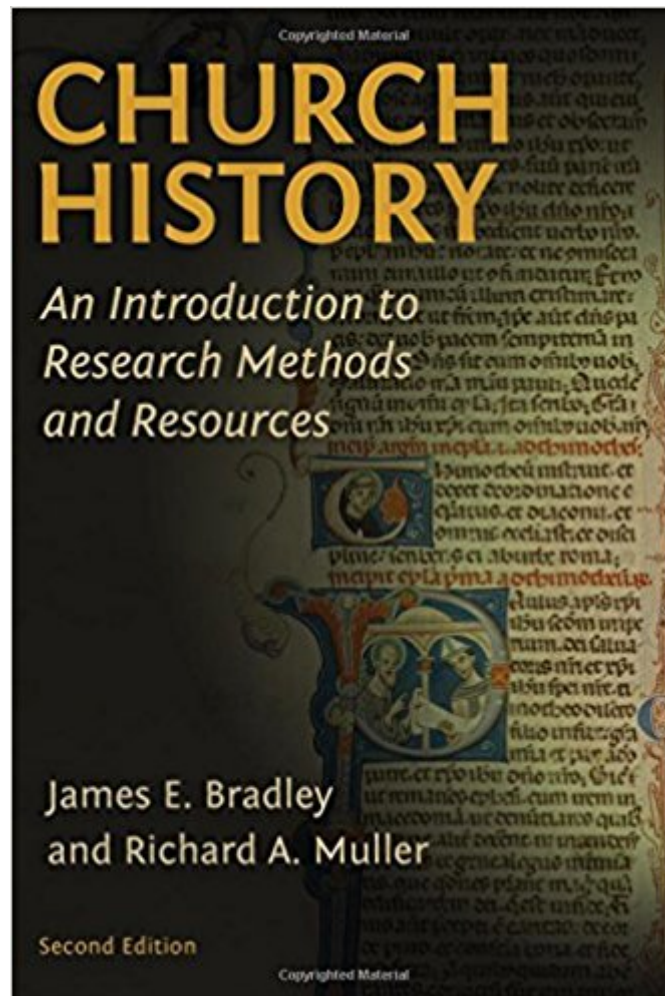


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Church History: An Introduction To Research Methods And Resources



Synopsis

In their acclaimed, much-used Church History, James Bradley and Richard Muller lay out guidelines, methods, and basic reference tools for research and writing in the fields of church history and historical theology. Over the years, this book has helped countless students define their topics, locate relevant source materials, and write quality papers. This revised, expanded, and updated second edition includes discussion of Internet-based research, digitized texts, and the electronic forms of research tools. The greatly enlarged bibliography of study aids now includes many significant new resources that have become available since the first edition's publication in 1995. Accessible and clear, this introduction will continue to benefit both students and experienced scholars in the field.

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Customer Reviews

PRAISE FOR THE FIRST EDITION Harry S. Stout "This is the most comprehensive and most lucidly written introduction to the methods of historical research and writing in the field of church history that I have seen. The authors are to be commended for engaging issues of faith and critical scholarship in ways that detract neither from personal commitment nor from historical rigor. All in all, a magnificent achievement." The Christian Century "While Bradley and Muller show how hard it is to learn the craft, they help the apprentice considerably." Religious Studies Review "A reliable roadmap for all who would

enter the scholarly labyrinth known as church history. All new practitioners of the discipline, not to mention old ones, could benefit from this book.

James E. Bradley is Geoffrey W. Bromiley Professor Emeritus and Senior Professor of Church History at Fuller Theological Seminary. Richard A. Muller is P. J. Zondervan Professor Emeritus of Historical Theology at Calvin Theological Seminary.

Very useful and written by someone who is eminently qualified to speak on the subject. Muller begins the first part introducing the historical student to different tools for historical research. One can tell the book was written in the mid 1990s: he even suggests that computer will one day aid in research! Later in the book in a chapter on preparing lectures, he suggests that a new program called "Power Point" will one day be used! Some of his material is simply dated. For example, Migne's *Patrologia Latina* and *Patrologia Graeca* are available online for free. The second half of the book is where the money is. He teaches the student how to take proper notes, file the notes, and eventually eye them for completing a chapter or historical article. The pages themselves are probably worth re-reading a dozen times so that one can memorize them. Away with new-fangled technology and back to old-school methods. Well, he doesn't say that but it is probably a good idea.

Very good quality.

This book began as a Ph.D. and Th.M. research and writing methods course at Fuller Theological Seminary. From there it has grown into a valuable resource for serious graduate (post-graduate) students of church history. Clearly written and distilling the insights of the authors' many years of research, writing and teaching in the field, no serious student of church history should be without it. Acknowledging the separate though inter-related issues of personal commitment and academic rigor, the authors discuss the relation of faith to critical scholarship. This personal aspect of academic work is often left out of many books, and the authors' opening of the conversation is a needed starting point in the consideration of one's commitment to academic life. The opening chapter is an introduction to church history as a specific historical discipline. Historiography - the writing of history - is explored with further references for a more in depth study of this rapidly changing field. Particular historians noted for their scholarship include Johann Lorenz von Mosheim (1694-1755), August Neander (1789-1850), and Philip Schaff (1819-1893). Specific eras that influence historiography include the Enlightenment and the Romantic periods. The second chapter

focuses on perspective and meaning in history. What is the difference between church history and secular history? What is the difference between a Christian doing history and a non-Christian doing history? What is truth and can it be historically determined? In asking whether objectivity is possible, the authors draw the student into one of the most important questions of modern history writing. These questions are explored and suggestions are offered with sources given for further reference. A consideration of reference and bibliographic sources as one begins historical research is the burden of the third chapter. This is the beginning of research itself. It is here that the authors' practical experience in teaching this subject shows so well. The questions discussed in the book are the questions every student beginning historical investigation is familiar with. Sources referred to are ones that are essential beginning points. Important primary resources are the subject of the fourth chapter, and the reader is alerted to works that must be consulted in any topic. Computerized records have made many primary materials more accessible and the growing importance of computers is noted. Perhaps the weakest point of this work deals with the details of computing. A necessary fault due to the revolutionary advances in computing, this area is one that can become outdated almost by the time of publication. Since the writing of this book, software programs have become much more powerful and information much more accessible. The internet has transformed communication (and also mis-communication) in ways not available when this book was published. It is hoped that further updated editions will address this valuable research tool. It must be noted, though, that specialist information is still often available only on location and to those who personally and patiently search through many languishing records. All research is still-born if it is not written up. How to go about this important aspect of writing is the topic of the fifth chapter. Specific help offered by computers is noted, and though progress has marched on well beyond what is described in the pages of this book, one very important point is noted that becomes more important as computers are relied on more and more. It is now possible like never before to access information and put it into research form without actually assimilating it. Bibliographic references and quoted material can be downloaded and passed into research papers without the information ever passing through the researchers' mind. It is easier than ever before to substitute quantity for quality. The potential for this situation to exist can only grow with the rapid advances in information technology and the expanding possibility for the mis-use of technology is not passed over in this thorough introduction. The final chapter deals with the preparation of lecture notes and writing for publication. A practical chapter indeed, this is one area that gets very little mention in most academic settings. A further 64 pages offer bibliographic resources and avenues for further investigation of the many areas covered in this book. The authors have done the field of church history a great service by their careful and

detailed work. While general enough to cover the field broadly, the extensive bibliography points the way for an in-depth coverage of the various topics not otherwise available in a book this size. This is a valuable work for students as well as teachers engaged in the serious study of church history, and who want to keep their methodology up-to-date.

A must if you require an understanding of hermeneutic methodologies in the social sciences.

My one-star review is actually for 's unprofessional handling of this book, not for the book itself, which certainly deserves 5 stars. Each student in the Church History program I direct is issued a copy -- it's that valuable. The first edition was published in 1995, and more than a decade ago James Bradley assured me that publication of the second edition was imminent. Well, maybe not. Last week I noted that Eerdmans's new catalog lists the second edition with the comment that it was published in March. So I went to 's page and, without checking closely, ordered a copy. It arrived today -- and I was chagrined to find that it was a copy of the first edition, now more than 20 years old. Only this afternoon, more than two months after the second edition's publication, did update its page to list that edition and not the first. Perhaps I can return the book and reorder, but why should I have to spend my time doing that? Why can't do better by its authors and customers?

If you want to study the history of christianity in a serious way, you will experience that this book gives you not only the most recent, but also the best available introduction into the most important matters of the field. Highly recommended

This is an excellent guide to traditional Western church history, but it is a pity that it did not avoid implicitly consigning the rest of the world to either mission history or insignificance. This needs to be corrected.

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