

## The First Urban Christians The Social World Of The Apostle Paul

Martyrs, exegetes, catechumens, and councils enlarge this study of North African Christianity, a region often reduced to its dominant patristic personalities. Smither provides English readers a quality translation of an important book that captures the unique spirit of an invaluable chapter of church history. Along with the churches located in large Greek cities of the East, the church of Carthage was particularly significant in the early centuries of Christian history. Initially, the Carthaginian churchbecame known for its martyrs. Later, the North African church became further established and unified through the regular councils of its bishops. Finally, the church gained a reputation for its outstanding leaders - Tertullian of Carthage (c. 140-220), Cyprian of Carthage (195-258), and Augustine of Hippo (354-430) - African leaders who continued to be celebrated and remembered today. Social historian and pastor Joe Hellerman addresses issues of power and authority in the church—in the New Testament and in the church today—in a fresh, culturally nuanced way. The local church, Hellerman maintains, should be led and taught by a community of leaders who relate to one another first as brothers and sisters in Christ, and who function only secondarily—and only within the parameters of that primary relational context—as vision-casting, decision-making leaders for the broader church family. Unique among contemporary treatments of servant leadership, Hellerman interprets the biblical materials against the background of ancient Roman cultural values, in order to demonstrate a social context for ministry that will provide healthy checks and balances on the use of pastoral power and authority in our congregations.

A controversial new biography of the apostle Paul that argues for his inclusion in the pantheon of key figures of classical antiquity.

Addressing such myths as faith can fix anything, forgiving means forgetting, and a godly home guarantees good kids, Osborne explores the greater truths they obscure.

China's Urban Christians

The Living Paul

The Moral World of the First Christians

The Rise of Christianity

His Life and Legacy in Their Roman Context

The First Crusade

A New York Times bestseller people can believe in—by “a pioneer of the new urban Christians” (Christianity Today) and the “C.S. Lewis for the 21st century” (Newsweek). Timothy Keller, the founding pastor of Redeemer Presbyterian Church in New York City, addresses the frequent doubts that skeptics, and even ardent believers, have about religion. Using literature, philosophy, real-life conversations, and potent reasoning, Keller explains how the belief in a Christian God is, in fact, a sound and rational one. To true believers he offers a solid platform on which to stand their ground against the backlash to religion created by the Age of Skepticism. And to skeptics, atheists, and agnostics, he provides a challenging argument for pursuing the reason for God.

Analyzes the letters of the disciple Paul in order to discover what life was like for the early Christians in Antioch, Corinth, Ephesus, and Thessalonica

This companion volume to N. T. Wright's Paul and the Faithfulness of God and Pauline Perspectives is essential reading for all with a serious interest in Paul, the interpretation of his letters, his appropriation by subsequent thinkers, and his continuing significance today. In the course of this masterly survey, Wright asks searching questions of all of the major contributors to Pauline studies since the Enlightenment.

Among modern analyses of the origin and development of John's Christology, the socio-religious analysis of Wayne A. Meeks advances one of the most compelling and suggestive theses in recent years, addressing the riddles pertaining to the puzzling presentation of Jesus as a prophet-king like Moses in John 6:14-15. Whereas the Logos motif of the Johannine Prologue and the Father-Son relationship in the Johannine narrative convey high-christological thrusts, his receptions as a rabbi, teacher, and prophet elsewhere in John's story of Jesus are far more mundane and earth bound. Was the origin and development of John's presentation of Jesus here political, historical, theological, sociological, or some combination of the like? These are the issues Wayne Meeks addresses in his first of several important monographs, and his work continues to impact New Testament studies to this day. —From the Foreword by Paul N. Anderson

After the First Urban Christians

Selected Essays

The Social World of the Apostle Paul

Who Were the First Christians?

The Reason for God

Power and Status in the Early Church and Why It Matters Today

Describes the social setting of the early Christians, looks at the Greek and Roman ethical traditions, and explains the moral formation of the beginning Christian movement

In this "slim, readable, and provocative volume" (Journal of Biblical Literature), Ronald Hock focuses on the apostle Paul and his work within the social and intellectual context of the Greek East of the early Roman Empire. Hock discusses the New Testament evidence concerning tentmaking in relation to Paul's life as an apostle of Christ. Relevant literary and nonliterary texts from outside the New Testament add detail to a picture of ancient society and open new areas for study. The author describes the typical experiences that arose from such a way of life —traveling, the tentmaking trade, the missionary use of the workshop, attitudes toward work, and Paul's own reflections on the significance of his tentmaking for the apostolic self-understanding.

Aune's comprehensive study of early Christian prophecy includes a review of its antecedents (Greco-Roman oracles, ancient Israelite prophecy, prophecy in early Judaism), a discussion of Jesus as prophet, and analyses of Christian prophetic speeches from Paul to the middle of the second century A.D. The most detailed study of early Christian prophecy written, Aune's book places the phenomenon of early Christian prophecy within the larger Greco-Roman world.

Out of all the divas at New Day Temple of Faith, Unique has to be the most colorful one—she and her mother Lorain, that is. Never one to hold her tongue in the name of keepin' it real, it's no surprise that Unique has not been saved all her life. It's safe to say that Lorain wasn't born on the church pew either. Let the church folk tell it, the apple hasn't fallen too far from the tree when it comes to Unique. Lorain—once known as the tight skirt, V-neck blouse, too much makeup-wearing leader of the New Day Singles Ministry—claims she's there to look out for her daughter and try to keep her in check. But how in the world does Lorain think she can even begin to keep her daughter on the straight and narrow with her own crooked life? Some might say Lorain has failed miserably as a mother when Unique ends up in jail for three counts of murder. One who would agree is the woman who raised Unique while Lorain was out living her life freely. As an all-out war takes place between Unique's birth mother and the woman who raised her, will Unique have any support while she fights for her life behind bars? Will all forsake her while they are too busy with their own agendas? Only God holds the answer to this one.

The Acts of the Apostles

The Urban World and the First Christians

The Call from the East

Cities of God

Dismantling the Urban Thesis

The Origins of the New Testament Images of Jesus (Second Edition)

*Urban Apologetics examines the legitimate issues that Black communities have with Western Christianity and shows how the gospel of Jesus Christ—rather than popular, socioreligious alternatives—restores our identity. African Americans have long confronted the challenge of dignity destruction caused by white supremacy. While many have found meaning and restoration of dignity in the black church, others have found it in ethnocentric socioreligious groups and philosophies. These ideologies have grown and developed deep traction in the black community and beyond. Revisionist history, conspiracy theories, and misinformation about Jesus and Christianity are the order of the day. Many young African Americans are disinterested in Christianity and others are leaving the church in search of what these false religious ideas appear to offer, a spirituality more indigenous to their history and ethnicity. Edited by Dr. Eric Mason and featuring a top-notch lineup of contributors, Urban Apologetics is the first book focused entirely on cults, religious groups, and ethnocentric ideologies prevalent in the black community. The book is divided into three main parts: Discussions on the unique context for urban apologetics so that you can better understand the cultural arguments against Christianity among the Black community. Detailed information on cults, religious groups, and ethnic identity groups that many urban evangelists encounter—such as the Nation of Islam, Kemetic spirituality, African mysticism, African Israelites, Black nationalism, and atheism. Specific tools for urban apologetics and community outreach. Ultimately, Urban Apologetics applies the gospel to black identity to show that Jesus is the only one who can restore it. This is an essential resource to equip those doing the work of ministry and apology in urban communities with the best available information.*

*How did the preaching of a peasant carpenter from Galilee spark a movement that would grow to include over two billion followers? Who listened to this "good news," and who ignored it? Where did Christianity spread, and how? Based on quantitative data and the latest scholarship, preeminent scholar and journalist Rodney Stark presents new and startling information about the rise of the early church, overturning many prevailing views of how Christianity grew through time to become the largest religion in the world. Drawing on both archaeological and historical evidence, Stark is able to provide hard statistical evidence on the religious life of the Roman Empire to discover the following facts that set conventional history on its head: Contrary to fictions such as The Da Vinci Code and the claims of some prominent scholars, Gnosticism was not a more sophisticated, more authentic form of Christianity, but really an unsuccessful effort to paganize Christianity. Paul was called the apostle to the Gentiles, but mostly he converted Jews. Paganism was not rapidly stamped out by state repression following the vision and conversion of the Roman Emperor Constantine in 312 AD, but gradually disappeared as people abandoned the temples in response to the superior appeal of Christianity. The "oriental" faiths—such as those devoted to Isis, the Egyptian goddess of love and magic, and to Cybele, the fertility goddess of Asia Minor—actually prepared the way for the rapid spread of Christianity across the Roman Empire. Contrary to generations of historians, the Roman mystery cult of Mithraism posed no challenge to Christianity to become the new faith of the empire—it allowed no female members and attracted only soldiers. By analyzing concrete data, Stark is able to challenge the conventional wisdom about early Christianity offering the clearest picture ever of how this religion grew from its humble beginnings into the faith of more than one-third of the earth's population.*

*Meeks analyzes the letters of Paul to see what kind of people joined the Christian groups in the urban centers and what it was like to be a Christian then.*

*It has been widely assumed that there were 6 million Christians (or 10% of the population of the Roman Empire) by around the year 300. The largely-unexamined consensus view is also that Christianity was an urban movement until the conversion of Emperor Constantine. On close examination, it appears that these two popular views would nearly saturate every urban area of the entire Roman Empire with Christians, leaving no room for Jews or pagans. In Who Were the First Christians?, Thomas Robinson shows that scenario simply does not work. But where does the solution lie? Were there many fewer Christians in the Roman world than we have thought? Was the Roman world much more urbanized? Or, is the urban thesis defective, so that the neglected countryside must now be considered in any reconstruction of early Christian growth? Further, what was the makeup of the typical Christian congregation? Was it a lower-class movement? Or was it a movement of the upwardly mobile middle-class? Arguing that more attention needs to be given to the countryside and to the considerable contingent of the marginal and the rustic within urban populations, this revisionist work argues persuasively that the urban thesis should be dismantled or profoundly revised and the growth and the complexion of the early Christian movement seen in a substantially different light.*

The First Two Centuries

Cambridge History of Christianity: Volume 1, Origins to Constantine

The Social-Scientific Study of Pauline Christianity Twenty-Five Years Later

Paul and His Recent Interpreters

Women in the World of the Earliest Christians

(A.D. 100-400)

A lively and accessible guide to the rich literary, philosophical and artistic achievements of the notorious age of Nero.

A compelling account of Christianity's Jewish beginnings, from one of the world's leading scholars of ancient religion How did a group of charismatic, apocalyptic Jewish missionaries, working to prepare their world for the impending realization of God's promises to Israel, end up inaugurating a movement that would grow into the gentile church? Committed to Jesus's prophecy—"The Kingdom of God is at hand!"—they were, in their own eyes, history's last generation. But in history's eyes, they became the first Christians. In this electrifying social and intellectual history, Paula Fredriksen answers this question by reconstructing the life of the earliest Jerusalem community. As her account arcs from this group's hopeful celebration of Passover with Jesus, through their bitter controversies that fragmented the movement's midcentury missions, to the city's fiery end in the Roman destruction of Jerusalem, she brings this vibrant apostolic community to life. Fredriksen offers a vivid portrait both of this temple-centered messianic movement and of the bedrock convictions that animated and sustained it.

According to tradition, the First Crusade began at Pope Urban II's instigation and culminated in July 1099, when western European knights liberated Jerusalem. But what if the First Crusade's real catalyst lay far to the east of Rome? Countering nearly a millennium of scholarship, Peter Frankopan reveals the First Crusade's untold history.

This text analyses the earliest extant documents of Christianity, the letters of Paul, which illuminate the tensions & the texture of life of the first urban Christians. In a new introduction, the author describes the field of New Testament scholarship over the past two decades.

The Oxford Handbook of Early Christian Studies

A Book About Heaven, Hell, and the Fate of Every Person Who Ever Lived

The Origins of Christian Morality

The First Generation

In Search of the Early Christians

The Prophet-King

*Offers a secular perspective on the growth of the Christian Church in ancient Rome, identifies nonreligious factors in conversion, and examines the influence of Constantine*

*'After the First Urban Christians' introduces the groundbreaking volume 'The First Urban Christians' to a new generation of students, scholars, and even general readers.*

*In the tradition of The First Urban Christians by Wayne Meeks, this book explores the relationship between the earliest Christians and the city environment. Experts in classics, early Christianity, and human geography analyze the growth, development, and self-understanding of the early Christian movement in urban settings. The book's contributors first look at how the urban physical, cultural, and social environments of the ancient Mediterranean basin affected the ways in which early Christianity progressed. They then turn to how the earliest Christians thought and theologized in their engagement with cities. With a rich variety of expertise and scholarship, The Urban World and the First Christians is an important contribution to the understanding of early Christianity.*

*A central figure in the reconception of early Christian history over the last three decades, Wayne A. Meeks offers here a selection of his most influential writings on the New Testament and early Christianity. His essays illustrate recent changes in our thinking about the early Christian movement and pose provocative questions regarding the history of this period. Meeks explores a fascinating range of topics, from the figure of the androgyne in antiquity to the timeless matter of God's reliability, from Paul's ethical rhetoric to New Testament pictures of Christianity's separation from Jewish communities. Meeks' introduction offers a retrospective on New Testament studies of the past thirty years and explains the intersection of these studies with a variety of exploratory and revisionist movements in the humanities, embracing social theory, history, anthropology, and literature. In an epilogue the author reflects on future directions for New Testament scholarship.*

Reading Romans in Pompeii

Malaysian Christians Online

The Early Christians in Ephesus from Paul to Ignatius

An Introduction to the Apostle's Life and Thought

A Light that Cannot Be Hidden

Ten Dumb Things Smart Christians Believe

*Lynn Cohick provides an accurate and fulsome picture of the earliest Christian women by examining a wide variety of first-century Jewish and Greco-Roman documents that illuminate their lives. She organizes the book around three major spheres of life: family, religious community, and society in general. Cohick shows that although women during this period were active at all levels within their religious communities, their influence was not always identified by leadership titles nor did their gender always determine their level of participation. The book corrects our understanding of early Christian women by offering an authentic and descriptive historical picture of their lives. Includes black-and-white illustrations from the ancient world.*

*Many facets of social life are now intrinsically linked to the Internet through increasing dependence of user-centric platforms like blogs, social-networking websites, online forums, and open source websites. The Malaysian Church is not exempt from having to negotiate with an increasingly tech-savvy and networked community of believers. Based primarily on Internet ethnography and interviews with Christian bloggers and church pastors, this book looks at how the Internet is a component of “everyday religion” in the lives of Malaysian Christians at individual, institutional, and national levels. It examines the ways in which online Christian expressions are increasingly integrated into the everyday religious routines of Christians for the development of their personal identities and inter-religious interactions. This book also shows how the spiritual authority of church pastors can be both challenged and reinforced through the creative use of online tools. It addresses some of the creative ways in which Christians utilise the Internet to engage with national socio-political issues within the context of restrictive and controlled mainstream media, as well as the ongoing discourse with Islam in the country. Through a selection of case studies, this book shows that while the Internet may be “free”, the users of the Internet are not necessarily so. While the Internet has provided Malaysian Christians with new tools to experience their faith in new ways, several aspects of “old” offline socio-cultural habits persist online. These, in turn, lead to a robust and growing environment of Internet Christianity in Malaysia. This timely book will be of interest to scholars in religious studies, media and communications, and cultural studies in Southeast Asia.*

*This "fresh, blunt, and highly persuasive account of how the West was won—for Jesus" (Newsweek) is now available in paperback. Stark's provocative report challenges conventional wisdom and finds that Christianity's astounding dominance of the Western world arose from its offer of a better, more secure way of life. "Compelling reading" (Library Journal) that is sure to "generate spirited argument" (Publishers Weekly), this account of Christianity's remarkable growth within the Roman Empire is the subject of much fanfare. "Anyone who has puzzled over Christianity's rise to dominance...must read it," says Yale University's Wayne A. Meeks, for The Rise of Christianity makes a compelling case for startling conclusions. Combining his expertise in social science with historical evidence, and his insight into contemporary religion's appeal, Stark finds that early Christianity attracted the privileged rather than the poor, that most early converts were women or marginalized Jews—and ultimately "that Christianity was a success because it proved those who joined it with a more appealing, more assuring, happier, and perhaps longer life" (Andrew M. Greeley, University of Chicago).*

*China's Urban Christians: A Light at Cannot Be Hidden looks at how massive urbanization is redrawing not only the geographic and social landscape of China, but in the process is transforming China's growing church as well. The purpose of this book is toexplore how Christians in China perceive the challenges posed by their new urban context and to examine their proposed means of responding to these challenges. Although not primarily political in nature, these challenges nonetheless illustrate the complex interplay between China's Christian community and the Chinese party-state as it comes to terms with the continued growth and increasing prominence of Christianity in modern China.*

*How to obscure, Marginal Jesus Movement Became the Dominant Religious Force ....*

Paul the Apostle

The First Urban Christians

And You Call Yourself a Christian

The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Nero

Early Christianity in North Africa

*Millions of Christians have struggled with how to reconcile God's love and God's judgment: Has God created billions of people over thousands of years only to select a few to go to heaven and everyone else to suffer forever in hell? Is this acceptable to God? How is this "good news"? Troubling questions—so troubling that many have lost their faith because of them. Others only whisper the questions to themselves, fearing or being taught that they might lose their faith and their church if they ask them out loud. But what if these questions trouble us for good reason? What if the story of heaven and hell we have been taught is not, in fact, what the Bible teaches? What if what Jesus meant by heaven, hell, and salvation are very different from how we have come to understand them? What if it is God who wants us to face these questions? Author, pastor, and innovative teacher Rob Bell presents a deeply biblical vision for rediscovering a richer, grander, truer, and more spiritually satisfying way of understanding heaven, hell, God, Jesus, salvation, and repentance. The result is the discovery that the "good news" is much, much better than we ever imagined. Love wins.*

*The Oxford Handbook of Early Christian Studies responds to and celebrates the explosion of research in this inter-disciplinary field over recent decades. It is thematically arranged to encompass history, literature, thought, practices, and material culture. Whilst the burgeoning of scholarly work has made it impossible for any one scholar to maintain expertise in every aspect of the discipline, this handbook seeks to aid both the new researcher in the field andthe scholar entering an unfamiliar sub-specialty. Each chapter orients readers to the current 'state of the question' in a given area, reflecting on key research issues to date, highlighting primarysources and giving suggestions as to the likely direction of future work. The Handbook takes the period 100 to 600 CE as a chronological span and examines the vast geographical area impacted by the early church, in Western and Eastern late antiquity.*

*Anthony Thiselton is an unabashed admirer of Paul, a student of his letters and a devotee of his gospel. Over a range of issues, Thiselton cleans the lens and sharpens the focus to give us snapshots of Paul's life, mission and thought. Whatever your level of knowledge and experience of Paul, you will find The Living Paul informative and interesting, nuanced and inspiring.*

*The capital city of the province of Asia in the first century CE, Ephesus played a key role in the development of early Christianity. In this book Paul Trebilco examines the early Christians from Paul to Ignatius, seen in the context of our knowledge of the city as a whole. Drawing on Paul's letters and the Acts of the Apostles, Trebilco looks at the foundations of the church, both before and during the Pauline mission. He shows that in the period from around 80 to 100 CE there were a number of different communities in Ephesus that regarded themselves as Christians -- the Pauline and Johannine groups, Nicolaitans, and others -- testifying to the diversity of that time and place. Including further discussions on the Ephesus addresses of the apostle John and Ignatius, this scholarly study of the early Ephesian Christians and their community is without peer.*

*Love Wins*

*Urban Apologetics*

*Mere Christianity Study Guide*

*Belief in an Age of Skepticism*

*Restoring Black Dignity with the Gospel*

*Tentmaking and Apostleship*

By the time Christianity became a political and cultural force in the Roman Empire, it had come to embody a new moral vision. This wise and eloquent book describes the formative years--from the crucifixion of Jesus to the end of the second century of the common era--when Christian beliefs and practices shaped their unique moral order. Wayne A. Meeks examines the surviving documents from Christianity's beginnings (some of which became the New Testament) and shows that they are largely concerned with the way converts to the movement should behave. Meeks finds that for these Christians, the formation of morals means the formation of community; the documents are addressed not to individuals but to groups, and they have among their primary aims the maintenance and growth of these groups. Meeks paints a picture of the process of socialization that produced the early forms of Christian morality, discussing many factors that made the Christians feel that they were a single and "chosen" people. He describes, for example, the impact of conversion; the rapid spread of Christian household cult-associations in the cities of the Roman Empire; the language of Christian moral discourse as revealed in letters, testaments, and "moral stories"; the rituals, meetings, and institutionalization of charity; the Christians' feelings about celibacy, sex, and gender roles; and their sense of the end-time and final judgment. In each of these areas Meeks seeks to determine what is distinctive about the Christian viewpoint and what is similar to the moral components of Greco-Roman or Jewish thought.

"Magisterial. . . . A learned, brilliant and enjoyable study."Géza Vermès, Times Literary Supplement In this exciting book, Paula Fredriksen explains the variety of New Testament images of Jesus by exploring the ways that the new Christian communities interpreted his mission and message in light of the delay of the Kingdom he had preached. This edition includes an introduction reviews the most recent scholarship on Jesus and its implications for both history and theology. "Brilliant and lucidly written, full of original and fascinating insights."Reginald H. Fuller, Journal of the American Academy of Religion "This is a first-rate work of a first-rate historian."James D. Tabor, Journal of Religion "Fredriksen confronts her documents!principally the writings of the New Testament!as an archaeologist would an especially rich complex site. With great care she distinguishes the literary images from historical fact. As she does so, she explains the images of Jesus in terms of the strategies and purposes of the writers Paul, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John."Thomas D'Evelyn, Christian Science Monitor

Acts is the sequel to Luke's gospel and tells the story of Jesus's followers during the 30 years after his death. It describes how the 12 apostles, formerly Jesus's disciples, spread the message of Christianity throughout the Mediterranean against a background of persecution. With an introduction by P.D. James

*Illuminating Ancient Ways of Life*

*Prophecy in Early Christianity and the Ancient Mediterranean World*

*The Social World of the Apostle Paul. Yale*

*Faith, Experience, and Social Engagement on the Internet*

*A Bible Study on the C.S. Lewis Book Mere Christianity*

*The Real Story of How Christianity Became an Urban Movement and Conquered Rome*