# BOOKS I HAVE READ: EARLY CHRISTIAN MISSION II

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Brief notes on an amazing book.
**Category:** Reviews

The second volume of Eckhard Schnabel's amazing work on Early Christian Mission is just as big and just as thorough as the first. The introductory comments that I made for the first volume are just as valid for the second, so I'll repeat some of them...

> *If you are interested in the origins of Christian mission, then you have to read this book. Mind you, it is a serious undertaking; this is a 900 page hardback (with another equally large volume on Paul, to follow).*
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> *The size makes it a daunting (and expensive) undertaking, but the breadth and depth of the material covered is stunning. The biblical exegesis is thorough and the background historical research is more detailed than anything I have ever seen.*

The book has three sections each of which could have been published as a decent length book in its own right.

- Pioneer Missionary Work: The Mission of the Apostle Paul

This section goes through Paul's missionary career in amazing detail. Not only does Schnabel talk about the cities that we know that Paul visited from the book of Acts, he also talks about the travel conditions, the other cities and villages he would have passed along the way and so on. This is a biblical historian's dream.

- Growth: Consolidation and Challenges of the Early Christian Mission

This is the shortest section and covers issues such as persecution and life in a religious culture which is very different to our own.

- Results: The Identity, Praxis and message of the Early Christian Mission

For my money, this is the heart of the two volumes and I'd almost encourage people to read this section even if they haven't read the rest of the book. Many mission writers have made suggestions about how mission should be carried out and organised based on their understanding of the mission in the New Testament. However, as Schnabel demonstrates quite clearly, they have not always really understood what is happening in ScriptureÂ and this leads them to false conclusions.

The book has extensive footnotes, intertextual notes and more references than you can shake a stick at. I don't think I'll ever sit down and read these two volumes in full again, but I will be consulting them for many years to come.