

# THEY CHANGED THE CHURCH



## A STUDY OF CHURCH HISTORY

written by Tom Kelby

Inside Front - BLANK

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*Unless otherwise indicated.*

The men whose lives you find summarized in the following pages all, for one reason or another, brought great change to the church. Some of these changes may not be viewed as for the better. Nevertheless, the events these men played a role in are part of our history, and their stories must not be forgotten. I pray that these short summaries will inspire you to read longer biographies, and that the longer biographies will inspire you to, as William Carey was fond of saying, “Expect great things from God; attempt great things for God.”

Tom Kelby  
August 1, 2007

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# Polycarp of Smyrna



<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Polycarp>

**c. 69—160**

**Bishop of Smyrna**

**Knew the apostle John**

**Refused to deny his faith in the face of death**

**“For eighty-six years I have served him, and he has done me no evil. How could I curse my king who saved me?”**

**Burned at the stake**

**See also:**

Justo L. González,  
*The Story of Christianity, Vol. 1*,  
42-44, 68

**Polycarp** was bishop of Smyrna, a city located on the coast of the Aegean Sea in the Roman province of Asia. He had known the apostle John. He collected the letters written by Ignatius, one of which had been addressed to him. Polycarp opposed Marcion (the founder of a heretical sect), calling him “the firstborn of Satan.” Events surrounding Polycarp’s martyrdom were reported by one who claimed to be an eyewitness in a document entitled *Martyrdom of Polycarp*.

Apparently, a number of Christians had been arrested in Smyrna. The crowds, agitated by one Christian’s courageous refusal to recant his faith, demanded Polycarp be delivered to them. Initially, Polycarp hid from the authorities. However, he concluded that his arrest was the will of God and he gave himself up (early Christians believed martyrdom was something that was chosen by God for certain believers). At his trial, the judge urged Polycarp to curse Christ and to worship the emperor. Polycarp responded, “For eighty-six years I have served him, and he has done me no evil. How could I curse my king, who saved me?” (1) The judge then threatened to burn Polycarp alive. His reply was that the judge’s fire would last for just a few short moments, but the eternal fire would never be extinguished. Polycarp was tied to a post and burned. His final words were directed to the Lord: “Lord Sovereign God ... I thank you that you have deemed me worthy of this moment, so that, jointly with your martyrs, I may have a share in the cup of Christ. ... For this ... I bless and glorify you. Amen.” (2) Antonius Pius was emperor at the time of Polycarp’s death.

**Writings:** *Epistle to the Philippians*

1. Justo L. González, *The Story of Christianity, Volume 1* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1984), 44.  
2. González, *The Story of Christianity*, 44.

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**Burned at the  
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**See also:**

Justo L. González,  
*The Story of  
Christianity, Vol. 1,*  
42-44, 68

**NOTES:**

**1. Do you think, as the early believers thought, that God selects certain people for martyrdom?**

**2. Where does a Christian find the strength to stand firm in the face of certain death?**

**3. What advantages would persecution of this sort bring to the church?**

**4. What disadvantages would it bring?**

**5. Sometimes those who claimed to be Christians, rather than standing firm like Polycarp, denied their faith. Some of these people later expressed desire to return to the church. Do you think it would be difficult to trust those who had denied Christ in the face of death? How do you think the church should have dealt with people like this?**



# Ignatius of Antioch



<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:Ignatius.jpg>

## Bishop of Antioch

Died as a martyr under Trajan in 117

Wrote important letters providing information about church leadership in second century



<http://www.ntcanon.org/Ignatius.shtml>

## See also:

Justo L. González, *The Story of Christianity, Vol. 1*, 39-44

Kenneth Scott Latourette, *A History of Christianity: Volume 1*, 85, 116-117

Ignatius was born sometime between AD 30 and AD 35. In his letters, Ignatius refers to himself as “the bearer of God.” As with John describing himself as “*the elder*” in 2 and 3 John, this must have been a title the church had given to Ignatius. He served as bishop of Antioch in Syria. This city was located near the northeastern corner of the Mediterranean Sea and was one of the most important early centers of Christianity. As bishop, Ignatius battled against Gnosticism. Late in his life, Ignatius was arrested. The precise reason behind his arrest is not known, although it is not unlikely that one of his enemies lodged a charge against him. Ignatius’ arrest took place while Trajan served as emperor. Trajan’s persecution of Christians was not overly aggressive. He did not believe the “crime” of believing in Christ was worth pursuing. However, if an accusation was brought against a Christian and the Christian refused to renounce his faith and worship the gods, Trajan believed the Christian should be punished. Based on this, it is likely that one of Ignatius’ enemies accused him of the crime of Christianity.

After his trial, Ignatius was pronounced guilty and was sentenced to death. His death was to take place in Rome as part of a celebration of a recent military victory. Roman soldiers accompanied Ignatius on his journey from Antioch to Rome. As Ignatius and his captors passed through Asia Minor, various Christians visited with him, including the bishop of Ephesus – a man named Onesimus (Onesimus may be the same Onesimus referred to in the letter of Philemon). The fact that these Christians were able to meet with a man condemned to death for the crime of believing in Christ demonstrates the inconsistency of persecution during this time period.

As he journeyed, Ignatius wrote letters to the churches in Magnesia, Tralles, Ephesus, Smyrna, and Philadelphia. He also wrote a letter to Polycarp, the bishop of Smyrna. These letters provide some hints about the nature of church leadership in the second century. In them, Ignatius emphasized the importance of the bishop, indicating, among other things, that the bishop, or one he appointed, was responsible to serve communion and administer baptism. From his letters, it appears a dis-

tinction was being made between elders and bishops at this time. Ignatius’ letters are the first to make this distinction. When this distinction began to be seen in practice is not clear. However, it appears that the churches to which Ignatius wrote may have had just one bishop.

Ignatius’ letter to Smyrna includes the first recorded use of the word “catholic” to describe the church. He wrote, “wherever Jesus Christ is, there is the Catholic Church.” (1) His use of the word, of course, differs from the modern connotation of the word catholic. He was not referring to the Roman Catholic Church as an institution. Rather, he was referring to the universality of the church.

On this last journey Ignatius also wrote a letter to the church in Rome. In that letter, Ignatius urged the church not to attempt to free him, something they had evidently contemplated. He wrote, “I fear your kindness, which may harm me. You may be able to achieve what you plan. But if you pay no heed to my request it will be very difficult for me to attain unto God.” (2) From this letter, it is clear that Ignatius wanted to die as a martyr. He wrote, “If you remain silent about me [that is, if you do not hinder my death as a martyr], I shall become a word of God. But if you allow yourselves to be swayed by the love in which you hold my flesh, I shall again be no more than a human voice.” (3) Ignatius’ wish was granted. He was not rescued by the church in Rome.

**Writings:** *To the Ephesians, To the Magnesians, To the Trallians, To the Romans, To the Philadelphians, To the Smyrnaeans, To Polycarp*

1. Kenneth Scott Latourette, *A History of Christianity: Volume I, Beginnings to 1500* (Peabody, Mass.: Prince, 2000), 130.

2. Justo L. González, *The Story of Christianity, Volume 1* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1984), 43.

3. González, *The Story of Christianity*, 43.

# Ignatius of Antioch



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**See also:**  
Justo L. González,  
*The Story of Christianity, Vol. 1,*  
39-44

Kenneth Scott  
Latourette, *A History of Christianity:*  
*Volume 1,* 85, 116-117

## NOTES:

**1. How did Ignatius' view of church leadership differ from that presented in the NT? See 1 Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9, 1 Peter 5:1-5, Acts 20:17-38**

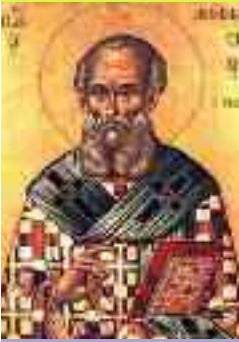
**2. What circumstances might have led to the designation of one bishop within each church?**

**3. Do you think this change in leadership structure was inevitable? Why or why not?**

**4. What advantages might the "single bishop" leadership structure have offered? Any disadvantages?**

**5. What were Ignatius' views of martyrdom? What does this tell you about the mindset of Christians at this time?**

# Athanasius of Alexandria



[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Athanasius\\_of\\_Alexandria](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Athanasius_of_Alexandria)

**AD 296 – AD  
373  
Bishop of  
Alexandria**

**Fought against  
Arianism  
Exiled from his  
city five times**

**“The results of  
the incarnation  
of the Savior  
are such and so  
many, that any-  
one attempting  
to enumerate  
them should be  
compared to a  
person looking  
upon the vast-  
ness of the sea  
and attempting  
to count its  
waves.”**

**See also:**

Justo L. González, *The Story of Christianity, Vol. 1*, 158-180

Kenneth Scott Latourette, *A History of Christianity: Volume 1*, 152-164

Athanasius was called “the black dwarf” by his enemies – of whom he had many. He also had many friends. For instance, throughout his lifetime, Athanasius maintained close relations with the monks. In fact, they frequently provided help and refuge to Athanasius when he was in need. Like the monks, Athanasius lived a simple and a disciplined life. These factors, along with the firmness of his convictions and the love he had for his people, endeared him to those under his care.

Prior to becoming bishop of Alexandria, Athanasius wrote two works: *Against the Gentiles* and *On the Incarnation of the Word*. In them, Athanasius makes clear that the incarnation—God becoming flesh in Jesus Christ—is the foundation of Christianity and of the history of mankind. This belief was to be the subject of great controversy in the church for the remainder of Athanasius’ life.

The controversy regarding the deity of Christ initially focused on two men within the Alexandrian church: the bishop of Alexandria, Alexander of Alexandria, and a presbyter in the Alexandrian church named Arius. Arius’s contention was that Christ was created by the Father (he also believed the Holy Spirit to be a created being). Alexander considered this teaching to be heretical and used his authority to remove Arius from his position within the church. This did not end the conflict. Instead, it grew to the point that Emperor Constantine wrote letters to the two men, calling them to resolve the conflict. Constantine, in his own words, thought the issue was “of a truly insignificant character and quite unworthy of such fierce contention.” (1) The two men, however, were convinced that their respective positions were correct. The conflict was not resolved and Constantine, worried that the church was fracturing, called a Council of Bishops. Around 300 bishops gathered in Nicea in 325. Most of the bishops present, at least initially, had no strong opinions regarding the Arian controversy. Arius was not present as he was not a bishop. A man named Eusebius of Nicomedia presented the Arian view. His presentation did not convince the bishops that Arianism was correct. Instead, it infuriated many. The council declared Arianism to be heretical and adopted a creed that

would eventually form the basis of the Nicene Creed. The creed the bishops accepted reads:

We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of all things visible and invisible, and in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the only-begotten of the Father, that is, of the substance of the Father, God from God, light from light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one substance with the Father, through whom all things came to be, those things that are in heaven and those things that are on earth, who for us men and for our salvation came down and was made flesh, and was made man, suffered, rose the third day, ascended into the heavens, and will come to judge the living and the dead. (2)

All bishops refusing to sign the creed were removed from their positions. This, however, did not end the threat of Arianism. In fact, after this initial defeat, Arianism grew to the point that it became the predominant belief within the church. The man most responsible for stopping its growth was Athanasius.

Upon Alexander’s death in 328, Athanasius was, quite unwillingly, named bishop of Alexandria. Five different times he was exiled from his city because of his stand against Arianism. False accusations were frequently used against him. At one point, Athanasius lived in the desert for five years. But the long years of persecution were not enough to weaken Athanasius’s resolve. He diligently worked to unify bishops around the truths found within the Nicene Creed. His efforts finally paid off. The issue was resolved in AD 381 at the Council of Constantinople. Athanasius, however, did not live to see this day. He died in 373.

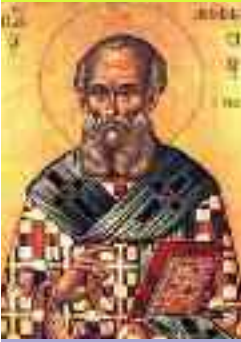
**Writings:** *Against the Gentiles, On the Incarnation of the Divine Word, Orations Against the Arians, Against Apollinarius*

1. Kenneth Scott Latourette, *A History of Christianity: Volume 1, Beginnings to 1500* (Peabody, Mass.: Prince, 2000), 153.

2. Latourette, *A History of Christianity*, 155.

3. Justo L. González, *The Story of Christianity: Volume 1, The Early Church to the Dawn of the Reformation* (San Francisco, HarperSanFrancisco, 1984), 173.

# Athanasius of Alexandria



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**See also:**

Justo L. González, *The Story of Christianity, Vol. 1*, 158-180

Kenneth Scott Latourette, *A History of Christianity: Volume 1*, 152-164

## NOTES:

**1. How would the adoption of Arius’s views, if they had stood, have changed Christianity?**

**2. Why do you think God would allow a controversy like this within the church? What benefits, if any, did the Arian controversy bring to the church? What harm would a controversy like this bring to the church?**

**3. If Jesus were a created being, could he be the Savior of the world? Why or why not?**

**4. What do the following verses teach about the deity of Jesus?**

*John 1:1,18*

*Hebrews 1:3,6,8*

*Colossians 1:15-19*

**5. Does your church use creeds in its public worship? What value would the use of creeds like the Nicene Creed in public worship bring to your church body? Do you see any drawbacks to the practice of reciting creeds in public worship?**

# Augustine of Hippo



[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Augustine\\_of\\_Hippo](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Augustine_of_Hippo)

**AD 354-430**

**Bishop of Hippo**

**“When I thought of devoting myself entirely to you, my God ... it was I that wished to do it, and I that wished not to do it. It was I. And since I neither completely wished, nor completely refused, I fought against myself and tore myself to pieces.”**

**See also:**

Justo L. González, *The Story of Christianity*, Vol. 1, 207-216

Kenneth Scott Latourette, *A History of Christianity: Volume 1*, 173-181

Augustine (the last syllable is pronounced “tin”) is widely considered to be the greatest theologian since the apostle Paul. He was born and raised in Tagaste, a small town in North Africa. While his father was a non-Christian, his mother was devoted to Christ. Blessed with great intelligence, Augustine was sent to study in Carthage. There he not only studied rhetoric, he also indulged in wild living. He fathered a child at this time.

Augustine’s studies convinced him that eloquence in speech and writing were not enough; he began to search for truth. This quest led him to experiment with several pagan religions. Eventually Augustine moved to Milan, where he became a professor of rhetoric. There he attended services so that he might listen to the preaching of Ambrose, the popular bishop of Milan. Eventually, Augustine became convinced that Christianity was the truth. However, he did not want to give up his sin. In fact, he testifies that he used to pray, “Give me chastity and continence; but not too soon.” (1) Augustine was finally converted in 386. He was then baptized by Ambrose. Augustine left his job as a professor and moved to Cassiciacum, North Africa. Augustine’s life changed again when he visited the town of Hippo in 391. As with Athanasius, Augustine was, quite unwillingly, ordained to serve in the church of Hippo. In just four years time he was made bishop.

Augustine’s influence in the church stems from the works written after this point. While he wrote to counter the claims of false religions, his works addressed broader issues like “the authority of Scripture, the origin of evil, and free will.” (2) He also wrote concerning the sacraments and developed the concept of “just war.”

Perhaps his most significant writings concerned the nature of the will in the battle against sin. His writings were in response to the views of Pelagius, a monk who believed that sin could be defeated and salvation earned by human effort. Augustine argued that human beings, due to the fall, are not free to not sin. Rather, the only freedom an unsaved person experiences is the freedom to sin. Conversion, to Augustine, was not a

choice that could be made by a human being’s will power alone, for apart from God’s grace, human beings have no capacity to choose what is right. For this reason, Augustine taught that God’s initiative, not man’s effort, is the critical element in salvation. Augustine also taught that grace is irresistible and is given only to those who have been predestined to receive it.

In addition to these writings, Augustine wrote *Confessions*, a book describing his own conversion to Christ, and *The City of God*, a large volume prompted by the collapse of Rome. Some were claiming that Rome’s collapse was due to her acceptance of Christianity and rejection of her ancient gods. Justo L. González summarizes Augustine’s great work as follows: “[T]here are two cities, each built on love as a foundation. The city of God is built on love of God. The earthly city is built on love of self. In human history, these two cities always appear mingled with each other. But in spite of this there is between the two of them an irreconcilable opposition, a war to death. In the end, only the city of God will remain.” (3)

While Augustine’s teachings were questioned during his lifetime, he was to become the most quoted theologian of the Middle Ages. But Augustine was not revered by Catholics alone; the 16th century Protestants also relied heavily on his works, quoting him more than any other church father. Thus, accepted by both Catholics and Protestants, Augustine stands alone. He is rightly regarded as “the most influential theologian in the entire Western church.” (4)

**Writings:** *Confessions*, *Meditations*, *The City of God*, *Enchiridion*, *Tetractationes*, *The Trinity*

1. Justo L. González, *The Story of Christianity, Volume 1* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1984), 211.  
2. González, *The Story of Christianity*, 213.  
3. González, *The Story of Christianity*, 215.  
4. González, *The Story of Christianity*, 216.  
5. González, *The Story of Christianity*, 207.

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**NOTES:**

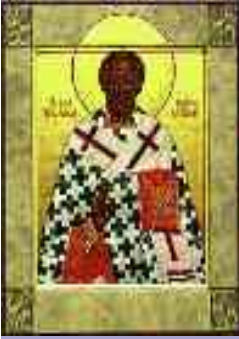
**1. Both Athanasius and Augustine were put into positions of power against their own will. What, if anything, does this tell you about God’s sovereignty and how he works on earth?**

**2. What is the value of writings like those of Augustine?**

**3. Most of Augustine’s writings were written in response to a pagan religion or a false idea. What, if anything, does this tell you about God’s work on the earth?**

**4. Do you believe, like Augustine, that humans, due to Adam’s sin, cannot not sin? Use Scripture verses to support your answer.**

# Leo The Great



[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope\\_Leo\\_I](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope_Leo_I)

**c. 400–461**

**First “official”  
pope of the  
Western  
Church**

**Convinced  
Attila the Hun  
not to invade  
Rome**

**Based claim of  
preeminence  
on Jesus’ words  
to Peter in Matt  
16:18**



[http://www.catholic.org/saints/saint.php?saint\\_id=299](http://www.catholic.org/saints/saint.php?saint_id=299)

**See also:**

Justo L. González,  
*The Story of  
Christianity, Vol. 1,*  
242-243

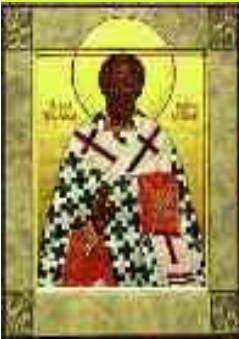
Leo I (also known as “The Great”) was the first “official” pope of the Western Church. He has been called “one of the ablest men who have ever sat on the throne of Peter.” (1) However, Leo was not the first person ever to be called pope. Indeed, as the word means “father,” bishops of high standing were often called by that name. Athanasius of Alexandria, for instance, is sometimes referred to as “Pope Athanasius” in documents. In the early centuries of Christianity, the bishop of Rome was not elevated above the bishops of the other significant cities within the church – Antioch, Jerusalem, Alexandria, and Constantinople. Rather, the opposite had more often been true; the bishops from these cities had been preeminent. For instance, witness the influence of Athanasius of Alexandria during the fourth century. The bishop of Rome’s status was forever altered when, upon the breakup of the Western Roman Empire, the church split into East and West. Rome was recognizably the most significant see (the area under a bishop’s authority) in the Western Church. However this is not the only reason the bishop of Rome became known as the pope. Leo’s rise to preeminence in the Western Church coincided with the invasion of Attila the Hun. Attila’s sights were set on Rome, and the emperor was powerless to stop him. However, Bishop Leo left the city of Rome and met with Attila, convincing him not to attack Rome. Peace was not to last long. In 455, the Vandals overran Rome. However, it was Bishop Leo, not the emperor, who convinced Genseric, the leader of the Vandals, not to burn the city. These “victories” greatly increased Leo’s standing in Rome. But Leo’s authority was not, at least to him, due to his political prowess. He believed, based on Jesus’ words to Peter in Matthew 16:18, that Peter was the rock on which the church would be built. Peter’s authority would have then been passed on to his successor, and since this successor was, according to Leo, the bishop of Rome, in Leo’s mind, the bishop of Rome was the legitimate head of the Church.

**Writings:** Prior to becoming pope, Leo wrote the Tome, a lengthy document refuting the views of Eutyches – a monk who declared that, while Jesus was of the same substance as the Father, he was not of the same sub-

stance as humans. In the Tome, Leo argued that Christ was fully and completely God and, at the same time, fully and completely man. He was both God and man “without detracting from the properties of either nature and substance.” (2) A council of bishops gathered in 451 in Chalcedon to discuss the matter. Leo’s Tome was read and approved. Eutyches was declared a heretic.

1. Kenneth Scott Latourette, *A History of Christianity: Volume I, Beginnings to 1500* (Peabody, Mass.: Prince, 2000), 171.  
2. Latourette, *A History of Christianity*, 171.

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**See also:**

Justo L. González,  
*The Story of  
Christianity, Vol. 1,*  
242-243

**NOTES:**

**1. Do you think it was inevitable for one bishop to rise above the others in the Western Church? Why or why not?**

**2. Read Matthew 16:13-20. What do you think Jesus meant by his words to Peter?**

**3. What benefits could one central leader like the pope bring to the church? Any drawbacks?**

**4. What are the benefits of a religious leader having a great deal of political influence? Any dangers?**



# Benedict of Nursia



[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Benedict\\_of\\_Nursia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Benedict_of_Nursia)

**A.D. 480-c.543**

**Shaped monastic life in the West.**

**Wrote The Rule of St. Benedict**



<http://www.catholic-forum.com/saints/saintb02.htm>

**See also:**

Justo L. González, *The Story of Christianity, Vol. 1*, 238-242

Kenneth Scott Latourette, *A History of Christianity: Volume 1*, 333-336

**Benedict** became one of the primary shapers of monastic life in the West. Benedict was born in the small Italian town of Nursia. As a young man he studied in Rome. At around age 20, he moved into a cave with the intent of living as a hermit. He became quite well known, and a number of disciples gathered around him. Eventually, Benedict and his disciples moved to Monte Cassino where they built a monastery. Around A.D. 530, Benedict wrote a document which came to be known as The Rule of St. Benedict. This document would serve as a model for monasticism in the Western Church for hundreds of years. The Rule addressed matters as diverse as sleeping, the ownership of property, the amount of food that should be served, prayer times, clothing, and ordination. The Lombards attacked and burned the Monte Cassino monastery in 589. However, this only served to increase the Rule's influence. Monks escaping from the Lombards made their way to Rome, bringing the Rule with them. The Rule fell into the hands of a man named Gregory, who eventually became Pope. The Pope's acceptance of this document resulted in it being used throughout the Western Church. Following are a few excerpts from The Rule of St. Benedict:

## 16. How Divine Service Shall Be Held through the Day

As the prophet says: "Seven times in the day so I praise Thee." Which sacred number of seven will thus be fulfilled by us if, at matins, at the first, third, sixth, ninth hours, at vesper time and at "completorium" we perform the duties of our service; for it is of these hours of the day that he said: "Seven times in the day do I praise Thee." For, concerning nocturnal vigils, the same prophet says: "At midnight I arose to confess unto thee." Therefore, at these times, let us give thanks to our Creator concerning the judgments of his righteousness; that is, at matins, etc..... and at night we will rise and confess to him....

## 22. How the Monks Shall Sleep

They shall sleep separately in separate beds. They shall receive positions for their beds, after the manner of their characters, according to the dispensation of their abbot. If it can be done, they shall all sleep in one place. If, however, their number do not permit it, they shall rest, by tens or twenties, with elders who will concern themselves about them. A candle shall always be burning in that same cell until early in the morning. They shall sleep clothed, and girt with belts or with ropes; and they shall not have their knives at their sides while they sleep, lest perchance in a dream they should wound the sleepers ...

## 33. Whether the Monks Should Have Anything of Their Own

More than anything else is this special vice to be cut off root and branch from the monastery, that one should presume to give or receive anything without the order of the abbot, or should have anything of his own. He should have absolutely not anything: neither a book, nor tablets, nor a pen-nothing at all.-For indeed it is not allowed to the monks to have their own bodies or wills in their own power. But all things necessary they must expect from the Father of the monastery; nor is it allowable to have anything which the abbot did not give or permit. All things shall be common to all, as it is written: "Let not any man presume or call anything his own." But if any one shall have been discovered delighting in this most evil vice: being warned once and again, if he do not amend, let him be subjected to punishment.

## 39. Concerning the Amount of food

We believe, moreover, that, for the daily refec-tion of the sixth as well as of the ninth hour, two cooked dishes, on account of the infirmities of the different ones, are enough for all tables: so that whoever, perchance, can not eat of one may partake of the other. Therefore let two cooked dishes suffice for all the brothers: and, if it is possible to obtain apples or growing vegetables, a third may be added. One full pound of bread shall suffice for a day, whether there be one refec-tion, or a breakfast and a supper. But if they are going to have supper, the third part of that same pound shall be reserved by the cellarer, to be given back to those who are about to sup. But if, perchance, some greater labour shall have been performed, it shall be in the will and power of the abbot, if it is expedient, to increase anything; surfeiting above all things being guarded against, so that indigestion may never seize a monk: for nothing is so contrary to every Christian as surfeiting ...

## 48. Concerning the Daily Manual Labour

Idleness is the enemy of the soul. And therefore, at fixed times, the brothers ought to be occupied in manual labour; and again, at fixed times, in sacred reading. ... there shall certainly be appointed one or two elders, who shall go round the monastery at the hours in which the brothers are engaged in reading, and see to it that no troublesome brother chance to be found who is open to idleness and trifling, and is not intent on his reading; being not only of no use to himself, but also stirring up others. (1)

1. <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/rul-benedict.html>  
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# Benedict of Nursia



[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Benedict\\_of\\_Nursia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Benedict_of_Nursia)

**A.D. 480-c.543  
Shaped  
monastic life in  
the West.**

**Wrote The Rule  
of St. Benedict**



<http://www.catholic-forum.com/saints/saintb02.htm>

## **See also:**

Justo L. González,  
*The Story of  
Christianity, Vol. 1,*  
238-242

Kenneth Scott  
Latourette, *A  
History of  
Christianity: Volume  
1,* 333-336

## **NOTES:**

**1. What benefits would the acceptance of “The Rule” in areas throughout Europe have brought to the Western Church? What drawbacks would the acceptance of these rules have brought?**

**2. Do you think the establishment of rules like these would result in more holiness in an individual’s life? Why or why not?**

**3. What benefits would the acceptance of a monastic lifestyle bring to the typical Christian in America?**

**4. What drawbacks would the acceptance of a monastic lifestyle bring to the typical Christian in America?**

# Francis of Assisi



<http://www.catholic-forum.com/saints/saintf01.htm>

**A.D. 1182-1226**

**Lived a life of poverty**

**Founder of major mendicant order—monks lived by begging**

**Made a will requiring monks within Franciscan order to live in poverty**



<http://www.travel.it/relig/saints/francis.htm>

**See also:**

Justo L. González,  
*The Story of Christianity, Vol. 1,*  
301-307

Kenneth Scott  
Latourette, *A History of Christianity: Volume 1,*  
429-433

**Francis of Assisi** was the founder of one of the major mendicant orders – the other major mendicant order was founded by Saint Dominic. (A mendicant is a member of a monastic order who owns no property and begs for a living.) Francis's real name was Giovanni. He was given the name Francesco (the little Frenchman) due to his love of the songs sung by the French troubadours.

Francis had a significant spiritual experience which prompted him to give away all his possessions and to live a life of poverty. This was not a joyless experience for him. Rather, he derived great pleasure from his poverty. In 1209, Francis was moved by Jesus' words in Matt 10:7-10 to leave his life as a hermit and to go into Assisi. While there, he ministered to the poor and the sick and he preached. He did not, however, leave his life of poverty. Eventually, a group of disciples began following Francis. He traveled to Rome and asked Pope Innocent III if he might begin a new monastic order. Innocent granted his request. Soon, many people joined the "order of lesser brothers." In fact, these Franciscans, who were also known as Friars Minor, could soon be seen in many cities, doing as Francis had done in Assisi. A similar order for women was established by Saint Clare. Francis was aware that the movement's great popularity threatened his original intent for the order. He feared the monks would become lovers of comfort and money. For that reason he "made a will forbidding his followers to possess anything, or to appeal to the pope or to anyone else to have the Rule that he had given them made less stringent." (1) But Francis didn't just want his monks to live in poverty. The order as a whole was also to acquire no wealth. Francis's view of riches may be seen in the following account: One of the Friars received a gold coin. He brought it to Francis in great joy. Francis did not share the Friar's joy. Rather, he told the man "to take the coin between his teeth, and bury it in a dung heap." (2)

Francis led the Franciscan order until 1220. At that time he turned the leadership over and swore his allegiance to his successor. Francis died six years later. After his death, the order attained a presence in Europe's universities. In 1236 a University of Paris professor joined the Franciscan order. In a short time, Franciscans

were found teaching in every major university in Europe. Franciscans were also known for their missionary efforts. In fact, one Franciscan, John of Montecorvino, traveled as far as Persia, Ethiopia, India and what is now called Beijing. Several thousand converts are credited to his efforts. The Franciscans also preached to the Moslems and many lost their lives in this work.

The Dominicans, who comprised the other major mendicant order and were formed shortly after the Franciscans, differed from the Franciscans in that, from the very beginning, they emphasized study. The Order of Preachers, as they were officially known, used poverty, not as an end in itself, but as a tool to strengthen their case in their battles against heretical groups. For this reason, they were not adverse to acquiring property when they felt it furthered their cause. They, like the Franciscans, made their presence felt in Europe's universities. Famous Dominicans included Thomas Aquinas and Albert the Great.

After Francis's death, the Franciscan order did not continue as Francis had insisted in his will. Rather, it began to acquire great wealth. Some within the order fought against what they saw to be the excesses of the order, but this group, rather than continuing to emphasize the ideals of poverty, began emphasizing the teachings of a "prophet" named Joachim of Fiore. Thus, Francis's will was not able to prevent the Franciscans from falling into excess.

1. Justo L. González, *The Story of Christianity, Volume 1* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1984), 304.  
2. González, *The Story of Christianity*, 304.

# Francis of Assisi



<http://www.catholic-forum.com/saints/saintf01.htm>

**A.D. 1182-1226**

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**Founder of major mendicant order—monks lived by begging**

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<http://www.travel.it/relig/saints/francis.htm>

**See also:**

Justo L. González,  
*The Story of Christianity, Vol. 1,*  
301-307

Kenneth Scott Latourette, *A History of Christianity: Volume 1,* 429-433

**NOTES:**

**1. While the imperial church at this time had a reputation as being rich and corrupt, the Franciscans had a very different reputation. How do you think the Franciscans altered the typical European's view of the church and of Christianity?**

**2. How do you interpret Jesus' words in Matt 10:5-10 – the verses that led Francis to begin the Franciscan order? What about Matt 19:16-22?**

**3. How did Jesus intend his followers to live?**

**4. What do you think would happen in the church if more people followed Francis's model?**

# John Wycliffe



<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:Wycliffe.jpg>

**A.D. 1329-1384**

**Taught that the true church was made up of those predestined to salvation**

**Taught that the pope, based on the fruit of his life, was most likely not predestined to salvation**

**Believed the Scriptures belonged to the true church and should be available in the language of the people**



<http://www.wycliffe.org/About/History/JohnWycliffe.aspx>

**See also:**

Justo L. González,  
*The Story of Christianity, Vol. 1,*  
346-348

Englishman **John Wycliffe** spent much of his life at Oxford. Although he did work for the crown for a period of time, his views on the limits of governmental authority limited his popularity among the authorities. He then returned to Oxford. Wycliffe is known for the bold statements he made concerning the doctrines of the church. While earlier efforts at reformation had addressed behavioral issues (such as the frequent absenteeism of priests from their parishes), Wycliffe courageously addressed the doctrines themselves. He taught that neither the pope nor the ecclesiastical hierarchy comprised the true church. Rather, like Augustine, he believed the church was comprised of all “those who are predestined to salvation.” (1) Wycliffe said that it was impossible to know who was predestined except by a person’s fruit. For this reason, he conjectured that the pope himself, based on the fruit of his life, was most likely not among those predestined to salvation. Wycliffe believed that the Scriptures belonged to the church, not meaning the physical church based in Rome, but the body of those predestined to salvation. For this reason, Wycliffe taught that the Scriptures must be made available in the language of the people. While these beliefs were quite controversial, perhaps the most controversy was raised by Wycliffe’s beliefs regarding Christ’s presence in communion. In contrast to the teaching of the church at large, which held to the doctrine of transubstantiation (a view that had been approved at the Fourth Lateran Council nearly 115 years before his birth), Wycliffe believed the bread did not become the body of Christ in communion. Rather, he believed that, in the same way that Christ’s divinity did not overwhelm his humanity in the incarnation, Christ’s presence did not overwhelm the bread in communion. He believed that Christ was mysteriously present in communion, but his “sacramental” presence did not somehow transform the bread into Christ’s physical body. Wycliffe’s radical views led him to be declared a heretic by many. In fact, he was imprisoned for a time. After his release he began work in a parish at Lutterworth. In 1384, Wycliffe died of a stroke and was buried. His body, however, was not allowed to rest in peace. The council of Constance condemned him and ordered his body to be

burned. “His ashes were then thrown into the river Swift.” (2)

Wycliffe was not alone in holding these beliefs. A number of people, some who considered themselves to be Wycliffe’s disciples and some who probably were not associated with him, preached a similar message. Known as “Lollards” – an insulting name “derived from a word meaning ‘mumblers’” (3) – these people focused upon the need to translate the Bible into the language of the people. They also believed “that pastors should not hold civil offices; and that images, clerical celibacy, pilgrimages, and other such uses were an abomination. They also rejected the doctrine of transubstantiation, and prayers for the dead.” (4) Based on their beliefs, the Lollards, like Wycliffe, should be seen as important forerunners of the Protestant Reformation. The fortunes of the Lollards rose and fell over the years. At first, Lollardism drew a great number of adherents from the nobility. Eventually, however, the greatest number of adherents was drawn from the lower classes. While the views of the Lollards grew more radical in the 1400s, the Lollards experienced a revival of sorts in the 1500s. Due to their beliefs, a great number of Lollards was put to death in the 1500s.

The impact of Wycliffe’s teachings was not just felt in England. King Richard had married a princess from Bohemia, thus many Czechs had found their way to England. This led to Wycliffe’s writings being brought to Bohemia, where they captured the attention of a university professor named John Huss.

**WRITINGS:** In keeping with his beliefs concerning the Scriptures belonging to the true church, John Wycliffe translated the Bible into English in 1382.

1. Justo L. González, *The Story of Christianity, Volume 1* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1984), 347.  
2. González, *The Story of Christianity*, 348.  
3. González, *The Story of Christianity*, 348.  
4. González, *The Story of Christianity*, 348.

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<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:Wycliffe.jpg>

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<http://www.wycliffe.org/About/History/JohnWycliffe.aspx>

**See also:**

Justo L. González,  
*The Story of Christianity, Vol. 1,*  
346-348

**NOTES:**

**1. Why do you think Wycliffe's views of communion were so offensive to the church?**

**2. How would the absence of Bibles written in the language of the people change the life of the church?**

**3. What changes would follow within the church if people, who had never had Bibles in their own language before, were suddenly given Bibles in their own language?**

**4. Why do you think God allows those who seem to be most influential to suffer such persecution? In what ways would persecution hinder the work of the Lord? In what ways might it advance it?**

# John Huss



[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John\\_Huss](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Huss)

**A.D. 1373-1415**

**Director of University of Prague—familiar with Wycliffe’s writings**

**Disobeyed papal decree which would have ended his preaching ministry  
Excommunicated in 1411**

**Declared “an unworthy pope is not to be obeyed.”**

**Burned at stake July 6, 1415**



[http://demo.lutherproductions.com/historytutor/basic/medieval/people/john\\_huss.htm](http://demo.lutherproductions.com/historytutor/basic/medieval/people/john_huss.htm)

**See also:**

Justo L. González, *The Story of Christianity, Vol. 1, 348-353*

One of those greatly impacted by the writings of **John Wycliffe** was the director of the University of Prague – a man named John Huss. Wycliffe’s writings created quite a stir in the University, which included both Germans and Czechs. The Germans rejected Wycliffe’s views, while the Czechs, while not accepting all of them (for instance, Huss did not agree with Wycliffe in regard to his rejection of transubstantiation), did support his views. The split eventually led the Germans to leave the University. This led many to believe that the Czechs were heretics. The archbishop of Prague, in an effort to silence Huss, “obtained a papal decree banning the works of Wycliffe, and also ordering that preaching should take place only in cathedrals, parish churches, and monasteries.” (1) This decree, if Huss had obeyed it, would have ended his preaching ministry, for he ministered at a chapel in Bethlehem (not the biblical Bethlehem). Huss disobeyed the decree. His disobedience in this and other acts, led the church to officially summon him to Rome in 1411. Huss disobeyed this decree as well. This led to his excommunication in 1411. At this point, Huss became more outspoken in his beliefs. He declared that “an unworthy pope is not to be obeyed.” (2) He also emphasized the importance of the Bible, stating that it “is the final authority by which the pope as well as any Christian is to be judged.” (3) Thus, Christians are under no obligation to obey a pope who does not obey the Bible. Huss’s vehement protests against the sale of indulgences to finance a crusade against Naples sealed his fate. Huss disagreed with the crusade in that it was politically motivated, and he disagreed with the sale of indulgences, in that he believed that only God can forgive sins. The king ordered Huss to speak no more against the crusade and indulgences. However, by this time, Huss’s protests had encouraged many of the people to protest the pope’s plans. The pope excommunicated Huss a second time. In order not to bring further distress to the nation, Huss withdrew to the country. However, while there, he heard of a council to be held in Constance. Huss was promised safe-conduct by Emperor Sigismund. This promise was not kept. When he arrived at the council, he was taken to the pope. He refused to recant his beliefs. He was

brought before the council on June 5, 1415. Once again, he was told to recant. Huss replied, “I appeal to Jesus Christ, the only judge who is almighty and completely just. In his hands I place my cause, since he will judge each, not on the basis of false witnesses and erring councils, but of truth and justice.” (4) July 6, 1415, was Huss’s last day on earth. He was led past piles of burning books that he had written to a stake where he himself would be burned alive. Before the fire was lit, he was given another opportunity to repent. Huss, as expected, refused. Instead, he prayed, “Lord Jesus, it is for thee that I patiently endure this cruel death. I pray thee to have mercy on my enemies.” (5) Huss reportedly was quoting the Psalms while the flames consumed him. Huss’s death greatly incensed the Bohemian people. Scores of noblemen declared their allegiance to Huss’s views.



[http://logosresourcepages.org/History/huss\\_b.htm](http://logosresourcepages.org/History/huss_b.htm)

1. Justo L. González, *The Story of Christianity, Volume 1* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1984), 349.  
2. González, *The Story of Christianity*, 349.  
3. González, *The Story of Christianity*, 349.  
4. González, *The Story of Christianity*, 350.  
5. González, *The Story of Christianity*, 351.

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[http://demo.lutherproductions.com/historytutor/basic/medieval/people/john\\_huss.htm](http://demo.lutherproductions.com/historytutor/basic/medieval/people/john_huss.htm)

**See also:**

Justo L. González,  
*The Story of Christianity, Vol. 1,*  
348-353

**NOTES:**

**1. Why would God permit his own children to be persecuted?**

**2. What do the following Scriptures teach about the Christian and persecution?**

*Matthew 5:10-12*

*John 16:1-4*

*2 Timothy 3:12*

*Hebrews 11:35-40*

**3. What can a Christian do to prepare himself or herself for times of persecution?**



[http://logosresourcepages.org/History/huss\\_b.htm](http://logosresourcepages.org/History/huss_b.htm)



# Hudson Taylor



*Justo L. González*

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:HudsonTaylorin1893.jpg>

**A.D. 1832-1905**

**Founder of  
China Inland  
Mission**

**Trusted God for  
all his needs**

**In contrast to  
missionary cus-  
toms, dressed  
as native  
Chinese  
dressed**

**At his death,  
CIM had 205  
mission sta-  
tions and 800  
missionaries.**

**“If I had a thou-  
sand pounds  
China should  
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China, but  
Christ. Can we  
do too much for  
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do enough for  
such a precious  
Saviour?”**

**See also:**

Justo L. González,  
*The Story of  
Christianity, Vol. 2,*  
312-313

As a young teenager, Hudson Taylor heard God tell him to go China. In preparation, Hudson lived and ministered among England’s poor. While there he learned to depend on God for everything—including his finances. Hudson’s approach to raising money was not to ask men for the money, rather, he learned that “He must move men through God—by prayer.”

Taylor sailed to China when he was 21 years old (the voyage took nearly 5 1/2 months). During these initial years in China, all prior to the founding of the China Inland Mission, Taylor discovered that he would be better received if he dressed as a native. Therefore, in contrast to the missionary customs of most, he adopted native Chinese dress—which meant shaving his forehead and wearing a pig-tail.

During these early years Taylor also met his wife, Maria. Taylor and his wife returned to England on furlough in 1860. During this furlough, Taylor completed his education (in medicine). He also wrote a book entitled *China’s Spiritual Need and Claims*, which was published in October of 1865. Taylor hoped that his words would move Christians to go to China. His sentiments may be seen in the following quote from the book, “Oh, for eloquence to plead the cause of China, for a pencil dipped in fire to paint the condition of this people.”

In addition to this, Taylor traveled throughout Great Britain, pressing the spiritual needs of China upon the Christians. He also met preacher Charles Haddon Spurgeon, who became one of Taylor’s supporters.

In June of 1865, Taylor founded the China Inland Mission. Soon, 24 missionaries had been accepted by CIM. Distinctives of this new mission were that it drew Christians from all denominations and that solicitations for money were not permitted.

The new mission team embarked for China in 1866. Upon arrival, the missionaries, both men and women, adopted Chinese dress. This was part of Taylor’s philosophy. He believed the gospel would be much more readily accepted if the missionaries adapted to the Chinese, rather than forcing the Chinese to adapt to the

missionaries.

The team began work in Hangzhou. Taylor preached and practiced medicine. However, the team was not united. It was only after the death of Taylor’s daughter Grace (in 1867) that the team really pulled together.

In 1868, CIM established a new base in Yangzhou, although this soon had to be abandoned due to violence against it.

1869 may be the most significant year in Taylor’s life, for it was then that he read a book entitled “Christ is All” by Stephen H. Tyng and discovered what it means to abide in Christ (see John 15). This discovery changed Taylor a great deal and must be considered a major reason CIM was able to accomplish all it did.

This discovery, however, did not prevent further tragedy from striking the Taylor family. In 1870, three additional family members died—sons Samuel and Noel, and Taylor’s wife Maria. Taylor, in poor health, returned to England in 1871. Taylor married again in 1871. In 1873, tragedy struck once again when his wife delivered stillborn twins. He was forced to return to England due to injuries suffered in a fall in 1875. In spite of this, Taylor pressed on. While in England, he wrote an appeal, asking for 18 new missionaries to return to China with him. The next year, Taylor returned to China with all 18.

Taylor spent the next years traveling throughout China, establishing new mission stations. The numbers of CIM missionaries increased each year—from 100 in 1881 to 225 in 1883 to over 325 in 1887. Eventually, 800 missionaries would serve in 205 mission stations. Thousands of converts are attributed to the work of the mission.

In 1900, tragedy struck the CIM. The Boxer Rebellion resulted in the deaths of 58 missionaries and 21 children from CIM. This, however, served to increase interest in the mission.

Records of Taylor’s life and work have inspired thousands to follow him, including Amy Carmichael (missionary to India), Jim Elliot (missionary to Ecuador), Eric Liddell (Olympic Gold Medalist—missionary to China), Luis Palau (evangelist), and Billy Graham (evangelist).

# Hudson Taylor



<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:HudsonTaylorin1893.jpg>

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**See also:**

Justo L. González,  
*The Story of  
Christianity, Vol. 2,*  
312-313

## NOTES:

1. Taylor adopted native dress. What benefits would this offer to the missionary? What benefits would this offer to those being evangelized? Why might have this been difficult for other missionaries to accept?

2. How do you see faith operating in the life of Hudson Taylor?

3. Do you think all missions organizations should operate as the CIM did in regard to finances? Why or why not?

4. Read John 15:1-17. What might “abiding in Christ” have to do with one’s success on the mission field?

5. Would those who know you best say that you are abiding in Christ?

# Martin Luther



<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:Luther46c.jpg>

**A.D. 1483-1546**

**Augustinian monk/Professor at University of Wittenberg**

**Nailed 95 Theses to church door on Oct 31, 1517**

**Pope Leo Referred to him as a "wild boar" in the vineyard of the Lord**

**Excommunicated in 1520**

**Translated Bible into German**

**"My conscience is a prisoner of God's Word. I cannot and will not recant, for to disobey one's conscience is neither just nor safe. God help me. Amen."**

**See also:**

Justo L. González, *The Story of Christianity, Vol. 2*, 14-45

Few names are as prominent within Protestant circles as that of **Martin Luther**. As influential as he was, it must be said that it is possible to overstate his significance. He was not the first person to recognize the need for reformation within the church. Many who went before him worked tirelessly for reformation. But while the early reformers were often killed before great change could take place (e.g., John Huss), Luther, by God's providence, was not killed. Born in 1483, Luther grew up in a strict home. His father desired that he would study law. However, very much against his father's wishes, Luther entered an Augustinian monastery in July of 1505. This decision was made just a few weeks earlier. He had been caught in a terrible thunderstorm and thought he was going to die. He cried out to Saint Anne, promising that he would become a monk if his life was spared. His life was spared, and he became a monk. However, monastic life did not bring long-term peace to his soul. The weight of his sin burdened him greatly. He thought of death and hell almost continually, knowing that God was just and that he was deserving of judgment for his sin. Luther entered the priesthood in 1507. This did not ease his pain. In fact, he came to realize that he did not love God.

In 1508, Luther began teaching at the University of Wittenberg. In 1512, he earned his doctorate in theology. Three years later, he began teaching from Paul's letter to the Romans. This is the book that changed his life, although he did not immediately grasp the implications of the teachings within Romans. The verse that initially captured his attention was Romans 1:17, "For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, 'The righteous shall live by faith.'" Luther pondered this verse night and day until he finally grasped the truth that God justifies (declares to be righteous) those who live by faith. This faith was not something a person had to earn. It was a gift from God. This discovery brought great joy to Luther. He said, "I felt that I had been born anew and that the gates of heaven had been opened. The whole of Scripture gained a new meaning. And from that point on the phrase 'the justice of God' no longer filled me with hatred, but rather became unspeakably sweet by virtue of a great love." (1) Luther did not, at this point, seek to withdraw from the established church. In time, the majority of professors at the University of Wittenberg seem to have been convinced of the truth he had learned. Eventually, he wrote Ninety-Seven Theses concerning the true nature of the gospel. The Theses were written so as to stir debate within academic circles. Surprisingly, the Theses did not elicit much attention whatsoever. The same cannot be said for the Ninety-Five Theses Luther posted on the door of the Wittenberg church on October 31, 1517. These Theses were written against the sale of indulgences. Indulgences were pieces of paper, given by authorization of the pope, which granted spiritual benefits to those who purchased them. They could be purchased for oneself, granting, it was said, forgiveness of sins. They could also be purchased for relatives who had died, granting, it was said, that relative immediate release from purgatory and passage into paradise.

At the time Luther had written his Theses, the pope had authorized the sale of new indulgences in Germany. Half of the money from the sale of these indulgences was to go toward the building of the Basilica of St. Peter. The

other half was to go to a bishop of two sees named Albert of Brandenburg, who needed the funds to purchase the most significant archbishopric in Germany. A Dominican friar named John Tetzel had been authorized to sell indulgences.

Tetzel and his preachers were heard announcing that the indulgence that they sold made the sinner "cleaner than when coming out of baptism," and "cleaner than Adam before the Fall," and that "the cross of the seller of indulgences has as much power as the cross of Christ." Those who wished to buy an indulgence for a loved one who was deceased were promised that, "as soon as the coin in the coffer rings, the soul from purgatory springs." (2)

Luther's Theses struck a nerve among the German people. Printers made many copies of his Theses – both in Latin and German – and these spread throughout Germany. A copy of the Theses reached Pope Leo. Leo initially hoped that the Augustinian order – of which Luther was a monk – would silence Luther. However, many of the Augustinians agreed with Luther. In addition, as John Tetzel was a Dominican, other Augustinians did not wish to see a Dominican gain a victory over an Augustinian. Leo was forced to resort to other means to silence Luther.

The events over the next several years are too many to describe in this brief summary of Luther's life. Suffice it to say that the pope's attempts to silence Luther were not successful. This was due, in part, to the pope's desire to court the German prince with jurisdiction over Luther, Frederick the Wise. Eventually, however, the pope issued a bull (a letter) comparing Luther to a wild boar in the vineyard of the Lord. In the bull, the pope demanded that Luther present himself to the Roman authorities within sixty days. The penalty for disobedience was to be excommunication. Luther burned the bull and was excommunicated in 1520. In 1521 he was called to the Diet of Worms. The emperor was present at this meeting. He, like the pope, desired to see Luther silenced. Luther was asked if he wished to recant of his writings. He asked for a day to consider his answer. The next day, after being asked the same question again, Luther responded, "My conscience is a prisoner of God's Word. I cannot and will not recant, for to disobey one's conscience is neither just nor safe. God help me. Amen." (3) After making this statement, Luther left the hall. An edict was written concerning Luther, "Luther is now to be seen as a convicted heretic. He has twenty-one days from the fifteenth of April. After that time, no one should give him shelter. His followers also are to be condemned, and his books will be erased from human memory." (4) This edict was never carried out. Frederick the Wise ordered an armed band of men to kidnap Luther and bring him to the castle of Wartburg. While there, Luther began translating the Bible into German. He also wrote other manuscripts which were distributed throughout Germany. By the time he left the castle, the reformation had gained enough momentum that it could not be stopped.

**Writings:** Translation of Old and New Testaments into German, Ninety-five Theses, On the Papacy at Rome, Address to the German Nobility, The Babylonian Captivity of the Church, The Bondage of the Will, Larger Catechism, Smaller Catechism, Lectures on Romans.

1. Justo L. González, *The Story of Christianity, Volume 2* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1985), 19-20.  
2. González, *The Story of Christianity, Volume 2*, 21.  
3. González, *The Story of Christianity, Volume 2*, 28.  
4. González, *The Story of Christianity, Volume 2*, 38.

# Martin Luther



<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:Luther46c.jpg>

## NOTES:

**A.D. 1483-1546**

**Augustinian monk/Professor at University of Wittenberg**

**Nailed 95 Theses to church door on Oct 31, 1517**

**Pope Leo Referred to him as a “wild boar” in the vineyard of the Lord**

**Excommunicated in 1520**

**Translated Bible into German**

**“My conscience is a prisoner of God’s Word. I cannot and will not recant, for to disobey one’s conscience is neither just nor safe. God help me. Amen.”**

### **See also:**

Justo L. González,  
*The Story of Christianity, Vol. 2,*  
14-45

**1. What evidence do you see of God’s sovereignty in the life of Martin Luther?**

**2. Why do you think God permitted the church to fall into the hands of such corrupt leaders during this time period? What, if anything, does this say about how he governs the affairs of the church?**

**3. Do you think a split in the church was inevitable? Wasn’t it possible that these reformations could have been brought about without the church splitting?**

**4. Thousands of people died as a result of the reformation. Why would God permit such evil to accompany the reforms that were taking place within the church?**

# Ulrich Zwingli



[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Huldrych\\_Zwingli](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Huldrych_Zwingli)

**A.D. 1484-1531**

**Priest in Zürich, Switzerland**

**Teachings regarding pilgrimages, indulgences, celibacy of priests, etc., led to conflicts with Rome**

**Due to Zwingli's influence, Zürich broke with Rome**

**Promoted education of all people, regardless of class**

**Gave people communion "in both kinds"**

**Believed only traditions specifically referred to in the Bible were to be supported**

**Killed in battle between Catholic and Protestant "cantons"**

**See also:**

Justo L. González, *The Story of Christianity, Vol. 2*, 46-60

As one of the most famous reformers, it is fitting that **Ulrich Zwingli** was born within just a couple of months of Martin Luther (Luther was older). Upon earning his Master of Arts, Zwingli served as priest in Glarus, Switzerland. While there he continued his studies, emphasizing humanism (which is not to be confused with modern secular humanism) and Greek. After leaving Glarus, Zwingli served as a priest at an abbey. Many people would come to this abbey on pilgrimages; however Zwingli was convinced – and taught – that pilgrimages like this did nothing to merit salvation. Zwingli eventually left the abbey and became a priest in Zürich. He came to hold many of the same convictions that Luther held. Zwingli arrived at his beliefs, not through reading Luther's books, but through his study of the Scriptures. Particularly, Zwingli stood against indulgences, superstition, the misuse of ecclesiastical authority, the required celibacy of priests, and the mercenary service that was forced upon the people by the leaders. He also taught against laws of fasting and abstinence, as witnessed by the fact that some of his parishioners ate sausages during Lent. Such beliefs soon led to conflicts with Rome. Zwingli was forced to defend his beliefs at a Council of Government in Zürich. The bishop of Constance sent a representative, who refused to debate with Zwingli. The Council determined that since the Church had not proved Zwingli wrong, he could continue to preach. The government of Zürich, by allowing Zwingli to continue preaching, thus broke with the bishopric of Constance, and as a result, with Rome itself. At this point, the government became supporters of the reformation in Zürich. As the reformation continued, priests and nuns renounced their vows of celibacy. Education for all people, regardless of class, was promoted. And the people were given communion "in both kinds" (that is, both the bread and the wine). The reformation spread throughout Switzerland. At this time, Switzerland was divided into a number of states called cantons. As the reformation continued, some cantons embraced Protestantism. Five cantons, however, remained true to the Catholic Church. These Catholic cantons attacked Zürich in October, 1531. Zwingli was killed during this battle. A peace treaty was signed a few weeks later,

giving each canton the right to determine its own religion.

Zwingli and Luther found much to agree on, however there were significant differences. For instance, Luther believed that traditions were acceptable unless they were explicitly refuted by the Bible. Zwingli, on the other hand, believed that only those traditions that were specifically referred to in the Bible were to be supported. Thus, he did not permit the use of organs or violins in the church, for these were not referred to in the Scriptures. The biggest difference between the two reformers – and the difference that kept them from joining forces – was their understanding of communion. Luther believed that Christ was present in communion (although not in the same manner that the Catholics believed). Zwingli believed that the elements of communion, while significant, were memorials of Christ.

While the reforms encouraged by Zwingli certainly changed Christianity in Switzerland, some felt that the reforms had not gone far enough. The Anabaptists, meaning "rebaptizers," were one such group. They believed that the church should be separated from the state. Infant baptism, they believed, could not place one in the church. For this reason, they taught that one ought not to be baptized until he has personally chosen Christ. Both Zwingli and Luther stood against the Anabaptists. The Anabaptists were heavily persecuted. Many, ironically, were drowned.

**Writings:** Concerning Freedom and Choice of Food, Sixty-seven Conclusions

1. Kenneth Scott Latourette, *A History of Christianity: Volume 1, Beginnings to 1500* (Peabody, Mass.: Prince, 2000), 153.

2. Latourette, *A History of Christianity*, 155.

3. Justo L. González, *The Story of Christianity: Volume 1, The Early Church to the Dawn of the Reformation* (San Francisco, HarperSanFrancisco, 1984), 173.

# Ulrich Zwingli



[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Huldrych\\_Zwingli](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Huldrych_Zwingli)

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**See also:**

Justo L. González,  
*The Story of Christianity, Vol. 2,*  
46-60

## NOTES:

**1. Zwingli would not permit any activities within the church that were not explicitly referred to in the Scriptures. Do you think this is a wise rule? What would change within your church if this rule was followed today?**

**2. Why do you think the question of the nature of communion would be enough to keep two reformers like Zwingli and Luther—who otherwise agreed about so much—separate? Do you think their separation helped or hindered the cause of reformation?**

**3. Zwingli and Luther lived during the same time period, but their beliefs were not shaped by one another. Instead, they arrived at their beliefs separately. What does this tell you about the work of God during this time period?**

# John Calvin



[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:John\\_Calvin\\_-\\_best\\_likeness.jpg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:John_Calvin_-_best_likeness.jpg)

**A.D. 1509-1564**

**Called to work in Geneva, Switzerland—against his will**

**Wrote *The Institutes*—a systematic theology still very much in use today**



[http://demo.lutherproductions.com/historytutor/basic/medieval/people/john\\_huss.htm](http://demo.lutherproductions.com/historytutor/basic/medieval/people/john_huss.htm)

**See also:**

Justo L. González, *The Story of Christianity, Vol. 2*, 61-69

**John Calvin** arrived in Switzerland just five years after the death of Ulrich Zwingli. He was born in France in 1509. He studied theology in Paris, intent on a career in the church. At his father's suggestion he also studied law. In these early days, Calvin was a devoted Catholic. Indeed, he said, "I was stubbornly tied to the superstitions of the papacy." (1) In his writings, Calvin does not describe how or when his understanding of salvation and of the church changed, but at some point Calvin embraced Protestantism. Francis I's aggression toward the Protestants drove Calvin to leave France, so in 1535 he settled in Basel, Switzerland. Calvin did not set out to become a leading reformer. Rather, he desired to study and write. He had already written one small treatise regarding "the state of the souls of the dead before the resurrection." (2) Specifically, he desired to write regarding Protestant theology – an area of study that had not been well developed up to this time period. In 1536, he published the first edition of the *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. This book, which totaled six chapters and 516 pages in length, was a great success. As it was written in Latin, it was able to be read throughout Europe. New editions appeared, in French and in Latin, at regular intervals thereafter. The last editions appeared in 1559 (Latin) and 1560 (French). By this time, the *Institutes*, the name they became known by, had swelled to eighty chapters. The *Institutes* rightly ranks as among the most significant works of Protestantism. In 1536, while journeying to Strasbourg, Calvin stopped in Geneva. A man named William Farel convinced him to stay in the city so that he might bring help to the Protestant cause. Soon, Calvin was leading the Protestant movement in Geneva. His leadership, however, put him at odds with the bourgeoisie then in control of the government. He was forced from the city. During his exile from Geneva, Calvin settled in Strasbourg and married Idelette de Bure. However Calvin's stay in Strasbourg was brief. By 1541 he was back in the city of Geneva. His influence in the city, while not always seen as positive, was enormous. Calvin's influence (already significant due to the publication of the *Institutes*) increased further with the founding of the Genevan Academy in 1539. In addition to the residents of Geneva, students from all over

Europe studied at the school. These students then returned to their own land, resulting in Calvin's teachings being spread throughout Europe.

Calvin differed from Luther and Zwingli in his understanding of communion. He believed that Christ's presence in communion is more than symbolic (which was what Zwingli believed), and it is not mysteriously present in the elements (which was what Luther believed). Rather, Calvin taught that Christ's presence in communion is spiritual. When believers share in communion they are, "by the power of the Holy Spirit ... taken to heaven and share with Christ in a foretaste of the heavenly banquet." (3) But while Calvin and Luther differed in their understanding of communion, Luther did appreciate the *Institutes*.

**Writings:** *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Commentaries on 49 books of Scripture

1. Justo L. González, *The Story of Christianity, Volume 2* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1985), 62.

2. González, *The Story of Christianity, Volume 2*, 63.

3. González, *The Story of Christianity, Volume 2*, 68.

# John Calvin



[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:John\\_Calvin\\_-\\_best\\_likeness.jpg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:John_Calvin_-_best_likeness.jpg)

**A.D. 1509-1564**

**Called to work in Geneva, Switzerland—against his will**

**Wrote *The Institutes*—a systematic theology still very much in use today**

## NOTES:

1. How do you see God's sovereignty at work in the life of John Calvin?

2. Calvin became a very powerful leader in Geneva and used this influence as he thought best. What dangers would this present to a Christian?

3. Do you think it is possible to legislate morality within a city? Why or why not?

4. What is the value of a systematic theology like the Institutes?



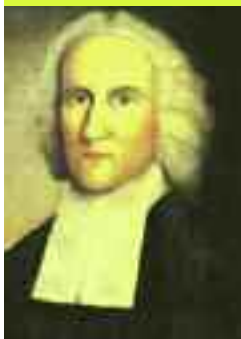
[http://demo.lutherproductions.com/historytutor/basic/medieval/people/john\\_huss.htm](http://demo.lutherproductions.com/historytutor/basic/medieval/people/john_huss.htm)

## See also:

Justo L. González,  
*The Story of Christianity, Vol. 2,*  
61-69



# Jonathan Edwards



[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jonathan\\_Edwards](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jonathan_Edwards)

**A.D. 1703-1758**

**Congregational pastor**

**Northampton, MA church experienced great revival while he was pastor**

**Revival spread throughout east coast—commonly referred to as First Great Awakening**

**Missionary to Native Americans**

**Considered America's greatest theologian**

**Served as president of Princeton for a brief period**

**See also:**

Justo L. González, *The Story of Christianity, Vol. 2*, 228-230

Widely acknowledged as America's preeminent theologian, Jonathan Edwards's sermons, books and letters are a remarkable testament to what God can do through a man devoted to God's glory. Blessed with an extremely sharp mind, Jonathan Edwards knew Greek, Hebrew and Latin by the time he was 13. After his education at Yale (he graduated when he was 17), Edwards began graduate school. While he was licensed to preach in 1722, he could not accept a pastorate until he studied an additional six years after college. During this time period, he preached in various churches. He also, during this time period, drew up 70 resolutions which he resolved to live by. Below are the first three:

1. *Resolved*, That I will do whatsoever I think to be most to the glory of God and my own good, profit, and pleasure, in the whole of my duration, without any consideration of the time, whether now, or never so many myriads of ages hence. Resolved, to do whatever I think to be my duty, and most for the good of mankind in general. Resolved so to do, whatever difficulties I meet with, how many soever, and how great soever.
2. *Resolved*, To be continually endeavoring to find out some new contrivance and invention to promote the forementioned things.
3. *Resolved*, If ever I shall fall and grow dull, so as to neglect to keep any part of these resolutions, to repent of all I can remember, when I come to myself again. (1)

Edwards examined these resolutions weekly. He also maintained a disciplined life in the areas of study, fasting and prayer. In fact, he studied an average of 13 hours a day.

In 1726, Edwards began serving as assistant pastor at the Northampton, MA Congregational Church under his grandfather, Rev. Solomon Stoddard. He was married a short time later to Sarah Pierpont. Eventually, they had eleven children.

Edwards's grandfather, Rev. Stoddard, died in 1729, leaving the church in Edwards's care. Soon, revival came to the church. Reports indicate that changes were felt in every

household, and in a short time there were more than 300 conversions. Edwards recorded the events of this time period in his *Narrative of Surprising Conversion*, published in 1736. In 1740, a second revival swept the town of Northampton. George Whitefield, the Anglican evangelist, came to Northampton in the fall of that year. Soon, the revival spread to churches throughout the east coast. In fact, more than 150 churches experienced revival during this time period and thousands were converted. However, as with every revival, there were issues that Edwards was forced to deal with. Due to false teaching and other abuses he saw during this time, Edwards was compelled to write *Thoughts Concerning the Present Revival of Religion in New England and Treatise on Religious Affections*.

Eventually, Edwards was forced out of the church in Northampton. This was due to the stand he took against false teaching which had been propagated by none other than his grandfather, Rev. Stoddard. In 1749, Edwards published *Humble Inquiry into the Rules of the Word of God, Concerning the Qualifications, Requisite to a Complete Standing and Full Communion in the Visible Christian Church*.

In 1751, Edwards became pastor of a church in Stockbridge, MA. While there he also directed a mission to Native Americans. In 1758, Edwards took over as president of Princeton College. He died on March 22 of that year.

Edwards is perhaps best remembered for a sermon entitled, *Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God*. However, his sermons, of which more than 1,100 exist in manuscript form, were not intended to scare people into conversion. Nor were they particularly emotional. Rather, Edwards's sermons were careful theological treatises from a Calvinistic perspective.

Edwards's works are still read by many, and have continued to shape the thinking of Christians into the twenty-first century.

**Writings:** Religious Affections, The Freedom of the Will, Narrative of the Surprising Work of God. Edited the diary of David Brainerd, missionary to the Native Americans

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[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jonathan\\_Edwards](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jonathan_Edwards)

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**Missionary to Native Americans**

**Considered America's greatest theologian**

**Served as president of Princeton for a brief period**

**See also:**

Justo L. González,  
*The Story of Christianity, Vol. 2,*  
228-230

**NOTES:**

**1. What prompts a revival? Do you think Edwards's ministry or approach to ministry had anything to do with it? Why or why not.**

**2. Why don't we see revival more often?**

**3. Why do you think God was able to use Edwards in such an extraordinary way?**

**4. What is the value to future generations of Christians of books and sermons like those left by Jonathan Edwards?**

# John Wesley



[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John\\_Wesley](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Wesley)

**A.D. 1703-1791**

**Anglican priest while at Oxford led club devoted to holiness—due to methods used by group, some called them “Methodists”**

**Sailed to Georgia to pastor and to evangelize native Americans**

**Converted on May 24, 1738—  
”I felt my heart strangely warmed.”**

**Preaching led to development of the Methodist church**



<http://www.brychancarey.com/abolition/wesley.htm>

**See also:**  
Justo L. González,  
*The Story of Christianity, Vol. 2,*  
209-216

**John Wesley's** roots were thoroughly Anglican—his father was an Anglican priest as was his grandfather (his mother's father). While at Oxford, John joined his brother Charles (later to become a famous hymn writer), George Whitefield (later to become a famous evangelist), and others in a club devoted to holiness. This holiness which they were devoted to was not due to the work of Jesus, but to their own efforts. In 1735, Wesley sailed to America in order to pastor a church in Savannah, Georgia. He also hoped to evangelize among the Native Americans. Wesley failed at both of these tasks. Upon his return to England, Wesley, in doubt of his own salvation, contacted the Moravians. He had met some Moravians on the voyage to America and had been impressed by their spiritual life. Wesley became convinced that he was not saved. This changed on May 24, 1738. Wesley recorded the event as follows:

In the evening I went very unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate Street, where one was reading Luther's preface to the Epistle to the Romans. About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for salvation: And an assurance was given me, that he had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death. (1)

Now that Wesley's own salvation was assured, he devoted himself to the salvation of others. He was invited to Bristol by George Whitefield, who had been converted several years earlier. Whitefield was finding great success preaching in the open air to the common workers. Wesley did not believe the preaching of the gospel should be done outside of a church. However, he did go and preach to the people, and he found that many were responding to the message. Eventually, due to differences in their understanding of predestination, Wesley and Whitefield parted ways.

Wesley did not intend to start a new church. Instead, he hoped his preaching would bring new life to the Anglican Church. For this reason, he did not schedule meetings while

Anglican services were taking place. In addition, Wesley encouraged those attending the Methodist meetings to attend the Anglican church and to take communion there.

Wesley organized those within the movement in societies—a small group. Later, these societies were divided into classes. These classes were led by ordinary laymen, and, in the case of women's classes, laywomen. Wesley traveled throughout Great Britain preaching and encouraging the Methodists. Wesley traveled by horseback everywhere he went—a practice he continued into his seventies. Over his lifetime, it is estimated he traveled nearly 250,000 miles, almost all on horseback. He even read books while riding his horse to meetings. Wesley preached 40,000 sermons over his lifetime, an average of two per day. However, even with these efforts, he found that the needs of the Methodists were greater than he could meet. Eventually, Wesley was persuaded that trained laymen and women could ease his burden. They then began preaching to the people.

Wesley and the Methodists experienced a good deal of persecution in the early days of the ministry. Wesley's life was threatened a number of times. Some of this was due to the place in which Wesley preached—outside. Some of it was due to his beliefs, which differed significantly from those within the Anglican Church. For instance, based on the Scriptures, Wesley believed that bishop, elder and presbyter were all synonymous terms. Therefore, he was convinced that an ordained presbyter could ordain other leaders.

Two of the laymen he ordained were sent to America in 1784. In addition, Wesley appointed an Anglican priest named Thomas Coke as their superintendent. Wesley himself spoke against the rebellion in America.

In 1787, again, against his earlier wishes, the Methodists felt compelled to register themselves as a separate church. In addition to the Methodist church, churches springing from the Methodist root include the Wesleyan Church, Holiness Churches, Pentecostal Churches, and the Christian and Missionary Alliance Church.

1. Justo L. González, *The Story of Christianity, Volume 2* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1985), 212.

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[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John\\_Wesley](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Wesley)

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**Preaching led to development of the Methodist church**



<http://www.brychancarey.com/abolition/wesley.htm>

**See also:**

Justo L. González,  
*The Story of Christianity, Vol. 2,*  
209-216

**NOTES:**

- 1. Wesley differed from George Whitefield in beliefs. Clearly, both men were not correct in regard to their understanding of predestination, yet God used them both mightily. What might this say about God’s concern regarding man’s understanding of issues like predestination?**
- 2. What events in Wesley’s life do you see happening “against his will?” What might this tell us about God’s sovereignty and the work of ministry?**
- 3. Wesley was enabled to work into his seventies, preaching over two times per day and traveling thousands of miles by horseback. This is in addition to the writing he continued throughout his life. How do you think he was able to keep his own spiritual fervor in spite of such a demanding schedule.**
- 4. Which of Wesley’s ideas do you find influencing the church today?**

# William Carey



<http://www.wholesomewords.org/biography/biorpcarey.html>

**A.D. 1761-1834**

**“The father of modern missions”**

**Wrote *An Enquiry into the Obligations of Christians to use Means for the Conversion of the Heathens***

**He and his team translated the Bible or parts of it into 35 languages**

**“Expect great things from God; attempt great things for God.”**

**Founded Serampore College**

**His life prompted many to devote themselves to missions**

**See also:**

Justo L. González, *The Story of Christianity, Vol. 2*, 306-311

Like Jonathan Edwards, **William Carey** was blessed with a sharp, inquisitive mind. He worked as a cobbler, but, even while working, he was always learning—he taught himself Latin, Greek, Hebrew, Italian, Dutch, and French. In 1785, Carey began pastoring a church in Moulton, England (he also worked as a schoolmaster at this time). But while his physical efforts were directed toward the saints in Moulton, his focus was increasingly directed toward foreign lands. He poured over Captain Cook’s reports concerning his voyages in the Pacific and the Diary of David Brainerd (edited by Jonathan Edwards). Seven years later, Carey began pastoring a Baptist church in Leicester. In 1792, Carey published *An Enquiry into the Obligations of Christians to use Means for the Conversion of the Heathens*. This book outlined theological reasons to engage in missionary work, a brief history of missions in the church, an overview of the populations and beliefs of the various countries of the world, a response to common objections to the missionary movement, and a call for the creation of a missions society. It was a call to, as he would later say, “Expect great things from God; attempt great things for God.” Carey was not content to wait for others to act. That year—1792—he, along with several others, began the Particular Baptist Society for Propagating the Gospel amongst the Heathen.

In 1793, Carey and his family sailed to Calcutta, India. The British East India Company was not favorable to missions work, so Carey was forced to base his operations in Serampore.

Carey focused much of his attention on translating the Bible into the local languages (including Bengali and Sanskrit). He firmly believed that people need to have a copy of the Bible in their own language. In spite of many setbacks—for instance, in 1812, the print shop caught fire and three years worth of work were destroyed—Carey and his associates were able to translate the Bible, or portions thereof, into more than 30 languages. Carey also worked to end the injustices he saw. At that time in India, when a husband died, his body was burned on a pyre.

Unbelievably, the widow—who was very much alive—was burned along with her husband. Thanks, in a large part, to Carey’s persistence,



[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:Hindu\\_Suttee.jpg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:Hindu_Suttee.jpg)

this practice was finally outlawed in 1829. If this wasn’t enough, the mission started and ran a college dedicated to the training of ministers. But the Serampore College was for more than just ministers. It also focused on the arts and sciences, providing educational opportunities for all, regardless of their caste. Successes in India came at a great price. Carey’s son Peter died due to dysentery and his wife Dorothy suffered a nervous breakdown as a result. Her condition was a trial to Carey and the other missionaries. She passed away in 1807. Carey remarried a year later. The first missionary arriving to help him also died of dysentery. Another died after he had been in the country less than a month. Later, Carey’s eldest son passed away, as did his second wife.

Eventually, the founding members of the mission society began to pass away and new members replaced them. These new members were not willing to live or to work in the manner in which the original members had lived and worked. Consequently, Carey left the mission society and moved to Serampore College, where he continued his work.

While Carey’s life was focused on those within India, perhaps his greatest influence was in the lives of those outside of India. Reports of his work prompted many Christians to enter the mission field. Others, inspired by his labors, began missions societies which resulted in many more being sent into the mission field.

While many attribute Carey’s accomplishments to his sharp mind, Carey said that his great attribute was that he could “plod.” That is, he kept at the task God had called him to complete, day after day, week after week, month after month, and year after year.

# William Carey



<http://www.wholesomewords.org/biography/biorpcarey.html>

**A.D. 1761-1834**

**“The father of modern missions”**

**Wrote An Enquiry into the Obligations of Christians to use Means for the Conversion of the Heathens**

**He and his team translated the Bible or parts of it into 35 languages**

**“Expect great things from God; attempt great things for God.”**

**Founded Serampore College**

**His life prompted many to devote themselves to missions**

**See also:**

Justo L. González,  
*The Story of Christianity, Vol. 2,*  
306-311

**NOTES:**

**1. What do you see as Carey's most significant accomplishment and why?**

**2. What potential excuses did Carey have that might have prevented him from beginning or completing the work he eventually completed?**

**3. Many Christian leaders (e.g., Augustine) were forced into the places where they ministered— in other words, they didn't open the doors, the doors were opened for them. Carey, on the other hand, worked tirelessly to open the doors that allowed him to go to India. What does this tell you about the manner in which God works?**

**4. Why do you think God permitted so many setbacks in Carey's life? Do you think Carey would have been more productive without these setbacks?**



[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:Hindu\\_Suttee.jpg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:Hindu_Suttee.jpg)

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**“Men are God’s method.  
The church is looking for better methods;  
God is looking for better men.”**

**E.M. Bounds**



[www.hands-to-the-plow.org](http://www.hands-to-the-plow.org)