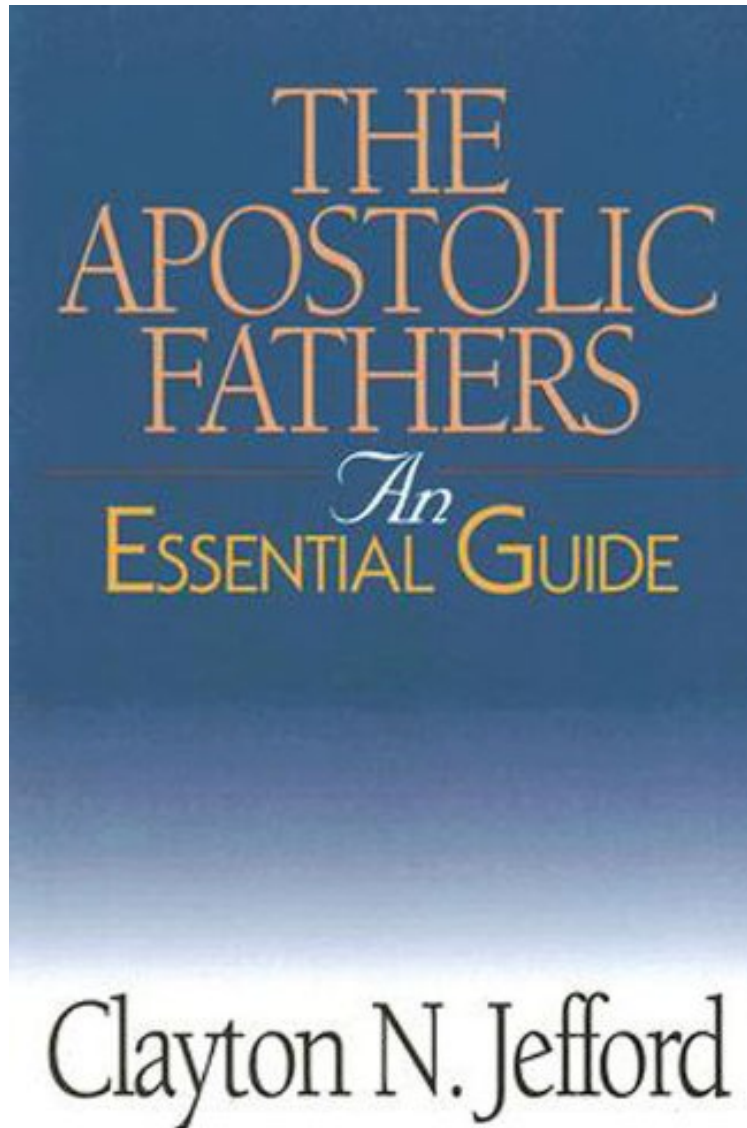


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Von Clayton N. Jefford

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Von Clayton N. Jefford : The Apostolic Fathers: An Essential Guide (Abingdon Essential Guides) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Apostolic Fathers: An Essential Guide (Abingdon Essential Guides):

KundenrezensionenHilfreichste Kundenrezensionen0 von 0 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich.

Founding Fathers of another sort... Von Fr Kurt Messick As author Clayton Jefford states in the first chapter, the body of literature collectively known as the Apostolic Fathers was, like the New Testament, not recognised as such during the time of composition, but rather is a categorisation that has been made much later, with the benefit of hindsight. 'In large part our Apostolic Fathers represent the remnants of early Christian writings that ultimately did not make it into the New Testament canon.' These are writings that were seen as having merit for the early Christian community, and continued to hold authority of some sort in most subsequent Christian times and institutions, but has never had an official church sanction in the way that the canonical Bible has had. However, understanding the formation of the canon is important in understanding the Apostolic Fathers as a collection, and Jefford introduces this complex subject with clarity. The closeness of these works to the canonical scriptures can be seen in the fact that, on various ancient lists, some of the works appear with the current canonical books, while some canonical texts are missing. Jefford gives a brief introduction to each work of the Apostolic Fathers (Epistle to Diognetus, First Clement, Second Clement, the Didache, the Epistle of Barnabas, the seven Epistles of Ignatius, the Epistle of Polycarp, the Martyrdom of Polycarp, the Shepherd of Hermas, and fragments of Papias) - whereas each of the works dates back to the first or second century, the phrase and understanding of the collection is at least a medieval one, and Jefford states that the modern use of the term 'Apostolic Fathers' dates from Jean Cotelier in 1672. Jefford has chapters devoted to historical context (people and places), scriptural connections, and theological ideas, as well as chapters that deal more generally with the ancient church in institutional terms and the influence and legacy that this early church, with possession of the body of literature from the Apostolic Fathers, had on later developments in Christianity. Jefford's historical survey organises things geographically, while Jefford's theological survey follows primary topics still strong in systematic theological circles (God, ecclesiology, eschatology, soteriology, and orthodoxy). Despite their influence, which has resurfaced a number of times in the nearly two millennia since their composition, 'the collected writings of the early church that are now classified as the Apostolic Fathers unfortunately remain a complete mystery to most Christians.' Jefford makes apt contrast of these texts with other works such as the Gospel of Thomas and other 'lost' writings - the fact that these were preserved (even though not considered scriptural) shows that the church over time considered them important and worthwhile in ways that competing writings were not. Jefford also highlights the regional diversity and ethnic and ethical diversity of the authors of the Apostolic Fathers. 'They were not canonised, but neither were they rejected. In this way we might argue with some justification that, despite the fact that these writings derive from a variety of different authors and geographical settings, they do indeed stand as a unified corpus of writings that depict a genuine faith among early Christians.' This is a book that will provide for the student, seminarian, minister, historian or other interested reader a good introductory snapshot of the Apostolic Fathers in terms of context, content, influence and importance. There is no index in the book, which is a drawback for those who might want to use this book as a reference tool. However, the book is well written and concise, so making notes for one's own use in the back pages would not be a bad idea. This is a book designed largely for the busy person in mind -- the reading is simple without being simplistic; there are not too many names and terms to wade through, and the whole of the book could be read in but a few hours, making this piece of church history readily accessible to even the busiest of lay persons, and a refresher handily available for the busiest of clergy.

Kurzbeschreibung The Apostolic Fathers is a collection of early Christian writings from the late first and early second centuries, traditionally considered to have been written by those connected with the Apostles, and therefore reflecting authentic Apostolic teaching. These writings include 1 Clement, 2 Clement, Ignatius, Polycarp, Didache, Barnabas, Papias, Hermas, Martyrdom of Polycarp, Diognetus, and Quadratus. Considering their historical context, the Apostolic Fathers bear directly on the study of the New Testament, the development of the early Church, and the history of Christian theology. The Apostolic Fathers: An Essential Guide will explain the nature of the collected writings as they stand between the world of the New Testament and later Christian writers, focusing upon what the texts say about ancient Christian thinkers, early church developments, and the evolution of theological ideas prior to the great ecumenical councils. Chapter Outline: *Chapter 1: The Collected Writings* Chapter 2: People and Places* Chapter 3: Connections to Scripture* Chapter 4: Theological Ideas* Chapter 5: Structures of the Ancient Church *Chapter 6: Roots of the Patristic Tradition Here is a long awaited volume that treats in a concise and readable format a body of literature too often neglected, but absolutely essential to our understanding of Christian origins. Clayton Jefford brings unrivaled expertise to this task and serves as a sensitive and insightful guide to these texts, offering an introduction that will serve the needs of the beginning student and the seasoned expert alike. It is sure to be at the top of the reading list for anyone interested in this important topic. Stephen J. Patterson Eden Theological Seminary St. Louis The authors goal a simple and sensible first introduction to the ideas and beliefs of the Apostolic Fathers is fully realized as he organizes his survey of these intriguing ancient Christian writers according to topics including scripture, theology, and church structure of continuing contemporary interest. A reliable guide for students and study groups. Michael Holmes Bethel University St. Paul, Minnesota Clayton N. Jefford is Professor of Scripture at Saint Meinrad School of

Theology and is the Secretary-Treasurer of the North American Patristics Society. He has written and edited six volumes and is best known for his research in the fields of the Didache and the Apostolic Fathers.

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