



# **The Early Church on Killing: A Comprehensive Sourcebook on War, Abortion, and Capital Punishment**

*Ronald J. Sider*

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"In a time when violent death is all too common and wars of choice are undertaken all too readily, it is bracing to be reminded by this cloud of witnesses from the early church of the value that early Christians placed on human life and the severe judgments they issued on those who took it without cause."

--**Harold W. Attridge**, Yale Divinity School

"The question of 'killing' has been a contested and debated issue from the earliest years of the church's history. May Christians serve in the military? Is abortion ever justifiable? What of the question of capital punishment? Ron Sider has produced an invaluable handbook of primary source material from an ancient Christian perspective that can serve the entire church well as we continue to face these thorny and often heartrending questions in a modern context."

--**Christopher A. Hall**, Eastern University

"In recent years some have argued that the church of the first three centuries might have been somewhat ambivalent in its opposition to war and killing. Ron Sider's excellent and comprehensive sourcebook shows once again that, even though the practices of individual Christians might have deviated at times from what Christians are called to be and do, the uniform voice of the church before its rise to political power was one of unconditional rejection of war and killing in all its pluriformity."

--**George Kalantzis**, The Wheaton Center for Early Christian Studies; author, *Caesar and the Lamb: Early Christian Attitudes to War and Military Service*

"In this very important work, Ron Sider returns to his roots as a church historian to offer an exceedingly careful, measured study of the literary evidence left by the early church on the morality of killing. This volume is entirely free of propaganda or polemics, following the evidence where it leads. This deceptively brief, highly disciplined study should prove to be authoritative in this field."

--**David P. Gushee**, Center for Theology and Public Life, Mercer University

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