

REVIEWS

Roy Swanstrom. *History in the Making: An Introduction to the Study of the Past*. Lanham, NY and London: University Press of America, 1991, Pp. 137. Paper, \$9.75.

Roy Swanstrom offers a clearly written introduction to the study of history in this reprint of a 1978 publication. Unfortunately, the title is misleading, for this book is not for just any student. It was written for, and will be meaningful only to, students who are practicing Christians. In particular, it would be useful for seniors taking history in Christian high schools and students taking an introductory history course in Christian colleges.

In *History in the Making*, Swanstrom combines his knowledge as a historian with his Christian perspective. He begins with discussion of history as a field of study. He provides good argument on the importance of studying history, stating that "few aspects of the present hold much significance or can be genuinely understood apart from their historical past."

He then discusses the relationship between Christianity and historical inquiry. Next he examines responses that have been offered to answer the question: Is there a pattern or meaning to the past? He then discusses how the Christian perspective helps one study history. And finally, he suggests how studying history might enrich one's life as a Christian.

The book includes sections here and there that will be of interest to the general reader. For example, he provides a good discussion of the uses and problems of primary and secondary sources. Moreover, he makes a good argument for the validity of the Christian perspective by placing it in the context of differing historical perspectives. But taken as a whole, this book will be meaningless to non-Christians and to Christians who do not agree with the author's particular religious beliefs. Swanstrom writes, for example, that "we must take into consideration the peculiar and perhaps imponderable work of the Holy Spirit" and "We realize that nations and civilizations are under the judgment of God. . . ."

Swanstrom has a conversational writing style that makes the book highly readable and easy to understand. Given the particular audience for which the book was written, evangelical educators and history instructors in Christian senior high schools and colleges should find that the chapters will generate a lively discussion in the classroom.

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Neil R. Stout. *Getting the Most Out of Your U.S. History Course: The History Student's Vade Mecum*. Lexington, MA and Toronto: D. C. Heath & Co., 1993. Pp. v, 81. paper, \$4.00.

Jules R. Benjamin. *A Student's Guide to History*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1991. 5th edition. Pp. xiii, 160. Paper, \$9.50.

Donald W. Whisenhunt. *A Student's Introduction to History*. Boston: American Press, 1993. 2nd edition. Pp. v, 64. Paper, \$3.95.

The problem of new college students not only ignorant of history, but indifferent and even hostile to it, has spawned a sub-industry of "how to" books as supplements to the traditional survey course. These works usually have two aims: to explain to students just what history is (and is not) and to give them practical guidance in navigating their way through a history course—note-taking, reading, coping with exams, producing a research paper, and the like. Here are three of the best.

Getting the Most Out of Your U.S. History Course comes as a "free" supplement with D. C. Heath's U.S. history text *The Enduring Vision*, or it may be purchased alone. Stout, who has taught at the University of Vermont for many years, has produced a pithy, practical guide. He admits in his preface what many of us would also confess, that as a brand new freshman "I didn't