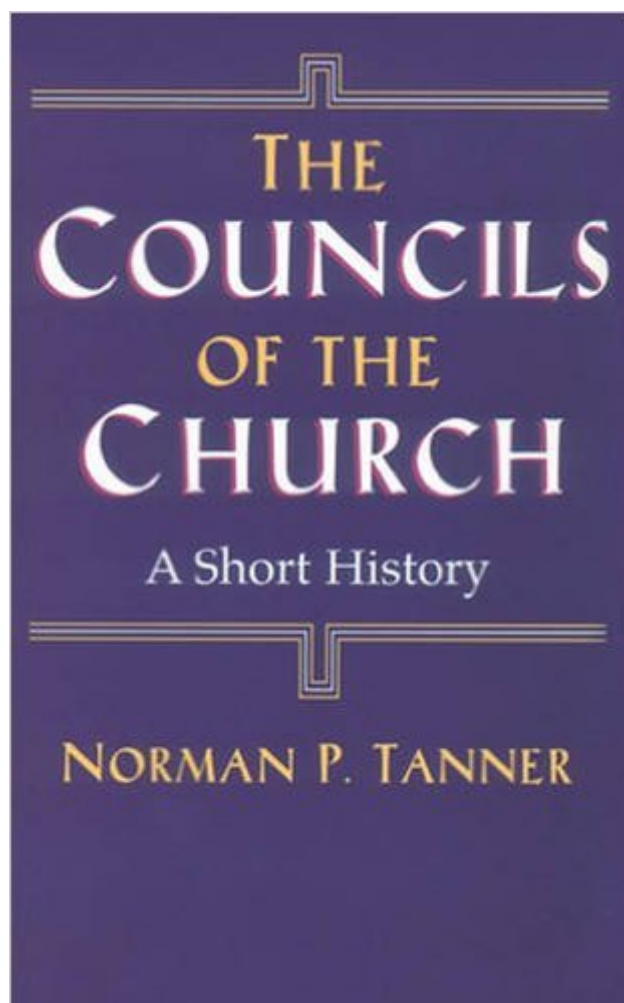


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The Councils Of The Church: A Short History



Synopsis

The editor of the magisterial Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils provides the best overview of the councils available in English. Tanner covers the history of conciliar teaching, from the early and medieval councils to the Second Vatican Council, showing their abiding importance in the life of the church.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I first discovered this book when I was doing some research for a paper in my graduate Italian Renaissance class. This book was not a source that I was able to cite much, but since I come from a Baptist background I was very unfamiliar with the Church Councils. This book does an excellent job of succinctly (only 119 pages) summarizing 1700 years of conciliar history. For someone who was entirely unfamiliar with the subject this was essential. What was invaluable for my research was the Bibliography! This was the jumping off point of my research and saved me many hours in the library. This book however is not just for the non-catholic who is unfamiliar with the church councils. I found that just this short book gave me a better basic understanding of the church councils than the average lay Catholic. I have recently reread this book due to apologetic conversations. Most christian faiths would be well suited to have an understanding of conciliar history since their faith either clings to, protests or denies the authority of the church councils.

This is a tremendous little book. So good, in fact, that I'm willing to overlook the author's occasional

use of exclamation points (a major prose no-no!). I appreciated the author's irenic, even-handed approach and his highlighting various, oft-overlooked facts and historical ironies, such as the theological dominance of the East in the early centuries, and the fact that those who hold to Papal supremacy (Catholics) have arguably been more vibrant and successful in conciliar practice than those who hold to a predominantly conciliar model (our Eastern Orthodox brethren). There is a welcome absence of smug triumphalism in Tanner's approach. This is an accessible and wise short introduction for those wanting to look into these particularly definitive moments in the early Church. It would be a wonderful entree into a broader examination of conciliar history, for those whose interest it piques.

This is an excellent introduction to the various church councils and all Christians, Catholics and non-Catholics alike should read this as essential reading to know more about the events that have shaped the faith to date. There is a very good bibliography at the end for those who are interested in learning more but I do feel that perhaps a little more information could have been included as at 119 pages, this is truly a very short history of the councils and as such, lives up to the book's title. In any case, even a short history is better than not knowing anything about these great events in church history. Recommended reading.

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