



The Early Church: The I.B.Tauris History of the Christian Church

Morwenna Ludlow

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How did the early Christians manage to establish a religion and institution which, despite persecution, flourished and grew? How did their initial experience of being a despised minority in the Roman Empire shape their sense of privileged identity and uniqueness? And how was it that--at least at the outset--the first believers were able to exist alongside the same shared traditions, rituals and beliefs of the Jews, despite the Jewish rejection of Jesus as Messiah? The Christian community was born out of paradox: its faith in a man who was also the ""anointed one"" (or Christ) of God, and its growth and development often echoed those complex and and contradictory origins. Morwenna Ludlow discusses the fragile context as well as the emerging core beliefs of the early Church (including divine creation, salvation, eschatology, the humanity and divinity of Christ and the inter-relationships of the Trinity) between 50-600 CE. She also examines the process of Christian self-definition in response to groups on the edge of the Church, such as Gnostics, Marcionites, Montanists and Manichaeans, as well as in relation to Judaism. Bringing to vivid life the remarkable history of the early Church, in all its conflict and struggle, the author shows why such a successful faith was able to rise out of such improbable and unpromising beginnings.

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