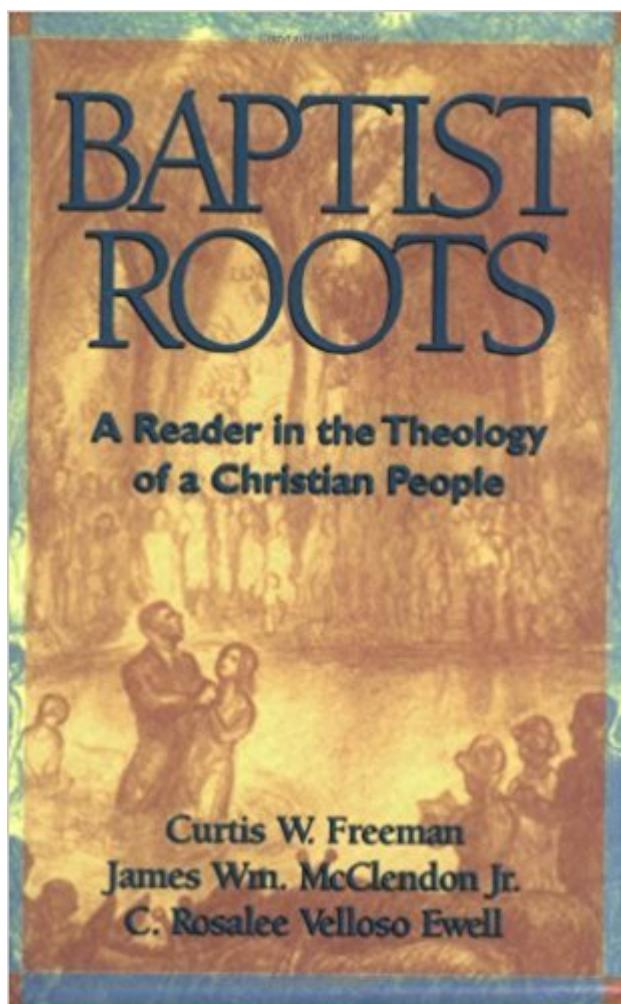


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Baptist Roots: A Reader In The Theology Of A Christian People



Synopsis

This in-depth examination of baptist theology provides insight into the contemporary issues related to baptist identity.

Book Information

Paperback: 436 pages

Publisher: Judson Pr (June 1, 1999)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0817012818

ISBN-13: 978-0817012816

Product Dimensions: 6.1 x 0.9 x 9.1 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.4 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.8 out of 5 stars 8 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #331,675 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #63 in Books > Christian Books & Bibles > Christian Denominations & Sects > Protestantism > Baptist #6738 in Books > Christian Books & Bibles > Theology #7531 in Books > Religion & Spirituality > Religious Studies > Theology

Customer Reviews

I read the book Baptist Roots as a class reading but I am so glad for the experience. The book has answered many of my questions of why am I a baptist? What do we support in the 21st century? This is a book that I will make sure that all my leaders read.

A must have for your collection.

Bought for my daughter in college. It was just what she needed.

Very helpful.

This book did a good job of developing the topic. It is worthy of a read. Good research and scholarly writing.

In an era where no one seems to know their spiritual ancestors, this is a much needed work. It complements sourcebooks like Lumpkin's Baptist Confessions of Faith by excerpting theological

works by major Baptist (and related baptists) theologians over the centuries. While I am disappointed at the neglect of 2 17th C. Baptists of major importance, Richard Overton and Gerrard Winstanley, overall I think this was one of the most inclusive collections. I am known to disagree with the interpretation of E. Y. Mullins held by one of the editors, Curtis W. Freeman, and, for that reason, wish that a different selection had been made of Mullins' work. Likewise, in addition to the Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "Letter from a Birmingham City Jail," which is reprinted in many places, I would like to have seen some other selections from King. Since there is a tendency for white Christians to "tame" King, excerpting the portion of *Where Do We Go From Here?* which analyzes the strengths and weaknesses of "Black Power," might have awakened many to the radical nature of King's thought. A selection from his posthumously published *The Trumpet of Conscience* might also have been useful in that regard. Still, caveats aside, this is an excellent collection and, with the exception of Mullins, the editors' introductory remarks are usually excellent in helping beginners to interpret baptist theologians with whom they are not familiar. This "reader" should become a textbook for courses with titles like "Baptist Theologians in Historical Perspective," and should find its way to church libraries and pastor's shelves as an essential reference. One of the editors, James McClendon, himself a very creative baptist theologian, unfortunately died in 2000. Hopefully Freeman or Velloso da Silva (now Velloso Ewell) will take up the challenge of the next step: Convincing a publisher to reprint some of the major works of these baptist thinkers in full. That way, readers of this volume who get excited by one or more of these "roots" can explore it further without spending months in the "rare book" sections of major theological libraries.

Baptist theologians are here allowed to speak for themselves in these excerpts. The diversity of voices is a hallmark of this volume. It includes Anabaptist forebears, African-American Baptists, voices from Asia, Latin America, and Africa, as well as women's voices. There are some idiosyncratic choices, as well as odd selections from the figures chosen, but this reader is breathtaking in its scope. The introductions are usually very insightful and the appendix listing even wider selections of Baptist life and thought and further reading possibilities make the collection even more helpful. Since publication, one of the editors, James Wm. McClendon, Jr., has died. In any future edition, McClendon's own voice needs to be included since he has made a major impact on younger generations of Baptist (and other) theologians, especially in the Free Church tradition.

In a time when being a baptist (the small "b" is no accident) is left to those who have no historical understanding of baptist roots, this book is a breath of fresh air. Don't let the scholarly leanings of

this volume get in the way - it is a straightforward account of the baptist heritage and its meaning and impact on contemporary theological thought. From the separation of church and state to the autonomy of the local church this is a helpful guide in navigating the current milieu of confused understanding which equates being baptist with being a member of the religious right or the politically correct. This third way charted by Freeman, McClendon, et al, will resonate with anyone seeking a better way to understand church history, present and future.

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