



Why Study the Past?: The Quest for the Historical Church

Rowan Williams

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The well-worn saying about being condemned to repeat the history we do not know applies to church history as much as to any other kind. But how are Christians supposed to discern what lessons from history need to be learned?

In this small but thoughtful volume, respected theologian and churchman Rowan Williams opens up a theological approach to history, an approach that is both nonpartisan and relevant to the church's present needs. As he reflects on how we consider the past in general, Williams suggests that how we consider church history in particular remains important not so much for winning arguments as for clarifying who we are as time-bound human beings. Good history is a moral affair, he advises, because it opens up a point of reference that is distinct from us yet not wholly alien. The past can then enable us to think with more varied and resourceful analogies about our identity in the often confusing present.

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