

FOR THE STUDENT: HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This study guide is intended to help you get the most out of *Introduction to the History of Christianity*—to further your understanding of the history of Christianity and to spark your critical thinking about the church's structures, values, leading figures, and relationships with other social forces. Each section of the guide corresponds to a part in the book and includes key terms, key figures, primary sources, a summary of each chapter, additional readings with questions for discussion and reflection, and selected online resources.

Before you begin reading the text, or after reading a chapter to ensure you understood the main ideas, read the *Chapter Summaries*. These offer a basic overview of each chapter's major themes and issues.

Also before you read each part, it might be useful to note the *Key Terms* and *Key Personalities* listed in the corresponding section of this guide. These are the headings for a selected list of terms (concepts particular to a period of Christian history, names of important institutions or movements, etc.) and one of significant individuals (church leaders, theologians, etc.). You will want to be at least familiar with these by the time you have finished reading the section. Many of the key terms are listed in the glossary; for those that are not, the Key Terms list provides the page numbers where they are first defined in the text. For the Key Personalities, year of birth and death are given, as well as brief information on their significance. These are followed by related publications, which typically include at least one primary source and a biographical treatment.

Excerpts from primary sources are included as often as possible. No reader, however lengthy, can do justice to the scope and breadth of Christian history. And no selection of readings can truly represent the complexity of any one writer's thought. These challenges become all the more apparent when faced with the constraints of a study guide. And yet encountering great Christian thinkers through their own words is valuable and rewarding. Thus, the primary source readings in this study companion were selected with the goal of introducing you to the human in the historical. They were selected with the hope that through them you will get at least a brief glimpse of the personalities, the passions, and the perspectives of each writer. Please consider them an invitation to go further in your explorations of Christian history.

When reading primary sources, whether in the main text or in this guide, you'll want to consult "Reading Historical Documents," beginning on page 171 of this guide. There you'll find suggested questions to keep in

mind when reviewing a historical document and further resources for the study of historical texts. In this guide, a brief primary source is presented with questions and answers, providing you with a model of how to pursue an inquiry into a historical document.

To deepen your understanding of the events, people, and themes discussed in the book, review the *Additional Readings*. Each section of the guide offers three excerpts that are related chronologically and thematically to the corresponding section in the book. The additional readings are accompanied by *Questions for Discussion and Reflection*, which can help you make connections between the selection and the main text and further your understanding of the relevant themes. Readings include scholarly discussion of historical questions, theological treatises, church documents, and a range of additional sources.

Each section of the guide ends with *Selected Online Resources*. The websites included in this guide are simply a sample of Internet resources related to church history, Christianity, and major Christian figures and movements. Online museum exhibits, academic research sites, biographies of important figures, and historical data are all available on the web. Use the sites offered here as a jumping-off point. When your interest is caught by a particular topic or individual mentioned in a chapter, you can do online research to learn more before heading to the library shelves. Here are a few resources for doing academic research online:

- ▶ “Internet Research”: <http://www.aacc.edu/library/InternetResearch.cfm>
- ▶ “Boolean Searching on the Internet”: <http://www.internettutorials.net/boolean.asp>
- ▶ “Use Google Scholar Effectively for Research”: http://www.library.illinois.edu/ugl/howdoi/use_google_scholar.html

The chapter entitled “Supplemental Readings” offers excerpts from five additional books in the history of Christianity and questions for discussion. These readings may help spur you in researching a topic of interest for an essay or other class assignment.

Following “Reading Historical Documents” is a guide to writing research papers on topics in the history of Christianity. In this last chapter you will find bibliographies of reference works (both print and online). Also included are suggested research methods and tips on writing effective papers, as well as footnote and bibliographic citation formats.