THE EARLY CHURCH
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.


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.

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


*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.


*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.


*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*

I 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*