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Early's "A History of Christianity: An Introduction Survey" (Book Review)

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A History of Christianity: An Introduction Survey,

by Joseph Early Jr., Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2015. 504 pp. \$39.99.

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Author Joseph Early Jr, Associate Professor of Theology at Campbellsville University, in this newly released survey comprehensively considers the development of Christianity. The focus of this work is to educate the reader on the historical course of Christianity through the use of key events, people and theological thought. The author does so by providing an outline that covers a time frame of over 2,000 years spanning history from the birth of Christ to the twenty-first century. Most chapters cover specific time frames, conflicts or believers groups. However, Constantine, Ulrich Zwingli and John Calvin are given special chapter recognition. The material is organized in chronological order that walks the reader through events as they unfolded. Not only a historical account, Early strives to show God's ever present hand on the lives and events that shaped our heritage, whether they were times of persecution or revival. He successfully achieves a historical work that is not just dates and facts but shows that through the lives of others we can be assured of the Father's hand ever orchestrating our lives.

The work is well written in an easy manner that is appropriate for students at the undergraduate level or any person who would like to expand their knowledge of Christian history. Early does a good job of introducing the information in a scholastic yet unintimidating way that draws in the reader and encourages further study. Great attention is given to exploring the people that formed Christian thought and perpetuated its message through the ages including biographical history and character insight. It should be noted that this book is quite text heavy and does not include illustrations or text/information boxes. Because of this format it may be difficult for visual learners to fully retain all the information given. The author provides well-researched content with source materials included in the form of end notes and a substantial bibliography of primary and secondary sources.

As an introductory survey this work exceeds expectation and would be suitable as a course textbook, reference source or study material for students, pastors or any individual seeking to increase their personal knowledge of Christian history.