

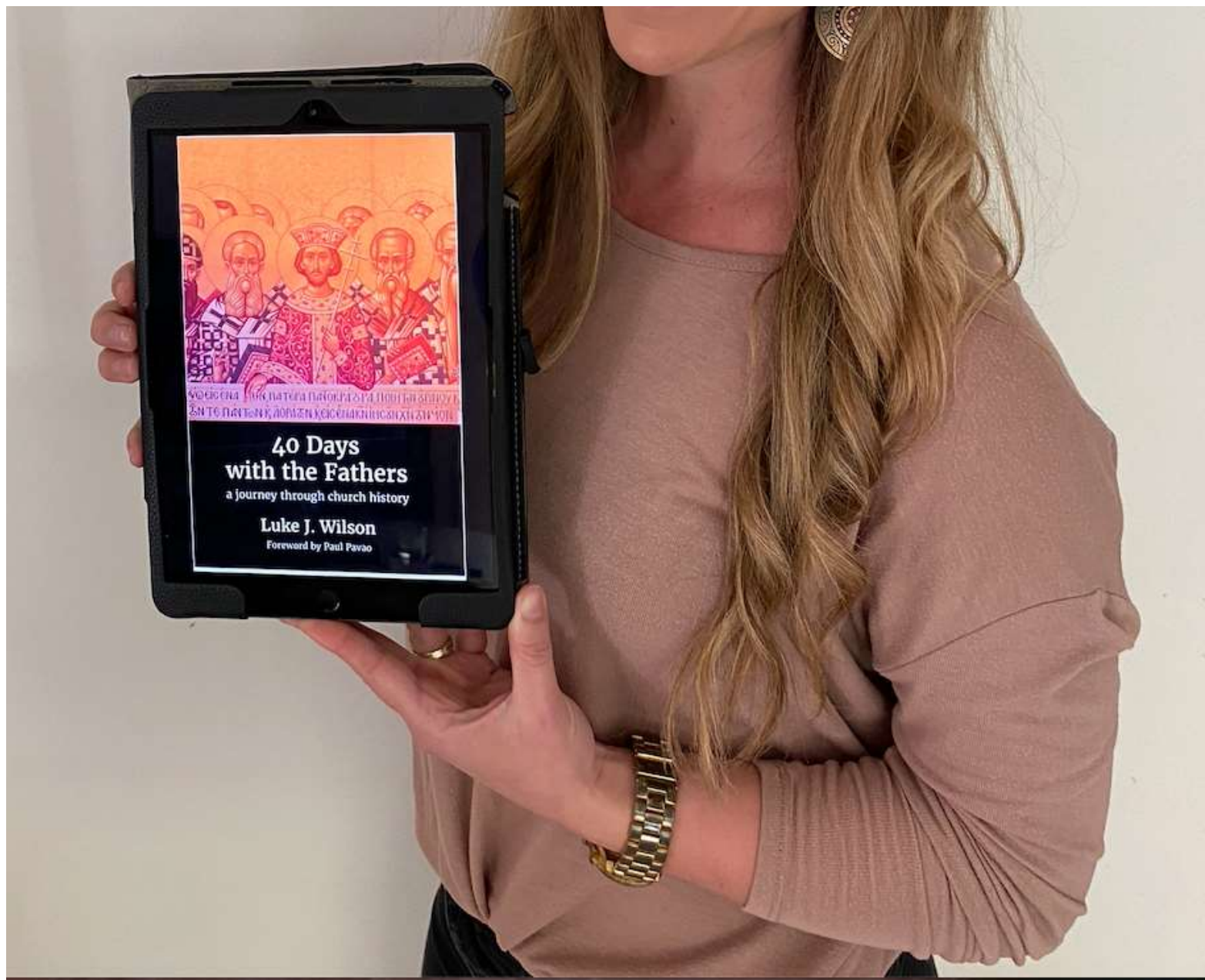
Tiffany Price

T.E. Price

Extended Author Interview: Luke Wilson

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(<https://tiffanyeveprice.files.wordpress.com/2022/07/screen-shot-2022-07-10-at-5.38.35-am.png>).

I ran a promo on my Instagram to find an author to interview for my newsletter, and Luke Wilson was my lucky winner...but in truth, I'm the one who lucked out. That's certainly how I felt while reading "40 Days with the Fathers: A Journey Through Church History." As a Christian Fiction

author, I must admit that this devotional isn't something I would typically read, but I was so surprised and encouraged to discover just how much I enjoyed reading Wilson's book. Let's see what Luke Wilson has to share with us!

To begin tell us a little about yourself.

I grew up going to church from around the age of 7 and have been around through various denominations, starting in the Church of England; then: Pentecostal, Evangelical, Baptist and non-denominational. I have a BA (hons) in Biblical Studies and Theology and have been reading and studying the works of the Early Church Fathers for over six years. I was involved in various short-term missions to South Africa where I met my now wife. We lived in SA for a short while after marriage and are now in the South West of the UK with a 5yo daughter. I am also now part of the Church of England (again) and discerning a vocation for ordination.

What inspired this book?

It was a journey that began years before I began to write anything as I had become a little disenchanted with church. At this time I was in a non-denominational church and week in, week out, it was three songs, a 20 minute sermon, 2 more songs and end. Maybe communion was thrown in every so often, though it wasn't ever a big deal as such. Then we all had coffee and biscuits after. I don't always want to sing, especially if the lyrics are terrible or questionable theology, which often left me thinking "how else can I worship?". There were no set times of prayer etc. so without music, it was just a sermon to listen to, which made the whole experience very much an audience/spectator role. So I decided I would research as far back in history as possible to see if this is how the Church had always done things, or if we had lost something along the way. I won't go into great detail now, because I could say plenty more, but basically the end result of my studies was this book! I discovered that the early church doesn't look a whole lot like the evangelical world and was more akin to the traditional denominations, as you'll see if you read my book and go on that same journey of discovery as I did.

What amount of research had to go into your third edition of the book, and what resources did you use for that research?

The Third Edition mainly expanded on some of the footnotes and a few other minor details in some existing chapters based on things I had learnt more of since initially writing the book. The biggest difference is the addition of a new chapter which addresses the Council of Nicaea, which happens mid-way through the book, chronologically speaking (AD 325). I thought that a book dealing with the early church should really give some information on one of the most critical events in early church history and dispel some of the myths that surround it and get posted online. I had recently written a blog series looking at the early creeds, and the Nicene Creed being a product of the Council meant that I did a lot of reading on the subject. Also my friend and foreword writer, Paul Pavao, also published a book dedicated to the Council of Nicaea which was very helpful! I would highly recommend his book *Decoding Nicea* if you want to dive deeper into that subject, or if you would like to read an overview of church history and get beyond the common misconceptions and legends (and memes), I would also recommend *Urban Legends of Church History*, by Micheal Svigel.

Can you briefly summarize the content of your book and the Gospel message displayed throughout the 40 devotionals?

I suppose the briefest summary would be the book's subtitle: *a journey through church history*. That is what I want, and hope, that readers will feel like they are embarking on. Like travelling a well-worn, ancient path of our shared faith-history, and getting to know that “great cloud of witnesses” who have come before us. We stand on the shoulders of giants to be where we are today, and men and women before us have literally died to protect this faith and ensure the Gospel was handed down in its purest form without corruption. Reading through the forty days should hopefully display the Gospel message in every text I examine, as the Church Fathers were ever faithful to the message handed down to them by the Apostles, trying their best to articulate sound doctrine and teaching to help preserve it against heresies and attack.

In what ways did writing “40 Days with the Fathers” challenge your faith and overall understanding of church history?

Oh wow, this could be a long answer! I'll try keep it short though: the main thing would be my idea of what church should be or look like, as well as foundational things like baptism and communion/Eucharist. One of the biggest initial shocks for me was realising and seeing that the liturgy is ancient! And I'm talking within the apostles' lifetime ancient. It was surprising because for much of my youth I had been told that liturgical style worship was all “medieval corruption” etc. I even heard similar things while at Bible College, so it had been reinforced quite a lot, along with the typical evangelical views of baptism being nothing more than an “outward sign” and communion being merely symbolic. Reading early church

leaders from the end of the first century and beginning of the second explain liturgical worship when describing a common Sunday morning (words still used to the letter in the C of E and other traditional denominations to this day). Hearing them explain how Jesus is truly present in the elements of the bread and wine – not necessarily transubstantiation, but certainly not plain symbolism either – along with how the Holy Spirit is present in the waters of baptism so we can enter into new life through this act and have our sins washed away, as the Scriptures say but that I'd so often overlooked due to doctrinal and denominational blinders. Before I go on too long, let's just say that I've found a "fullness" to worship in the Anglican church that I couldn't any longer in other denominations, as they felt lacking now. The liturgy ensures full participation and engages you, it's hard to just be a spectator sat in an 'audience' this way!

What was your biggest encouragement in the publishing process?

Seeing the book in print! Being able to actually hold a real, physical copy of all that hard work is amazing. Three editions later, it still feels good to get it in my hands, and even more so with this edition as it's also available in hardback, which looks *really* nice if I do say so myself! And of course, SALES! Ha! Nothing builds encouragement like seeing that other random people on the internet are actually buying your book and even leaving positive reviews!

What was your biggest discouragement in the publishing process and how did you overcome that?

I think sometimes the hardest thing is getting over yourself. Either self-doubt or imposter syndrome, or just procrastination to write something! Feeling like you are just another blip in the Amazon ocean of self-published books with little to no marketing can be a little discouraging. Despite reading so many authors who tell of how hard or bad traditional publishing can be, there's still that sense of "legitimacy" that comes from the idea of being picked up by a big publishing house. But I've built up a small audience of blog subscribers, Facebook and other social followers who enjoy the things I write, so just knowing there are some fans out there who like what I do can be enough to get over any humps of doubt that may come, and I trust God to work through this in whatever way possible.

If anyone wanted to get in touch with you regarding your book, "40 Days with the Fathers: A Journey Through Church History," what's the best way of doing so?

I am always happy to have people contact me if they want to chat about any of the subjects or topics in the book (or this interview), and anyone can get in touch via my website: <https://lukejwilson.com> (<https://lukejwilson.com/>).

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