readable and compelling statement of why that is so. This is a great primer for the study of Christian history in all of its multicolored meanings and forms." (Timothy George, founding dean, Beeson Divinity School of Samford University; general editor, Reformation Commentary on Scripture)"Robert Rea, who describes himself as a 'Bible-focused' Christian believer, wants others who focus on the Bible to take church history seriously. His careful, thought-provoking study shows why there is no biblical reason to fear 'tradition' properly understood, but every reason to heed believers from the past as guides to Christian life today. Most importantly, the book is successful in explaining why full commitment to Scripture demands close and respectful attention to the past." (Mark Noll, Francis A. McAnaney Professor of History, University of Notre Dame)"A thoughtful introduction to the use of the history of Christianity within our Christian lives and Christian communities. Rea deserves our thanks for a thoughtful and useful book." (Mark Granquist, World World, 37/1, Winter 2017)"I agree wholeheartedly with Rea: we need church history, and we can use it while affirming our commitment to Scripture. . . . I welcome that call, and I echo many of his explanations for how church history helps and how neglect of it impoverishes our churches. This book is a useful starting point for the pastor and layperson who want to know and discuss why church history matters." (Matt Shrader, Baptist Bulletin, November/December 2015)"This is a helpful volume that belongs in religious library collections. It is a perceptive treatment that convincingly argues about the significance of Christian history." (Michael W. Campbell, Journal of Asia Adventist Seminary, 16.2 (2013))"Rea provides an accessible and compelling case for why and how the study of church history can actually serve the faith of Bible-focused Christians. Therefore, it would serve as an excellent textbook in a Christian college or seminary class, when many students are only beginning to taste the riches our historic faith has to offer." (Shane Shaddix, Themelios, April 2015, 40:1)"Rea is to be commended for making a cogent argument for the importance of historical theology to an audience that typically neglects it." (Jeremy Sabella, Catholic Historical, Winter 2016)"Robert F. Rea has prepared for us a small appetizer which invites us to the table to enjoy a feast with many other prominent Christians—sages, theologians and ministers—and to taste selected dishes of Ancient, Medieval, Reformation, and all the way to modern theological desserts, prepared by our elderly brothers and mentors such as Karl Barth, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, and their works." (Vatroslav Zupancic, Evangelical Journal of Theology 9, no. 2, (2015))About the AuthorRobert F. Rea (M.Div., Emmanuel School of Religion; Ph.D., Saint Louis University) is a professor of church history and historical theology at Lincoln Christian University. He is a member of numerous professional societies, including the North American Patristics Society and the American Society of Church History. Prior to his teaching career, he served as a pastor and youth minister, and has contributed articles or book reviews to publications such as the Encyclopedia of Early Christianity, Christian Standard and The Stone-Campbell Journal.