

# CHRISTIAN HISTORY

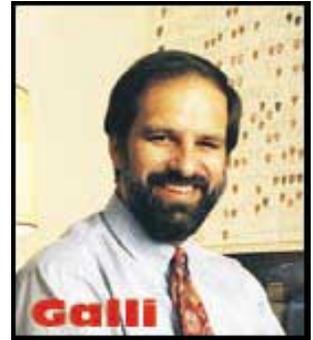
Issue 65: Ten Influential Christians of the 20th Century

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## The Ten Most Influential Christians of the Twentieth Century: From the Editor - The Long and the Short of Lists

Mark Galli

The journalist in me is pretty happy with this issue's title, "The 10 Most Influential Christians of the Twentieth Century." It's got bite, appeal, and it begs for an argument. And I had a lot of fun pulling the list together: after reading the results of our poll (see "[What Do You Think?](#)") and sifting that through my experience and reading, this is what came out.



On the other hand, the historian in me is nagged by the qualifications that whisper their disapproval.

First, among the readers and scholars we polled last year, one exclaimed: "I am amazed by the list of candidates ... as if the entire church consisted of Westerners!" Valid criticism.

Then again, had we put, let's say, Africans John Chilembwe and Simeoni Nsibambi on this list, would they have garnered many votes? I doubt it. Nearly all Christian History readers and scholars (and the editor) are Westerners; we know the West; we've been affected by the West. We could hardly vote any other way. Besides, influential Westerners in the Northern Hemisphere have unparalleled access to mass media, and they have, for better or worse, received disproportionate exposure and so have had disproportionate influence. That's the way the world is at this point in history.

Second, one fellow editor in the Christianity Today International, building, was especially incensed: "How could you leave out so many women, like Henrietta Mears, who disciplined men like Senate chaplain Richard Halverson and Campus Crusade founder Bill Bright?" Point well taken. Yet other than leaving off Mears, I have no regrets in this respect. The historical fact is that for the bulk of the twentieth century, Christian women have been excluded from public influence. I'm sure my editorial heir in the year 2100 will have a lot more female names on the ballot listing the most influential Christians of the twenty-first century.

Finally, as reader Jeremy Stefano put it, "How can someone's influence in an organism as diverse and scattered as the church be gauged?" In his e-mail, he argued that while the media catapulted Mother Teresa to fame, it ignored the work of people like scholar Bruce Metzger—who headed the committees that translated the RSV and NRSV, Bible versions read by millions, and whose Greek New Testament has become dog-eared with use by seminarians and pastors for decades. Stefano concludes, "Influence in the cause of the Kingdom of God cannot be gauged in this life."

This is why, I'm sure, more than one reader ignored our instructions (to note only those who have had a **public** influence) and put down as most influential a father, mother, or pastor. For good reason. Those most close to us will remain the most vital influences.

Still, I find this most-influential list most inspiring. Such an exercise is a way to look back on the century and, as the psalmist said, "remember the wonderful works [God] has done, his miracles, and the judgments he has uttered" (105:5). Reader Larry Bjorklund put it more poignantly: "The list of names you provided ... is wonderful, and as I read through it, my mind went back to so many of them who have influenced my life in so many ways. I wish I could tell each of them how greatly their lives challenged me in my walk in Christ."

Indeed.

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## The Ten Most Influential Christians of the Twentieth Century: Introductory Timeline - Visionary Years

It was an ambitious and sometimes tragic century in which Christians lived out the gospel.

editors

United States poet laureate Robert Pinsky said in a recent interview, "The history of my century is a history in which the visionary has repeatedly collapsed into nightmare. ... Pol Pot was a visionary. And Hitler was a visionary."

The century seemed to be one large, visionary experiment in which people desperately sought, as Alexandr Solzhenitsyn put it, "to live without God." Politics was to save us from injustice, science from disease, psychoanalysis from suffering, and literature from despair. When it worked, we benefited (civil rights, a cure for polio), but when it didn't, it turned tragic (the Holocaust, chemical warfare).

And all the while, Christians lived out their faith. Some worked alongside the humanitarians, though with a slightly different agenda (e.g., John Mott, Mother Teresa, Martin Luther King, Jr.), some opposed the utopians (Karl Barth, C. S. Lewis, Solzhenitsyn); some did an end-around, renewing the church (popes John XXIII and John Paul II) or nurturing the spirit (Billy Graham, William Seymour).

To be sure, the century produced more tragedy and suffering than all other centuries combined, but as the calendar begins a new millennium, the Christian church, though still under attack in many quarters, is larger and stronger than ever—thanks in part to the ten people profiled in the following pages.

### —The editors

#### World Politics

**1914-1918** The Great War

**1917** Russian Revolution

**1936** Joseph Stalin begins a bloody purge that would claim millions of lives

**1939** Adolf Hitler's invasion of Poland sparks World War II

**1941** Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor

**1942** Nazi leaders decide on their "Final Solution": to kill all European Jews

**1945** United States drops atomic bombs on Japan; the United Nations founded

**1949** Communist Mao Tse-tung emerges as the leader of the People's Republic of China; Western powers found NATO

**1964** Gulf of Tonkin resolution commits American troops to Vietnam (they would maintain a presence until 1973)

**1989** The destruction of the Berlin Wall signals the end of the Cold War

### **Science/Technology**

**1905** Albert Einstein publishes his theory of relativity

**1908** Ford rolls out the first mass-produced automobile, the Model T

**1928** First all-electronic TV patented

**1947** Transistor invented at AT&T's Bell Laboratories

**1949** U.S.S.R. detonates its first atomic bomb, initiating the Cold War nuclear arms race

**1955** Jonas Salk's polio vaccine released for use in the United States

**1957** Russians launch **Sputnik**—and the "space race"

**1961** Researchers discover the structure of DNA

**1962** Rachel Carson's **Silent Spring** kicks off environmental movement

**1969** The United States lands a man on the moon

**1971** Intel introduces the microprocessor

**1981** Scientists identify Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS); IBM launches the first personal computer

**1997** Chess master Garry Kasparov loses to the computer Deep Blue

### **Society**

**1900** Sigmund Freud publishes **The Interpretation of Dreams**

**1919** Prohibition amendment passed

**1925** Fundamentalists mocked nationally for the Scopes "Monkey" trial

**1954** Segregation outlawed by the Supreme Court in Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka

**1960** The FDA approves the birth control pill

**1963** Feminism is born with the publication of Betty Friedan's **The Feminine Mystique**

**1969** Woodstock celebrates youth counter-culture; California legalizes no-fault divorce

**1973** Abortion is declared a woman's "fundamental right" by the Supreme Court in *Roe v. Wade*

**1981** MTV debuts with "Video Killed the Radio Star"

**1993** Internet takes off with the creation of the Mosaic browser

### **Art/Literature**

**1900** Friedrich Nietzsche, who declared in *The Gay Science* (1882) that "God is dead," dies

**1910** The first abstract painting, "Improvisation XIV," is unveiled by German artist Vasily Kandinsky

**1922** Modernism makes a literary statement with the publication of T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* and James Joyce's *Ulysses*; logical positivism finds voice in Ludwig Wittgenstein's *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*

**1929** A. N. Whitehead expounds process philosophy in *Process and Reality*

**1934** John Dewey advocates anti-supernatural humanism in *A Common Faith*

**1956** French playwright Jean-Paul Sartre sounds existentialism's hopeless note in *Being and Nothingness*

**1961** Michel Foucault's *Madness and Civilization* explores society's power relations

**1967** Jacques Derrida introduces deconstructionism in *De la grammatologie*

**1981** Alisdair MacIntyre's *After Virtue* argues the failure of the Enlightenment's liberal individualism

**1987** Allen Bloom criticizes higher education in the U.S. in *The Closing of the American Mind*

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# CHRISTIAN HISTORY

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## Evangelicalism: Billy Graham

As an evangelist he has preached to millions; as an evangelical he put a movement on the map.

William Martin

The litany of accomplishments is familiar. Billy Graham has preached the gospel of Christ in person to more than 80 million people and to countless millions more over the airwaves and in films. Nearly 3 million have responded to the invitation he offers at the end of his sermons.

He was the first Christian, eastern or western, to preach in public behind the Iron Curtain after World War II, culminating in giant gatherings in Budapest (1989) and Moscow (1992) and complemented by unprecedented invitations to Pyongyang, North Korea (1992) and Beijing (1993).

He has been a friend to the pope, the queen, several prime ministers, and every president from Dwight Eisenhower to Bill Clinton. When America needs a chaplain or pastor to help inaugurate or bury a president or to bring comfort in times of terrible tragedy, it turns, more often than not, to him.

For virtually every year since the 1950s, he has been a fixture on lists of the ten most admired people in America or the world. He has received both the Presidential Medal of Freedom (1983) and the Congressional Gold Medal (1996), the highest honors these two branches of government can bestow upon a civilian. Thus, it is hardly surprising that a *Ladies Home Journal* survey once ranked the famed evangelist second only to God in the category, "achievements in religion."

Born near Charlotte, North Carolina, in 1918, Billy Graham first attended Bob Jones College, but he found both the climate and Dr. Bob's strict rule intolerable. He then followed a friend to Florida Bible Institute, where he began preaching and changed his denominational affiliation from Associate Reformed Presbyterian to Southern Baptist. To round out his intensive but academically narrow education, he moved north to Wheaton College, where he met and married Ruth Bell, the daughter of a medical missionary, and undertook his first and only stint as a local pastor.

In 1945 Graham became the field representative of a dynamic evangelistic movement known as Youth for Christ International. In this role, he toured the United States and much of Great Britain and Europe, teaching local church leaders how to organize youth rallies. He also forged friendships with scores of Christian leaders who would later join his organization or provide critical assistance to his crusades when he visited their cities throughout the world.

"When  
God  
gets  
ready  
to  
shake  
America,  
he may  
not  
take

Graham gained further exposure and stature through nationally publicized crusades in Los Angeles, Boston, Washington, and other major cities from 1949 to 1952, and through his *Hour of Decision* radio program, begun in 1950. Stunningly successful months-long revivals in London (1954) and New York (1957), triumphant tours of the Continent and the Far East, the founding of *Christianity Today* magazine (1956), the launching of nationwide television broadcasts on ABC (1957), and a public friendship with President Dwight Eisenhower and Vice-President Richard Nixon firmly established him as the acknowledged standard-bearer for evangelical Christianity.

As Graham's prestige and influence grew, particularly among "mainline" (non-evangelical) Christians, he drew criticism from fundamentalists who felt his cooperation with churches affiliated with the National and World Council of Churches signaled a compromise with

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D. and  
the D.D.  
God  
may  
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a  
country  
boy  
... and I  
pray  
that he  
would!"

—Billy  
Graham

the corrupting forces of modernism. Bob Jones accused him of peddling a "discount type of religion" and "sacrificing the cause of evangelism on the altar of temporary convenience." The enduring break with hard-line fundamentalism came in 1957, when, after accepting an invitation from the Protestant Council of New York to hold a crusade in Madison Square Garden, Graham announced, "I intend to go anywhere, sponsored by anybody, to preach the gospel of Christ, if there are no strings attached to my message. ... The one badge of Christian discipleship is not orthodoxy but love. Christians are not limited to any church. The only question is: are you committed to Christ?"

The New York Crusade marked another significant development in Graham's ministry. At a time when sit-ins and boycotts were stirring racial tensions in the South, Graham invited Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., to discuss the racial situation with him and his colleagues and to lead the Garden congregation in prayer. The implication was unmistakable: Graham was letting both whites and blacks know that he was willing to be identified with the civil rights movement and its foremost leader, and King was telling blacks that Billy Graham was their ally. Graham would never feel comfortable with King's confrontational tactics; still, his voice was important in declaring that a Christian racist was an oxymoron.

During the decade that spanned the presidencies of Lyndon Johnson and Richard Nixon, to whom he had close and frequent access, Graham often drew fire from critics who felt he ought to be bolder in supporting the civil rights movement and, later, in opposing the war in Vietnam. The normally complimentary *Charlotte Observer* noted in 1971 that even some of Graham's fellow Southern Baptists felt he was "too close to the powerful and too fond of the things of the world, [and] have likened him to the prophets of old who told the kings of Israel what they wanted to hear."

The evangelist enjoyed his association with presidents and the prestige it conferred on his ministry. At the same time, presidents and other political luminaries clearly regarded their friendship with Graham as a valuable political asset. During his re-election campaign, for example, Nixon instructed his chief of staff, H. R. Haldeman, to call Graham about once every two weeks, "so that he doesn't feel that we are not interested in the support of his group in those key states where they can be helpful." After the Watergate scandal, Graham drew back a bit and began to warn against the temptations and pitfalls that lie in wait for religious leaders who enter the political arena.

When the movement known as the Religious Right surfaced in the late 1970s, he declined to participate in it, warning fellow Christian leaders to "be wary of exercising political influence" lest they lose their spiritual impact.

As Graham came to sense the breadth of his influence, he grew ever more determined not only to help evangelicalism become increasingly dynamic and self-confident, but also to shape the direction of contemporary Christianity. That determination manifested itself in several major international conferences sponsored or largely underwritten by the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association (BGEA).

In particular, the 1966 World Congress on Evangelism in Berlin, attended by 1,200 evangelical leaders from 104 nations, and the 1974 International Congress on World Evangelization in Lausanne, Switzerland, attended by 2,400 delegates from 150 countries, helped evangelicals to see themselves as a worldwide Christian force, alongside Vatican II and the World Council of Churches, an international movement capable of accomplishing more than its constituents had dreamed possible.

Few, if any, developments in Billy Graham's ministry have been more surprising or controversial than his success in penetrating the Iron Curtain. Beginning in 1978, virtually every Soviet-controlled country progressively gave him privileges that no other churchman, including the most prominent and politically docile native religious leaders, had ever received. Graham used these visits to preach, to encourage

Christian believers, and to explain to Communist leaders that their restriction of religious freedom was counterproductive, hampering diplomatic relations with America.

A story from Graham's 1982 visit to Moscow highlights the impact of his diplomatic influence. A group of six Siberian Pentecostals, claiming to be victims of religious persecution, had been living in asylum in the basement of the U. S. Embassy since 1978. A vexing source of tension between the Soviet and U. S. governments, the Siberian Six demanded that Graham meet with them during his trip—with full media coverage. Not wanting to exacerbate an already perilous situation, Graham agreed to the meeting but vehemently refused any media presence. He also refused to meet the group's demands that he publicly call for their release and decry communism, which enraged the Pentecostals and led them to tell the American press, "He was like all the other religious figures who have visited us, nothing special."

However, Graham and his adviser Alexander Haraszti were working behind the scenes for the group's release, seeking, through all of their diplomatic contacts, a promise of safe passage out of the country. This Haraszti received when a Soviet deputy told him, "The Soviet Union will not lie to Billy Graham." Graham sent a letter to the Pentecostals in 1983, outlining the steps he felt they should take. Not long afterward, the two families, together with several relatives who had not been with them in the embassy, were allowed to emigrate. Asked in 1989 to assess his role in the incident, Graham said, "I think [the Soviets] eventually did what we asked them to. I have no way of knowing whether [what we did] was a factor or not. But I think it was."

Graham's proudest achievements may be two BGEA-sponsored conferences in Amsterdam in 1983 and 1986, with a third scheduled for the year 2000. These gatherings, attended by a total of 13,000 on-the-job itinerant evangelists from 174 countries, provided basic instruction in such matters as sermon composition, fundraising, and effective use of films and videotapes. As a sign of Billy Graham's change-embracing spirit, approximately 500 attendees at the 1986 meeting were women, and Pentecostals outnumbered non-Pentecostals. Subsequent smaller gatherings throughout the world have afforded similar training to additional thousands of evangelists.

Indeed, it is plausible that the answer to the oft-asked question, "Who will be the next Billy Graham?" is no single man or woman, but this mighty army of anonymous individuals whose spirits have been thrilled by Billy Graham's example, their hands and minds prepared with his organization's assistance, and their hearts set on fire by his ringing exhortation at the Amsterdam meetings: "Do the work of an evangelist!"

Age and Parkinson's Disease have taken their toll, but they have not quenched Billy Graham's spirit. "My mind tells me I ought to get out there and go," he said, as he was beginning to feel the effects of his disease, "but I just can't do it. But I'll preach until there is no breath left in my body. I was called by God, and until God tells me to retire, I cannot. Whatever strength I have, whatever time God lets me have, is going to be dedicated to doing the work of an evangelist, as long as I live."

*William Martin is a professor of sociology at Rice University and author of Prophet with Honor: The Billy Graham Story (Morrow, 1991).*

## Timeline

**1918** William Franklin Graham, Jr., born near Charlotte, North Carolina

**1925** Scopes "Monkey" Trial forces fundamentalism into a retreat

**1934** Charles E. Fuller begins an evangelistic radio show that will come to be called *The Old Fashioned Revival Hour*

**1937** Graham transfers to Florida Bible Institute; preaches his first sermon

**1940** Enrolls at Wheaton College, meets Ruth (they marry in 1943)

**1943** National Association of Evangelicals founded

**1944** Graham's first attempt at mass evangelism, at the inaugural rally for Chicagoland Youth for Christ, prompts 42 people to come forward

**1947** Carl F.H. Henry publishes *The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism*; Fuller Theological Seminary founded

**1949** An eight-week crusade in Los Angeles catapults Graham into the national spotlight

**1951** Bill Bright founds Campus Crusade for Christ; later writes the pamphlet "The Four Spiritual Laws"

**1954** Graham's wildly successful crusade at London's Harringay Arena

**1956** *Christianity Today* publishes its first issue

**1957** Graham's crusade at Madison Square Garden forces break with fundamentalists

**1962** D. James Kennedy creates an outreach program called "Evangelism Explosion"

**1963** Pat Robertson begins the 700 Club

**1974** Graham assembles 2,400 Protestant leaders from 150 countries at Lausanne, Switzerland, for the International Congress on World Evangelization

**1982** Visits the Soviet Union

**1986** "Amsterdam '86" draws 10,000 itinerant evangelists

**1987-88** Televangelists Jim Bakker and Jimmy Swaggart involved in scandals

**1995** Graham reaches 185 countries simultaneously through 3,000 downlinks in his "Global Mission" satellite crusade

## **You Are There**

### ***How two journalists reported on Billy Graham's landmark 1949 crusade in Los Angeles:***

That old time religion has gone as modern as an atomic bomb in the thunderous revival meetings that Rev. Billy Graham conducts nightly in a giant tent at Washington Boulevard and Hill Street.

But its modernity is in externals. Nothing detracts from the traditional fury and power of an old-fashioned gospel gathering. That's what his listeners, many of whom remember with pleasure the late Billy Sunday, want. And that's what they get.

In a mighty and skilled voice, Billy Graham selects the words of today, in 1949, as he hammers out this slogan:

"Christ in this crisis."

The crisis is the worldwide crisis of fear, of atomic warfare, of economic, social and political problems. And of moral degeneration in this country.

Billy Graham, only 30 years old, is a tall handsome man with intense blue eyes and a whip-like vitality. As president of a Baptist college in Minneapolis, he disclaims that he is a professional evangelist, but he is noted for addressing large congregations.

— *Richard Reynolds, Los Angeles Daily News, September 30, 1949*

Old-time religion is sweeping Los Angeles. In six weeks, 200-thousand people have filed into a circus tent on the outskirts. And they're still pouring in at the rate of 10-thousand every night.

They come to hear a handsome young college president, Billy Graham. And churchmen say he's started the greatest religious revival in the history of southern California.

Thousands have hit the sawdust trail [and] announced their return to Christ. One sportsman said he's selling his racing stable.

He mixes sermons with stories of salvation from misery, misfortune, and sorrow for those who repented their sins.

He tells such stories as this:

An irreligious business man lost his family, his self-respect and his standing in his community. He was a beaten, discouraged man.

Then he repented. He was led to a small tent. An attendant said, "We will have someone assist you in prayer."

That someone was his wife, whom he had not seen since their divorce 10 years before. They plan to remarry soon.

— *Associated Press news release, November 1949*

### **Billy Graham's Success: Two Views**

The Billy Graham campaign will spin along to its own kind of triumph because canny experienced engineers of human decision have laid the tracks, contracted for the passengers, and will now direct the traffic which arrives on schedule. ... Anticipation has been adroitly created and built up by old hands at the business, and an audience gladly captive to its own sensations is straining for the grand entrance. ... [The "Graham procedure"] does its mechanical best to "succeed" whether or not the Holy Spirit is in attendance.

—*The Christian Century, 1957, criticizing the extensive preparations for Graham's New York crusade*

**What** is most captivating about Billy is his sincerity. There isn't an iota of hypocrisy in the man. He is real. I sat in Harringay [Arena, London, site of a 12-week crusade in 1954] night after night asking over and over, 'What is the reason [for his success]?' I finally decided that this was the first time most of these people had heard a transparently honest evangelist who was speaking from his heart and who meant and believed what he was saying. There is something captivating about that."

—*Anglican priest and popular author John Stott in 1986*

**For more information on this topic, see:**

billygraham.org—The Billy Graham Evangelistic Association  
<http://www.billygraham.org>

Billy Graham Center Home Page  
<http://www.wheaton.edu/bgc/bgc.html>

The Billy Graham Training Center at The Cove  
<http://www.thecove.org>

TIME 100: Heroes & Icons - Billy Graham  
<http://www.pathfinder.com/time/time100/heroes/profile/graham01.html>

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## Pentecostalism: William Seymour

What scoffers viewed as a weird babble of tongues became a world phenomenon after his Los Angeles revival.

Vinson Synan

Of all the outstanding black American religious leaders in the twentieth century, one of the least recognized is William Seymour, the unsung pastor of the Azusa Street Mission in Los Angeles and catalyst of the worldwide Pentecostal movement. Only in the last few decades have scholars become aware of his importance, beginning perhaps with Yale University historian Sidney Ahlstrom, who said Seymour personified a black piety "which exerted its greatest direct influence on American religious history"—placing Seymour's impact ahead of figures like W. E. B. Dubois and Martin Luther King, Jr.

William Joseph Seymour was born in Centerville, Louisiana, on May 2, 1870 to former slaves Simon and Phyllis Seymour. Raised as a Baptist, Seymour was given to dreams and visions as a youth. At age 25, he moved to Indianapolis, where he worked as a railroad porter and then waited on tables in a fashionable restaurant. Around this time, he contracted smallpox and went blind in his left eye.

In 1900 he relocated to Cincinnati, where he joined the "reformation" Church of God (headquartered in Anderson, Indiana), also known as "the Evening Light Saints." Here he became steeped in radical Holiness theology, which taught second blessing entire sanctification (i.e., sanctification is a post-conversion experience that results in complete holiness), divine healing, premillennialism, and the promise of a worldwide Holy Spirit revival before the rapture.

In 1903 Seymour moved to Houston, Texas, in search of his family. There he joined a small Holiness church pastored by a black woman, Lucy Farrow, who soon put him touch with Charles Fox Parham. Parham was a Holiness teacher under whose ministry a student had spoken in tongues (*glossolalia*) two years earlier. For Parham, this was the "Bible evidence" of the baptism in the Holy Spirit. When he established a Bible school to train disciples in his "Apostolic Faith" in Houston, Farrow urged Seymour to attend.

Since Texas law forbade blacks to sit in classrooms with whites, Parham encouraged Seymour to remain in a hallway and listen to his lectures through the doorway. Here Seymour accepted Parham's premise of a "third blessing" baptism in the Holy Spirit evidenced by speaking in tongues. Though Seymour had not yet personally experienced tongues, he sometimes preached this message with Parham in Houston churches.

In early 1906, Seymour was invited to help Julia Hutchins pastor a Holiness church in Los Angeles. With Parham's support, Seymour journeyed to California, where he preached the new Pentecostal doctrine using Acts 2:4 as his text. Hutchins, however, rejected Seymour's teaching on tongues and padlocked the door to him and his message.

Seymour was then invited to stay in the home of Richard Asberry at 214 Bonnie Brae Street, where on April 9, after a month of intense prayer and fasting, Seymour and several others spoke in tongues. Word spread quickly about the strange events on Bonnie Brae Street and drew so much attention that Seymour was forced to preach on the front porch to crowds gathered in the street. At one point, the jostling crowd grew so large the porch floor caved in.

Seymour searched Los Angeles for a suitable building. What he found was an old abandoned African

Methodist Episcopal church on Azusa Street that had recently been used as a warehouse and stable. Although it was a shambles, Seymour and his small band of black washerwomen, maids, and laborers cleaned the building, set up board plank seats, and made a pulpit out of old shoebox shipping crates. Services began in mid-April in the church, which was named the "Apostolic Faith Mission."

What happened at Azusa Street during the next three years was to change the course of church history. Although the little frame building measured only 40 by 60 feet, as many as 600 persons jammed inside while hundreds more looked in through the windows. The central attraction was tongues, with the addition of traditional black worship styles that included shouting, trances, and the holy dance. There was no order of service, since "the Holy Ghost was in control." No offerings were taken, although a box hung on the wall proclaimed, "Settle with the Lord." Altar workers enthusiastically prayed seekers through to the coveted tongues experience. It was a noisy place, and services lasted into the night.

Though local newspaper coverage spoke cynically about the "weird babble of tongues" of "colored mammys," on street corners and trolley cars, the news intrigued the city. Whole congregations came en masse to Azusa Street and stayed while their former churches disappeared. Other Pentecostal centers soon sprang up around town.

Reporting on all this was Frank Bartleman, an itinerant Holiness preacher and rescue mission worker, who wrote to the **Way of Faith** in South Carolina that "Pentecost has come to Los Angeles, the American Jerusalem." His reports, which were printed and reprinted in the Holiness press, spread a contagious fever of curiosity about the Azusa Street meetings all across the country.

In September, Seymour began publishing his own paper titled **The Apostolic Faith**. At its height, it went free to some 50,000 subscribers around the world.

Though many came to mock and scorn, many others heard messages in known earthly languages uttered by uneducated blacks and whites that convinced them of the reality of the revival. Soon whites made up the majority of members and visitors, and black hands were laid on white heads to receive the new tongues experience. Soon an avalanche of "Azusa Pilgrims" descended on the mission to receive what were thought to be "missionary tongues," which would enable preachers to go to the far corners of the world proclaiming the gospel in languages they had never learned.

"Don't go out of here talking about tongues; talk about Jesus."  
—  
William Seymour

A list of Azusa pilgrims reads like a hall of fame for the new order of Pentecostal priests. From North Carolina came Gaston B. Cashwell, who later spread the Pentecostal message to the southern Holiness churches. From Memphis came Charles Mason who returned to lead the Church of God in Christ into the Pentecostal fold (now the largest black Pentecostal denomination in America). From Chicago came William Durham, who later formulated the "Finished Work" theology that gave birth to the [Assemblies of God](#) in 1914.

To Seymour, tongues was not the only message of Azusa Street: "Don't go out of here talking about tongues: talk about Jesus," he admonished. Another message was that of racial reconciliation. Blacks and whites worked together in apparent harmony under the direction of a black pastor, a marvel in the days of Jim Crow segregation. This led Bartleman to exult, "At Azusa Street, the color line was washed away in the Blood." Seymour dreamed that Azusa Street was creating a new kind of church, one where a common experience in the Holy Spirit tore down old walls of racial, ethnic, and denominational differences.

Seymour's dream was rudely shattered even before the "glory days at Old Azusa" came to an end. When his mentor Charles Parham visited Azusa Street in October of 1906, Parham was appalled at what he called "darky camp meeting stunts" and "fits and spasms of spiritualists" who invaded the meetings. Although Seymour recognized him the "projector" of the movement, the Azusa Street elders rejected

Parham. For the rest of his life, Parham denounced the Azusa Street meetings as "spiritual power prostituted."

Perhaps the most damaging challenge to Seymour came in 1909 when white female co-workers Florence Crawford and Clara Lum moved to Portland, Oregon, carrying with them the mailing list for *The Apostolic Faith* magazine. This cut off Seymour from his followers and effectively ended his leadership of the emerging movement.

Rumors circulated in the black community that Crawford may have left in a fit of jealousy. It was said that she had wanted to marry Seymour but was discouraged from doing so by C. H. Mason because the world was not prepared for interracial marriages. When Seymour decided to marry Jennie Moore, a black leader at Azusa Street, Crawford opposed it "because of the shortness of time before the rapture of the church."

After the "glory years" of 1906 to 1909, the Azusa Street mission became a small black church pastored by Seymour until his death on September 28, 1922, and then by his wife, Jennie, until her death in 1936. It was later sold for unpaid taxes and demolished. Today, a Japanese Cultural Center occupies the ground.

By the year 2000, the spiritual heirs of Seymour, the Pentecostals and charismatics, numbered over 500 million adherents, making it the second largest family of Christians in the world. Today, practically all Pentecostal and charismatic movements can trace their roots directly or indirectly to the humble mission on Azusa Street and its pastor.

*Vinson Synan, dean of the School of Divinity at Regent University, is author of The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition (Eerdmans, 1997).*

## Timeline

**1867** National Holiness Association forms

**1870** William Seymour born in Louisiana

**1901** Agnes Ozman speaks in tongues under Charles Parham's ministry in Topeka, Kansas

**1905** Seymour accepts Parham's Pentecostal doctrine in Houston

**1906** At the house on Bonnie Brae Street, Los Angeles, Seymour speaks in tongues for the first time

**1906-1909** Azusa Street revival

**1907** G. B. Cashwell brings Pentecostal fervor to churches in the South

**1908** Seymour marries Jennie Moore; the next year, Florence Crawford departs Azusa Street with the mailing list of *The Apostolic Faith*

**1914** The Assemblies of God forms

**1922** Seymour dies; his wife takes over leadership of the Azusa Street Mission

**1943** American Pentecostal churches become charter members of the National Association of Evangelicals

1960 Episcopal priest Dennis Bennett speaks in tongues, inaugurating the charismatic movement

## You Are There

***Excerpt from a news story by a dismayed reporter of the Los Angeles Daily Times, April 18, 1906:***

An old colored exhorter [Seymour], blind in one eye, is the major-domo of the company. With his stony optic fixed on some luckless unbeliever, yells his defiance and challenges an answer. Anathemas are heaped upon him who shall dare to gainsay the utterances of the preacher. Clapsed in his big fist, the colored brother holds a miniature Bible from which he reads at intervals one or two words—never more.

After an hour spent in exhortation, the brethren present are invited to join in a "meeting of prayer and testimony." Then it is that pandemonium breaks loose, and the bounds of reason are passed by those who are "filled with the Spirit," whatever that may be.

"You-oo-po goo-ioo-ido come under the bloo-oo-oo-boo-ido," shouts an old colored "mammy" in a frenzy of religious zeal. Swinging her arms wildly about her she continues with the strangest harangue ever uttered. Few of her words are intelligible, and for the most part, her testimony contains the most outrageous jumble of syllables, which are listened to with awe by the company.

### **For more information on this topic, see:**

History of the Assemblies of God

<http://www.heavenlywebs.com/ccg/historyag.html>

Chapter 5: Spirit Baptism

<http://www.epbc.edu/rholm/chapter5b.html>

Pentecostal History

<http://www.oru.edu/university/library/holyspirit/pentorg1.html>

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# CHRISTIAN HISTORY

Issue 65: Ten Influential Christians of the 20th Century

## Ministries of Mercy: Mother Teresa

She stirred a generation by touching the untouchables.

Ruth A. Tucker

Mother Teresa belongs to the whole world—not to Roman Catholics only, not to Christians only. Indeed, she is the first religious figure in history to be revered during her lifetime by adherents of all religions and Christians of all denominations. And when she died in 1997, there was a universal outpouring of heartfelt appreciation and reverence for her long life of service.

Humility, simplicity, and sacrifice are the terms most often associated with Mother Teresa and her work—though many who encountered her personally would quickly add tenacity. And this tenacity was often accompanied by a stern, uncompromising demeanor. She was driven by an unswerving conviction that she was called by God to reach out to the poorest of the poor, and this conviction left little room to entertain the objections of government officials, church authorities, or even military leaders.

In a famous televised scene from 1985, she insisted that a government minister from Ethiopia give her Missionaries of Charity two unused buildings to be made into orphanages. With cameras rolling, the minister balked but finally had no choice but to capitulate. Pop singer Bob Geldorf, in Ethiopia as part of his Band Aid campaign, witnessed this exchange in the Addis Ababa airport and remarked, "There was a certainty of purpose which left her little patience. But she was totally selfless; every moment her aim seemed to be, how can I use this or that situation to help others?"

Mother Teresa of Calcutta was born Agnes Gonxha Bojaxhiu in Albania in 1910. Her father was a businessman whose death when she was 9 years old left the family in difficult financial circumstances. But their faith sustained them. With her mother and brother and sister, Agnes attended church every day, and she sang in the church choir. Her widowed mother, though nearly destitute herself, volunteered in the neighborhood, caring for an invalid alcoholic woman and later taking six orphaned children into her own home. It was a model of servanthood that did not go unnoticed by young Agnes.

At age 12, Agnes sensed God calling her to his service, but she struggled with how she could know for certain. She prayed and talked with her mother and sister, but she had no real peace. Then she talked with her Father confessor. "How can I be sure?" she asked. He answered, "Through your joy. If you feel really happy by the idea that God might call you to serve him, then this is the evidence that you have a call. The deep inner joy that you feel is the compass that indicates your direction in life."

"By blood  
and  
origin, I  
am all  
Albanian.  
My  
citizenship  
is Indian.  
I am a  
Catholic

The joy of serving God stayed with her, and in 1929, at age 19, she was in Calcutta preparing to become a teacher and a nun. From the beginning, she was concerned for the poor, but for two decades, her assigned ministry was in the classroom—primarily at the Loreto Convent, where she taught geography to schoolgirls. She loved her students and they loved her, and soon they were joining her on weekends as she went into the streets to care for the sick and the hungry.

Mother Teresa's call to devote herself entirely to serving the poor came suddenly. It was a clear call from God, she insisted, not pity for the poor. And it was a call that was not easily answered in the affirmative: "To leave Loreto was my greatest sacrifice, the most difficult thing I have ever done," she later reflected. "It was much more difficult than to leave my family and country to enter religious life. Loreto meant everything to

nun.  
As to my  
calling, I  
belong to  
the whole  
world. As  
to my  
heart, I  
belong  
entirely  
to Jesus."  
—Mother  
Teresa

me."

She experienced the call in 1946 while traveling to a Himalayan retreat:

"It was on that train that I heard the call to give up all and follow him into the slums—to serve him in the poorest of the poor. ... I was to leave the convent and work with the poor while living among them. It was an order. I knew where I belonged, but I did not know how to get there."

At 38 Mother Teresa left the security of the Loreto community and exchanged her black and white nun's habit for garb of the street—a white and blue sari. With permission from the pope a year later, a new religious order was born. All of the members were required to take the three basic vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, as well as an additional a vow of pledging service to the poor, whom Mother Teresa spoke of as the embodiment of Christ. The nuns were not cloistered, and there was no vow of silence.

They lived simply, shared work equally (Mother Teresa helped with the daily washing until she was too feeble to do so), and served the dying and destitute with food, medical supplies, and companionship—whatever they needed most.

Mother Teresa was sometimes challenged about the long-term effects of her humanitarian ministry. For example, she was asked, why give people fish to eat instead of teaching them how to fish? She had a quick response: "But my people can't even stand. They're sick, crippled, demented. When I have given them fish to eat and they can stand, I'll turn them over and you give them the rod to catch the fish."

She was quick to emphasize, however, that she gave people more than "fish." Equally important was that which came from the heart—love and joy. The poor, she insisted, deserve more than just service and dedication: "If our actions are just useful actions that give no joy to the people, our poor people would never be able to rise up to the call which we want them to hear, the call to come closer to God. We want to make them feel that they are loved."

In 1952, four years after she left Loreto community, she opened Nirmal Hriday ("Pure Heart"), a home for dying and destitute people in Calcutta. In the decades that followed, she extended her work to five continents. The first 20 years of the ministry passed essentially unnoticed, but that changed quickly in 1969, when she was interviewed by Malcolm Muggeridge for the BBC. A film and a book (both called ***Something Beautiful for God***) by Muggeridge followed, and soon she was on her way to becoming an international celebrity. Special recognition came from Queen Elizabeth and from the U. S. Congress, and even from Harvard University, which granted her an honorary doctorate. In 1979 she was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. But she was never fully comfortable in the limelight. "For me," she confessed, "it is more difficult than bathing a leper."

Bathing a leper would be her lasting legacy. Of course, she will also be remembered for the international recognition she received, the thousands of nuns who followed her, and the hundreds of homes established around the world. But the image imprinted on the global psyche would be that of a tiny wrinkled old woman reaching out and touching those consigned to the trash heap of humanity.

**Ruth A. Tucker is the author of 13 books, including *From Jerusalem to Irian Jaya: A Biographical History of Christian Missions*.**

## Timeline

**1901** Jean Henri Dunant, founder (in 1863) of the Red Cross, wins the inaugural Nobel Peace Prize

- 1910** Agnes Gonxha Bojaxhiu born in Skopje, Macedonia (Albania)
- 1913** Acclaimed theologian and organist Albert Schweitzer begins medical missionary work in Africa
- 1929** Sister Teresa arrives in Calcutta
- 1944** National Association of Evangelicals establishes the War Relief Commission (renamed World Relief in 1950)
- 1946** United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) established
- 1947** India gains independence from Great Britain
- 1950** Order of the Missionaries of Charity approved by Pope Pius XII; Bob Pierce founds World Vision
- 1952** Mother Teresa establishes Nirmal Hriday, her first Home for Dying Destitutes
- 1961** Peace Corps launched; Amnesty International founded
- 1966** Brother Andrew takes charge of the Missionary Brothers of Charity, the order's male branch
- 1969** Malcolm Muggeridge's BBC film *Something Beautiful for God* brings Mother Teresa worldwide recognition
- 1979** Mother Teresa wins the Nobel Peace Prize
- 1985** Band Aid, a charity effort of several popular music groups, raises money for famine in Ethiopia
- 1997** Mother Teresa dies

## **You Are There**

In my television interview with Mother Teresa, I raised the point as to whether, in view of the commonly held opinion that there are too many people in India, it was really worth while trying to salvage a few abandoned children who might otherwise be expected to die of neglect, malnutrition, or some related illness. It was a point, as I was to discover subsequently, so remote from her whole way of looking at life that she had difficulty in grasping it. The notion that there could in any circumstances be too many children was, to her, as inconceivable as suggesting that there are too many bluebells in the woods or stars in the sky. In the film we made in Calcutta, there is a shot of Mother Teresa holding a tiny baby girl in her hands; so minute that her very existence seemed like a miracle. As she holds this child, she says in a voice, and with an expression, of exaltation most wonderful and moving: "See! there's life in her!" Her face is glowing and triumphant; as it might be the mother of us all glorying in what we all possess—this life in us, in our world, in the universe, which, however low it flickers or fiercely burns, is still a divine flame which no man dare presume to put out, be his motives never so humane and enlightened.

— *BBC journalist Malcolm Muggeridge in Something Beautiful for God*

**For more information on this topic, see:**

Nobel Prize Internet Archive

<http://www.almaz.com/nobel/peace/1979a.html>

CNN - Mother Teresa: Angel of Mercy

<http://www.cnn.com/WORLD/9709/mother.teresa>

Mother Teresa

<http://www.tisv.be/mt/indmt.htm>

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# CHRISTIAN HISTORY

Issue 65: Ten Influential Christians of the 20th Century

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## Neo-Orthodoxy: Karl Barth

He revived orthodoxy when mere moralism and humanism had seemingly won over the theological world.

Mark Galli

"The gospel is not a truth among other truths. Rather, it sets a question mark against all truths." Karl Barth (pronounced "bart") not only said this, he spent his life setting question marks, in the name of Christ, against all manner of "truths." In the process, he did nothing less than alter the course of modern theology.

He started out life conventionally enough: he was born in 1886 in Basel, Switzerland, the son of Fritz Barth (a professor of New Testament and early church history at Bern) and Anna Sartorius. He studied at the best universities: Bern, Berlin, Tübingen, and Marburg. At Berlin he sat under the famous liberals of the day (like historian Adolf Harnack), most of whom taught an optimistic Christianity that focused not so much on Jesus Christ and the Cross as the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man.

After serving a Geneva church from 1909 to 1911, Barth was appointed to a working-class parish in Switzerland. In 1913 he married Nell Hoffman, a talented violinist (they eventually had one daughter and four sons).

As he pastored, he noted with alarm that not only was Switzerland's close neighbor, Germany, becoming increasingly militaristic, but his former professors there were fully supportive of the development. Dismayed with the moral weakness of liberal theology, Barth plunged into a study of the Bible, especially Paul's Epistle to the Romans, to see what insights it could offer. He also visited Moravian preacher Christoph Blumhardt and came away overwhelmingly convinced of the victorious reality of Christ's resurrection.

Out of this search emerged his *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (1918). He sounded themes that had been muted in liberal theology. For example, liberal theology had domesticated God into the patron saint of human institutions and values. Instead, Barth wrote of the "crisis," that is, God's judgment under which all the world stood; he taught God's absolute sovereignty and complete freedom in initiating his revelation in Jesus Christ.

He spoke dialectically, in paradox, to shock readers into seeing the radical nature of the gospel: "Faith is awe in the presence of the divine incognito; it is the love of God that is aware of the qualitative difference between God and man and God and the world."

The first of six heavily revised editions of the commentary followed in 1922. It rocked the theological community. Liberal theologians gasped in horror and attacked Barth furiously, for in this and later works, he assaulted their easy optimism.

In response to their amiable view of humankind, Barth wrote, "Men have never been good, they are not good, they will never be good."

Against the liberal tendency to treat Jesus as a teacher of religion, Barth said, "Jesus does not give recipes that show the way to God as other teachers of religion do. He is himself the way."

In 1921 Barth was appointed professor of Reformed theology at the University of Göttingen, and later to chairs at Münster (1925) and Bonn (1930). He published works critiquing nineteenth-century Protestant theology and produced a celebrated study of Anselm.

In 1931 he began the first book of his massive *The Church Dogmatics*. It grew year by year out of his class lectures; though incomplete, it eventually filled four volumes in 12 parts, each densely printed with 500 to 700 pages each. Many pastors in the 1930s, '40s, and '50s, desperate for an antidote to liberalism, eagerly awaited the publication of each book.

His theology came to be known as "dialectical theology," or "the theology of crisis"; it blossomed into a school of theology known as neo-orthodoxy, which influenced theology for decades and included thinkers like Emil Brunner and Reinhold Niebuhr. Many Catholic theologians (like Hans Küng) and evangelical theologians (like Donald Bloesch) have acknowledged Barth's key influence on them.

Not that everyone fell at his feet. On the one hand, liberals mocked him as a Bible-thumping fundamentalist; on the other, conservatives wondered about Barth's orthodoxy because he refused to consider the Bible to be "infallible" (he believed, instead, that only Jesus is infallible). Others thought Barth's theology overemphasized God's transcendence, making God seem utterly distant, and others still argued that God, in fact, did show signs of his presence in nature and history (something the early Barth vehemently denied).

All in all, Barth was surprised at the waves he caused. Late in life he wrote, "As I look back upon my course, I seem to myself as one who, ascending the dark staircase of a church tower and trying to steady himself, reached for the banister, but got hold of the bell rope instead. To his horror he had then to listen to what the great bell had sounded over him and not over him alone."

Barth fought not just with liberals but also with allies who challenged some of his extreme conclusions. When Brunner proposed that God revealed himself not just in the Bible but in nature as well (though not in a saving way), Barth replied in 1934 with an article titled, "No! An Answer to Emil Brunner." Barth believed that such a "natural theology" was the root of the religious syncretism and anti-Semitism of the "German Christians"—those who supported Hitler's national socialism. (Later in life, he moderated his views and reconciled with Brunner).

"Jesus does not give recipes that show the way to God as other teachers of religion do. He is himself the

By this time, Barth was immersed in the German church struggle. He was a founder of the so-called Confessing Church, which was repulsed by the ideology of "blood and soil" and the Nazis' attempt to create a "German Christian" church. The 1934 Barmen Declaration, largely based on Barth's initial draft, pitted the revelation of Jesus Christ against the "truth" of Hitler and national socialism:

"Jesus Christ ... is the one Word of God. ... We reject the false doctrine, as though the Church could and would have to acknowledge as a source of its proclamation, apart from and beside this one Word of God, still other events and powers, figures and truths, as God's revelation."

When Barth refused to take the oath of unconditional allegiance to the Führer, he lost his position at Bonn. His native Basel offered him a chair in theology and from there he continued to champion the causes of the Confessing Church, the Jews, and oppressed people everywhere.

After the war, Barth engaged in controversies about baptism (though a Reformed theologian, he rejected infant baptism), hermeneutics, and the demythologizing program of Rudolf Bultmann (who denied the historical nature of Scripture, instead believing it a myth whose meaning could heal spiritual anxiety).

way."  
—Karl  
Barth

Barth also made regular visits to the Basel prison, and his sermons to prisoners, *Deliverance to the Captives*, reveal a combination of evangelical passion and social concern that characterized his whole life.

Though his later years were relatively quiet, Barth remains the most important theologian of the twentieth century. When it looked as if a moralistic and humanistic theology had won over Christendom, Barth showed Christians—mainline, evangelical, and Catholic—how to continue to take the Bible seriously.

*Mark Galli is editor of Christian History.*

## Timeline

**1886** Karl Barth born in Basel, Switzerland

**1901** Adolf Harnack publishes *What Is Christianity?* a succinct expression of liberal theology

**1911** Barth begins pastoring a village church in Safenwil (Aargau)

**1914-1918** World War I

**1918** First edition of Barth's *Romans*

**1921** Barth becomes a professor at Göttingen, then Münster (1925), then Bonn (1930)

**1932** Publishes first volume in *The Church Dogmatics*, on which he will work continuously the rest of his life

**1934** Instrumental in writing the Barmen Declaration

**1935** Fired for refusing to swear allegiance to Hitler; becomes professor at Basel

**1946** Rudolf Bultmann publishes *Jesus Christ and Mythology*

**1948** First meeting of the World Council of Churches

**1962** Barth visits the United States

**1968** Barth dies

**1977** Last volume of *The Church Dogmatics* published

## You Are There

*In 1933, Karl Barth wrote his discouraged colleague Dietrich Bonhoeffer who, disgusted with the German Christian response to Hitler, fled Germany to pastor a German-speaking parish in England:*

What is all this about "going away," and "quietness of pastoral work," etc., at a moment when you

are wanted in Germany? You, who know as well as I do that the opposition in Berlin and the opposition of the church in Germany as a whole stands inwardly on such weak feet! ... Why aren't you always there where so much could depend on there being a couple of game people on the watch at every occasion, great or small, and trying to save what there is to be saved? ...

I think that I can see from your letter that you, like all of us—yes, all of us!—are suffering under the quite common difficulty of taking "certain steps" in the present chaos. But should it not dawn on you that there is no reason for withdrawing from this chaos, that we are rather required in and with our uncertainty, even if we should stumble or go wrong ten times or a hundred times, to do our bit? ...

One simply cannot become weary now. Still less can one go to England! What in all the world would you want to do there? ... You must now leave go of all these intellectual flourishes and special considerations, however interesting they may be, and think of only one thing, that you are a German, that the house of your church is on fire, that you know enough to be able to help and that you must return to your post by the next ship.

***Bonhoeffer returned to Germany 16 months later, after Barth had been exiled to Switzerland.***

**For more information on this topic, see:**

A Karl Barth Home page (Barth Society at Memphis Theological Seminary)  
<http://www.karlbarth.org>

Faith Quest: Theologians/Karl Barth  
<http://www.faithquest.com/theologians/barth>

Island of Freedom - Karl Barth  
<http://www.island-of-freedom.com/BARTH.HTM>

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# CHRISTIAN HISTORY

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## Apologetics: C.S. Lewis

The atheist scholar who became an Anglican, an apologist, and a patron saint of Christians everywhere.

Ted Olsen

"He was a heavily built man who looked about forty, with a fleshy oval face and a ruddy complexion. His black hair had retreated from his forehead, which made him especially imposing. I knew nothing about him, except that he was the college English tutor. I did not know that he was the best lecturer in the department, nor had I read the only book that he had published under his own name (hardly anyone had). Even after I had been taught by him for three years, it never entered my mind that he could one day become an author whose books would sell at the rate of about two million copies a year. Since he never spoke of religion while I was his pupil, or until we had become friends 15 years later, it would have seemed incredible that he would become the means of bringing many back to the Christian faith."

Even to his best biographer and longtime friend George Sayer, Clive Staples Lewis was a surprise and a mystery.

As J. R. R. Tolkien advised Sayer, "You'll never get to the bottom of him." But understanding or even fully agreeing with Lewis have never been prerequisites to enjoying and admiring him.

His books continue to sell extremely well (the *Chronicles of Narnia* set, for example, is among Amazon.com's top 200 titles), and many readers rate him as the most influential writer in their lives. Quite a feat for a man who long disparaged "the Christian mythology" and regarded God as "My Enemy."

Lewis was born into a bookish family of Protestants in Belfast, Ireland.

"There were books in the study, books in the dining room, books in the cloakroom, books (two deep) in the great bookcase on the landing, books in a bedroom, books piled as high as my shoulder in the cistern attic, books of all kinds," Lewis remembered, and none were off limits to him. On rainy days—and there were many in northern Ireland—he pulled volumes off the shelves and entered into worlds created by authors such as Conan Doyle, E. Nesbit, Mark Twain, and Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.

After his only brother, Warren, was sent off to English boarding school in 1905, Jack became reclusive. He spent more time in books and an imaginary world of "dressed animals" and "knights in armor."

His mother's death from cancer in 1908 made him even more withdrawn. Mrs. Lewis's death came just three months before Jack's tenth birthday, and the young man was hurt deeply by her passing. On top of that, his father never fully recovered from her death, and both boys felt increasingly estranged from him; home life was never warm and satisfying again.

His mother's death convinced young Jack that the God he encountered in the Bible his mother gave him didn't always answer prayers. This early doubt, coupled with an unduly harsh, self-directed spiritual regimen and the influence of a mildly occultist boarding school matron a few years later, caused Lewis to reject Christianity and become an avowed atheist.

Lewis entered Oxford in 1917 as a student and never really left. "The place has surpassed my

wildest dreams," he wrote to his father after spending his first day there. "I never saw anything so beautiful." Despite an interruption to fight in World War I (in which he was wounded by a bursting shell), he always maintained his home and friends in Oxford. His attachment to Oxford was so strong that when he taught at Cambridge from 1955 to 1963, he commuted back to Oxford on weekends so he could be close to familiar places and beloved friends.

Christianity,  
if false, is  
of no  
importance,  
and, if  
true,  
of infinite  
importance.  
The one  
thing it  
cannot be  
is  
moderately  
important."

—C.S. Lewis

In 1919 Lewis published his first book, a cycle of lyrics titled *Spirits in Bondage*, which he wrote under the pseudonym Clive Hamilton. In 1924 he became a philosophy tutor at University College, and the following year he was elected a Fellow of Magdalen College, where he tutored in English language and literature. His second volume of poetry, *Dymer*, was also published pseudonymously.

As Lewis continued to read, he especially enjoyed Christian author George MacDonald. One volume, *Phantastes*, powerfully challenged his atheism. "What it actually did to me," wrote Lewis, "was to convert, even to baptize ... my imagination." G. K. Chesterton's books worked much the same way, especially *The Everlasting Man*, which raised serious questions about the young intellectual's materialism.

"A young man who wishes to remain a sound atheist cannot be too careful of his reading," Lewis later wrote in the autobiographical *Surprised by Joy*. "God is, if I may say it, very unscrupulous."

While MacDonald and Chesterton were stirring Lewis's thoughts, close friend Owen Barfield pounced on the logic of Lewis's atheism. Barfield had converted from atheism to theism, then finally to Christianity, and he frequently badgered Lewis about his materialism. So did Nevill Coghill, a brilliant fellow student and lifelong friend who, to Lewis's amazement, was "a Christian and a thoroughgoing supernaturalist."

Soon after joining the English faculty at Oxford's Magdalen College, Lewis met two more Christians, Hugo Dyson and J. R. R. Tolkien. These men became close friends of Lewis. He admired their brilliance and their logic. Soon Lewis recognized that most of his friends, like his favorite authors—MacDonald, Chesterton, Johnson, Spenser, and Milton—held to this Christianity.

In 1929 these roads met, and Lewis surrendered, admitting "God was God, and knelt and prayed." Within two years the reluctant convert also moved from theism to Christianity and joined the Church of England.

Almost immediately, Lewis set out in a new direction, most demonstrably in his writing. Earlier efforts to become a poet were laid to rest. The new Christian devoted his talent and energy to writing prose that reflected his recently found faith. Within two years of his conversion, Lewis published *The Pilgrim's Regress: An Allegorical Apology for Christianity, Reason and Romanticism* (1933). This little volume opened a 30-year stream of books on Christian apologetics and discipleship that became a lifelong avocation.

Not everyone approved of his new interest in apologetics. Lewis frequently received criticism from members of his closest circle of friends, the Inklings (the nickname for the group of intellectuals and writers who met regularly to exchange ideas). Even close Christian friends like Tolkien and Owen Barfield openly disapproved of Lewis's evangelistic speaking and writing.

In fact, Lewis's "Christian" books caused so much disapproval that he was more than once passed over for a professorship at Oxford, with the honors going to men of lesser reputation. It was Magdalene College at Cambridge University that finally honored Lewis with a chair in 1955.

Regardless of their reception close to home, Lewis's 25 Christian books, including *The Screwtape Letters*

(1942), *Mere Christianity* (1952), the *Chronicles of Narnia* (1950-56), *The Great Divorce* (1946), and the *Abolition of Man* (1943), which *Encyclopedia Britannica* included in its collection of Great Books of the World, have sold millions of copies.

Though his books gained him worldwide fame, Lewis was always first a scholar. He continued to write literary history and criticism such as *The Allegory of Love* (1936), considered a classic in its field, and *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century* (1954).

In spite of his many intellectual accomplishments, he refused to be arrogant: "The intellectual life is not the only road to God, nor the safest, but we find it to be a road, and it may be the appointed road for us. Of course, it will be so only so long as we keep the impulse pure and disinterested."

Lewis did hit at least one jarring bump in his intellectual road: a 1948 debate with British philosopher Elizabeth Anscombe. Anscombe read a paper before the Oxford Socratic Club (a forum Lewis led for many years) in which she attacked Lewis's recently published *Miracles* and his whole argument against naturalism. Anscombe won the day, and Lewis was reportedly "deeply disturbed" and "in very low spirits." He never wrote straight apologetics again, though he continued to communicate his faith through fiction and other literary forms.

Books were not the only means Lewis found for sharing his message. In 1941, the director of religious broadcasting at the BBC (who had found personal comfort through reading *The Problem of Pain*) asked if Lewis would be willing to speak on the radio. Though the author hated radio, he recognized the opportunity to reach a wider audience. The outcome was seven sets of talks, broadcast between 1941 and 1944, with titles like "Right and Wrong: A Clue to the Meaning of the Universe?" and "What Christians Believe."

The weekly broadcasts were very popular—just what weary, discouraged Brits were looking for in the gloom of World War II. Sayer recounts, "I remember being at a pub filled with soldiers on one Wednesday evening. At a quarter to eight, the bartender turned the radio up for Lewis. 'You listen to this bloke,' he shouted. 'He's really worth listening to.' And those soldiers did listen attentively for the entire fifteen minutes."

In addition to spreading Lewis's fame as an apologist and speaker, the BBC talks produced at least two major results. One was the book *Mere Christianity* (1952), a collection of all the talks that is now Lewis's second-best-selling work. The other was a deluge of correspondence, including many letters from spiritual seekers to whom he wished to make a detailed, personal reply. The sheer volume of letters led him to seek his brother Warren's secretarial assistance but did not prevent him from crafting responses that showed the same clarity of thought and literary grace possessed by all his writing.

One correspondent in particular would play a major role in Lewis's life. In 1950 he received a letter from Joy Davidman Gresham, a New Yorker who had become a Christian through reading *The Great Divorce* and *The Screwtape Letters*. Lewis was impressed by the writing and the mind behind it, and a lively, intense correspondence followed.

Two years later, Joy crossed the Atlantic to visit her spiritual mentor in England. Soon thereafter her alcoholic husband abandoned her for another woman, and she moved to London with her two adolescent boys, David and Douglas.

Joy gradually fell into financial trouble. Lewis helped out by underwriting the boys' boarding school education and paying the rent on a house not far from his own. The two developed a deep friendship, much to the dismay of many of Lewis's friends. Joy had many strikes against her: she was an American, of Jewish descent, a former communist, 16 years younger than Lewis, divorced, and personally abrasive. However, she stimulated Lewis's writing, and he enjoyed her company.

Even so, it wasn't love that primarily motivated the couple to marry in 1956—Joy couldn't renew her permit to live and work in England, so her only chance to stay in the country was to marry an Englishman. Lewis gallantly offered his services.

A few months after the civil wedding ceremony, something happened that did rouse Lewis's emotions. After a bad fall in her house, Joy was diagnosed with bone cancer. "Never have I loved her more than since she was struck down," Lewis wrote to a friend. The two were married in an ecclesiastical ceremony at Joy's bedside, and she moved in with Lewis, presumably to die.

In a seeming miracle, Joy's condition improved, and she and Lewis enjoyed three happy years together. As he wrote to one friend soon after their marriage, "It's funny having at 59 the sort of happiness most men have in their twenties ... 'Thou hast kept the good wine till now.' " A writer in her own right, her influence on what Jack considered his best book, *Till We Have Faces* (1956), was so profound that he told one close friend she was actually its co-author.

Joy's death in 1960, like the death of his mother, dealt Lewis a severe blow. The best way he knew to grapple with his feelings of grief, anger, and doubt was to write a book. *A Grief Observed* appeared in 1961 under a pseudonym, because it was so intimate and personal Lewis couldn't bear for it to be published with his own name. Few copies were sold until it was reissued under the author's true name after his death.

In the summer and fall of 1963, Lewis's health deteriorated. He died in his sleep on November 22, the same day John F. Kennedy was assassinated. Perhaps because of the worldwide shock regarding the president's death, Lewis barely made headlines, and his funeral was attended mostly by family and close friends, including the Inklings.

Lewis may have been buried without fanfare, but his impact on hearts and lives has never stopped growing. In the words of evangelical leader John Stott, "He was a Christ-centered, great-tradition mainstream Christian whose stature a generation after his death seems greater than anyone ever thought while he was alive, and whose Christian writings are now seen as having classic status. ... I doubt whether the full measure of him has been taken by anyone."

*Ted Olsen, former assistant editor of Christian History, now edits [ChristianityToday.com](http://ChristianityToday.com).*

## Timeline

**1898** Clive Staples Lewis born in Belfast, Ireland

**1908** Lewis's mother dies

**1917** Lewis begins studies at University College, Oxford

**1925** Awarded a fellowship in English at Oxford's Magdalen College; publication of G.K. Chesterton's *The Everlasting Man*

**1929** Converts to theism and, in 1931, Christianity

**1933** The first members of the Inklings meet in Lewis's chambers

**1937** J. R. R. Tolkien publishes *The Hobbit*

**1939** Author Charles Williams moves to Oxford, joins the Inklings

**1941** Publication of *The Screwtape Letters* gains Lewis worldwide fame; Dorothy Sayers, Lewis's friend and a 22-year member of his Socratic Club at Oxford, publishes her best-known work, *The Man Born to Be King*

**1948** Lewis loses debate to British philosopher Elizabeth Anscombe

**1950-1956** Writes seven volumes of *The Chronicles of Narnia*

**1952** *Mere Christianity*, a collection of radio broadcasts Lewis delivered during World War II, is published

**1954-1955** Publication of Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*

**1956** Lewis marries Joy Davidman Gresham in a civil ceremony (a Christian ceremony followed in 1957)

**1960** Joy dies; to deal with his emotions, Lewis writes *A Grief Observed*

**1963** Lewis dies at his home, The Kilns.

## You Are There

The tutorial was a formal occasion. Wearing a gown, a pupil would stand outside the tutor's door and wait until the clock struck to before knocking. Jack's door, like all the doors in New Buildings, was thick, but, through it, one could easily hear the strong, booming voice say, "Come in." The room was adequately, but rather shabbily, furnished. On one side of the lovely eighteenth-century fireplace in which a coal fire would be burning during cold weather, there was a sofa upon which he sat; on the other side, there was an armchair for the student.

The tutorial always began the same way: The pupil would read the essay that he had been told to write the week before. Jack, who would have spent some time that week reading the books with which the essay was concerned, would sit listening, very often lighting, smoking, and relighting his pipe, and perhaps making a few notes. Afterward, he would make wide-ranging criticisms, some of them semantic or philological, for he always hated the inexact use of words.

"What exactly do you mean by the word 'sentimental,' Mr. Sayer?" he might begin. Then he would present a summary of the ways in which the word had been used in the past, perhaps adding, "Well, Mr. Sayer, if you are not sure what the word means or what you mean by it, wouldn't it be very much better if you ceased to use it at all?" ...

Everyone recognized the breadth of his knowledge. He was widely read and had a remarkable memory that enabled him to quote at length from any author who interested him and even from some who did not. No pupil of his will ever forget the way he quoted the poetry he enjoyed.

—George Sayer, *Lewis's pupil and, later, biographer*, in *Jack: C.S. Lewis and His Times*

**For more information on this topic, see:**

Into the Wardrobe: The C.S. Lewis Web Site

<http://cslewis.drzeus.net>

C.S. Lewis Mega-Links Page

<http://ic.net/~erasmus/RAZ26.HTM>

C.S. Lewis Foundation

<http://www.cslewis.org>

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# CHRISTIAN HISTORY

Issue 65: Ten Influential Christians of the 20th Century

## Roman Catholic Reform: John XXIII

Elected to be a caretaker pope, he decided instead to revolutionize Catholicism.

Elesha Coffman

Angelo Guiseppe Roncalli began his life in 1881 as the son of farmers so poor they shared the first floor of their house in Bergamo, near Milan, with six cows. After entering seminary at age 11, he pursued a thoroughly Catholic education, then spent most of his life in the papal diplomatic service. He served mainly in obscure places, which helped him make a lot of friends without collecting any enemies. He was known for being lovable and kind, if a bit unconventional—hardly qualities that would automatically propel him toward the papacy.

However, when Pope Pius XII died in 1958, the office was plagued by allegations of autocratic abuses, anti-Semitism, and complicity with Adolf Hitler. No one wanted continued controversy, so the cardinals looked around for a milder successor. They spotted the pious and aged Roncalli, whom they believed would manage a brief and uneventful administration.

Much to the cardinals' surprise, the new pope had no intention of merely "warming the throne of Peter" until his death. He wrote in his journal in 1961, "When ... the cardinals of the Holy Roman Church chose me ... everyone was convinced that I would be a provisional and transitional pope. Yet here I am, already on the eve of the fourth year of my pontificate, with an immense program of work in front of me to be carried out before the eyes of the whole world, which is watching and waiting."

"The habit of thinking ill of everything and everyone is tiresome to ourselves and to all around us." —  
*John XXIII*

He was referring to the program he had announced just months after his election, the calling of a great church council, Vatican II. No such council had been summoned since 1879, and John attributed the unexpected call to an inspiration from the Holy Spirit. He was frustrated by the "prophets of doom" among his advisors who believed "our era, in comparison with past eras, is getting worse," whereas "at the time of the former councils, everything was a triumph for the Christian idea and way of life and for proper religious liberty."

The pope, a keen student of history, lacked these illusions about the past, and he was convinced that with a few major reforms, the church could have at least as great an impact on the twentieth century as it had on any other. Specifically, he sought reconciliation with non-Catholics (whom he called "separated brethren"), greater efficiency within church administration, and increased relevance to contemporary culture. Vatican II was successful on all three counts.

John included journalists and non-Catholic religious leaders as observers and also invited prelates from around the world, ensuring that the council's efforts would reach far beyond Rome and ushering in an unprecedented spirit of ecumenism. The church became more vigorous as authority was decentralized and hierarchy relaxed. Most significantly for the average Mass-attending Catholic, the liturgy was switched from Latin to the language the congregation could understand. This led W. M. Abbott, Jesuit editor of a 1965 book on ecumenism, to predict: "[B]y 1990 our Catholic people will be much closer to Holy Scripture—and, thanks to the vernacular, so will our priests."

John XXIII didn't live to see the impact of the council or even its second session. But his successor, Pope

Paul VI, announced at his election that the council would continue, and by the time it closed in 1965, it was hailed as possibly the most significant event in church history since the Reformation.

*Elesha Coffman is assistant editor of Christian History.*

## Timeline

**1881** Angelo Giuseppe Roncalli born near Milan

**1892** Enters minor seminary of Bergamo

**1907** Pope Pius X issues encyclical condemning modernism

**1946** Mother Frances X. Cabrini becomes first American to be canonized as a saint

**1950** Pope Pius XII proclaims the dogma of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary

**1958** Roncalli elected Pope John XXIII

**1962** Vatican II opens

**1963** John XXIII dies; Pope Paul VI continues the council

**1965** Vatican II closes its fourth and final session; Pope Paul VI and Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras nullify anathemas in force since the Great Schism

## You Are There

To anyone who had the good fortune to be standing in front of the bronze doors leading into the papal palace, on the side of St. Peter's Square, at eight o'clock on the morning of Thursday, October 11, 1962, there was suddenly revealed a dazzling spectacle. At that moment, two papal gendarmes, resplendent in parade uniform of white trousers and black topboots, coats, and busbies, slowly swung the great door open, exposing to a portion of the crowd row upon row of bishops, clad in flowing white damask copes and mitres, descending Bernini's majestic *scala regia* from the papal apartments. As brilliant television floodlights were switched on along the stairway, the intense light brought to mind Henry Vaughan's lines: "I saw Eternity the other night, Like a great ring of pure and endless light."

In rows of sixes, an apparently inexhaustible phalanx of prelates filed out of the Vatican palace, swung to their right across St. Peter's Square, then wheeled right again, to mount the ramplike steps leading into the basilica. Every now and then, this white mass was dotted with the black cassock, full beard, and round headdress of an oriental bishop, and with the bulbous gold crown and crossed pectoral reliquaries of a bishop of the Byzantine rite. Toward the end came the scarlet ranks of the Sacred College of Cardinals. Finally, the pope appeared, carried, in deference to the wishes of his entourage, on the *sedia gestatoria*, and looking rather timid, perhaps even frightened—as he always does when first mounting this oriental contraption—but gradually warming to the mild acclamation of the overawed crowd, and gently smiling and quietly weeping as he was carried undulantly forward, blessing the onlookers.

—*"Xavier Rynne" (pseudonym), an observer at the opening of Vatican II, in Letters from Vatican City*

**For more information on this topic, see:**

The Writings of Pope John XXIII

<http://listserv.american.edu/catholic/church/papal/john.xxiii/john.xxiii.html>

Popes Through the Ages: Pope John XXIII

<http://www.newadvent.org/Popes/ppjo23.htm>

1962 Man of the Year: Pope John XXIII

<http://www.pathfinder.com/time/special/moy/1962.html>

CIN - Vatican II Documents

<http://www.cin.org/vatiidoc.html>

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# CHRISTIAN HISTORY

Issue 65: Ten Influential Christians of the 20th Century

## Literature of Protest: Alexandr Solzhenitsyn

The high school physics-teacher-turned-novelist whose writings shook an empire

Edward E. Ericson, Jr.

A high school teacher in his hovel far from home spends every spare minute writing—and then burying the manuscripts in jars. Who could have guessed that he was changing history? A Soviet-era joke set in the future has a teacher asking who Soviet president Leonid Brezhnev was and a schoolgirl replying, "Wasn't he some insignificant politician in the age of Solzhenitsyn?"

As a boy, Alexandr Solzhenitsyn planned to find fame through commemorating the glories of the Bolshevik Revolution. But as an artillery captain, he privately criticized Stalin and got packed off to eight years in the prison camps. There, the loyal Leninist encountered luminous religious believers and moved from the Marx of his schoolteachers to the Jesus of his Russian Orthodox forefathers: "God of the Universe!" he wrote, "I believe again! Though I renounced You, You were with me!"

After prison, Solzhenitsyn poured out once-unimaginable tales of the brutality of Soviet prison life. With *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*, the unknown author became lionized worldwide as a truth-telling freedom-fighter. A publishing event that Premier Nikita Khrushchev authorized as part of his de-Stalinization campaign looks, in retrospect, like the first crack in the Berlin Wall.

*The Gulag Archipelago*, a history of the Soviet concentration camps, prompted the Kremlin to ship the author westward in 1974.

At home, Solzhenitsyn had scolded the Soviet leaders for their attempted "eradication of Christian religion and morality" and for substituting an ideology with atheism as its "chief inspirational and emotional hub." But once in the West, he scolded Western elites for discarding "the moral heritage of Christian centuries with their great reserves of mercy and sacrifice" and for substituting "the proclaimed and practiced autonomy of man from any higher force above him."

Thus many Western intellectuals also turned against him (one headline bellowed, "Shut Up, Solzhenitsyn"). Despite his moderate political inclinations, critics pinned false labels on him: reactionary, chauvinist, monarchist, theocrat, even anti-Semite.

"Gradually it was disclosed to me that the line dividing good and evil passes not through states, nor between classes, nor

Solzhenitsyn replied, "They lie about me as if I were already dead," and complained, "Nobody ever gives any quotes."

Moving to Vermont and listening only to "the sad music of Russia," Solzhenitsyn fulfilled his boyhood plan with *The Red Wheel*, but now the Bolshevik Revolution was not celebrated but lamented. And "the main cause of the ruinous Revolution that swallowed up some sixty million of our people" was—as he had heard his elders starkly say—that "men have forgotten God." That forgetting is also "the principal trait of the entire twentieth century."

Today as the Cold War rapidly disappears from modern consciousness, Solzhenitsyn is less well-known. But he remains the indispensable witness to and keenest interpreter of the century's greatest intellectual and political conflict. **New**

between political parties either—but right through every human heart." — *Alexandr Solzhenitsyn*

*Yorker* editor David Remnick calls him our age's "dominant writer" and says, "No writer that I can think of in history, really, was able to do so much through courage and literary skill to change the society they came from. And, to some extent, you have to credit the literary works of Alexandr Solzhenitsyn with helping to bring down the last empire on earth."

*Edward E. Ericson, Jr., is a professor of English at Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Michigan, and author of Solzhenitsyn and the Modern World (Regnery Gateway, 1993).*

## Timeline

**1917** Russian Revolution

**1918** Alexandr Solzhenitsyn is born

**1928** Joseph Stalin consolidates his power; first Five-Year Plan

**1936-39** Stalin's great purge annihilates tens of thousands

**1945** Solzhenitsyn arrested as a captain in the army; Soviets consolidate power in Eastern Europe, which begins the Cold War

**1953** Solzhenitsyn released from prison camps and diagnosed with terminal cancer; Nikita Khrushchev takes power in U.S.S.R. upon Stalin's death

**1962** Publishes *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*

**1968** Publishes *Cancer Ward* and *First Circle*

**1970** Awarded the Nobel Prize for literature

**1973** Publishes first volume of *Gulag Archipelago*

**1974** Exiled from his homeland

**1988** Mikhail Gorbachev becomes U.S.S.R. president

**1989** Berlin Wall dismantled

**1994** Solzhenitsyn returns to Russia

## You Are There

***In his autobiographical*** The Oak and the Calf, *Alexandr Solzhenitsyn recalls how he "wrote" in the camps, where writing was forbidden—and how vulnerable his work was.*

**I**n the camp, this meant committing my verse—many thousands of lines—to memory. To help me with this, I improvised decimal counting beads and, in transit prisons, broke up matchsticks and used the fragments as tallies. As I approached the end of my sentence, I grew more confident of my powers of

memory, and began writing down and memorizing prose—dialogue at first, but then, bit by bit, whole densely written passages. ... But more and more of my time—in the end as much as one week every month—went into the regular repetition of all I had memorized.

Then came exile, and right at the beginning of my exile, cancer. ... In December [1953] the doctors—comrades in exile—confirmed that I had at most three weeks left.

All that I had memorized in the camps ran the risk of extinction together with the head that held it. This was a dreadful moment in my life: to die on the threshold of freedom, to see all I had written, all that gave meaning to my life thus far, about to perish with me. ...

I hurriedly copied things out in tiny handwriting, rolled them, several pages at a time, into tight cylinders and squeezed these into a champagne bottle. I buried the bottle in my garden—and set off for Tashkent to meet the new year and to die. [In fact, he was treated and recovered completely.]

**For more information on this topic, see:**

Alexandr Solzhenitsyn

<http://www.soc.pu.ru/gallery/solzhenitsyn/home.html>

A World Split Apart: An Address by Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn

<http://www.uncg.edu/~danford/solz.html>

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# CHRISTIAN HISTORY

Issue 65: Ten Influential Christians of the 20th Century

## Globalism: John Paul II

In issuing more significant encyclicals and visiting more nations than any other pope, he's shown that Christianity remains a world force.

Richard John Neuhaus

In October, 1978, Karol Wojtyla, the Cardinal Archbishop of Krakow, Poland, was elected the first Slav pope in history and the first non-Italian since the sixteenth century. He took the name John Paul II, and many observers believe he will be known in history as "John Paul the Great," much as Christians refer to the fifth and sixth century popes, Leo the Great and Gregory the Great.

Secular writers tend to see his greatness chiefly in the part he played in the end of the empire of Soviet communism. During World War II, when Joseph Stalin was cautioned against incurring the displeasure of Pope Pius XII, Stalin dismissively asked, "How many divisions does the pope have?" John Paul marshaled divisions of the human spirit in Poland and throughout Eastern Europe, encouraging millions of people to declare their determination to "live in the truth." It was in 1980, one year after he visited Poland, that the Solidarity movement became a force—a connection Solidarity leader Lech Walesa commemorated by signing the agreement legalizing the movement with a souvenir pen bearing the pope's picture.

Wojtyla's Slavic heritage is not the only unique element of his background. During the Nazi occupation of Poland, he worked in a quarry and a chemical factory. But by night, he studied philosophy, published poetry, and wrote and performed plays as part of a clandestine cultural resistance organization. It wasn't until after his father's death in 1941 that he began to consider the priesthood as yet another way to resist the degradation and brutality of totalitarian rule.

He entered seminary in 1942, though the political climate made this a risky choice; many of his professors had already been arrested and lost forever to concentration camps. He conducted his studies in secret until Poland was "liberated" by the Russian army and the Krakow seminary could be public once more. Following his ordination, he began to travel throughout Europe, and he also continued his literary pursuits, always making every effort to assert a vision of life different from what the ruling communists sought to impose. His ideas and activism attracted the attention of church leaders, and when the cardinals met to choose a new pope after John Paul I's sudden death in 1978, Wojtyla garnered nearly all of the votes.

"The Church counters the culture of death with the culture of

While his influence in world affairs has been enormous, John Paul is not primarily a political figure. He sees himself first as a priest, philosopher, theologian, bishop, and teacher. Among his titles is *Servus servorum Dei* (Servant of the servants of God), and as such he sees himself as servant to the more than one billion Roman Catholics in the world, and indeed to the entire human family, all of whom are called to be servants of God and of one another. "Believers have a duty to treat all men and women as brothers and sisters in the one human family," he said in a 1995 address to the ambassador of Great Britain. "Prejudice and enmity have no place in true religion and can never be justified on religious grounds."

The theme of his first sermon as pope was "Be not afraid!" and that theme has been repeated thousands of times throughout the 20 years of his pontificate. The message is that, despite all the perils facing humanity, the human project itself cannot

love." —  
John  
Paul II

fail because God has become one of us in Jesus Christ, and Christ has already overcome sin, evil, and every threat to human existence. That message is aptly described as "prophetic humanism," a radically Christ-centered word to the world offering both God's judgment and promise of redemption. "The Redeemer of Man, Jesus Christ, is the center of the universe and of history," he wrote in his first encyclical.

John Paul's focus on future redemption, as well as his deep hostility to communism, place him in opposition to liberation theology, which gained popularity in the 1960s and 1970s. He saw too much of a Marxist agenda in this school of thought. However, he also criticized Western capitalism on the grounds of the "fundamental defect, or rather a series of defects, indeed a defective machinery" that allows some to prosper while others starve. The pope's other stances that have created controversy include vehement opposition to abortion and birth control, a refusal to even discuss women's ordination, and forceful support for theological orthodoxy, even to the point of intervening in the affairs of Catholic educators and the Society of Jesus.

In more than 90 pastoral visits around the world, in World Youth Day events that have rallied millions of young people, and in thousands of homilies, speeches, and official documents, the role of John Paul has been chiefly that of teacher. His is possibly the most energetic teaching pontificate in 2,000 years of Christian History. Especially influential are the 13 encyclical letters to date, five of which deserve special attention:

- ***Centesimus Annus*** (The Hundredth Year, 1991) set out the biblical and moral basis of a free and just social order.
- ***Veritatis Splendor*** (The Splendor of Truth, 1993) contends for the objectivity of moral truth, in opposition to all forms of relativism and nihilism.
- ***Evangelium Vitae*** (The Gospel of Life, 1995) explains why protecting unborn children and other imperiled human lives is necessary for the defense of human dignity against "the culture of death."
- ***Ut Unum Sint*** (That They May Be One, 1995) echoed the prayer of Christ in John 17, calling for unity among Christians, especially reconciliation with Eastern Orthodoxy and the healing of the sixteenth-century breach between Rome and the Reformation.
- ***Fides et Ratio*** (Faith and Reason, 1998) explains that all truth is God's truth and therefore all truth is one, which requires a renewed conversation between science, philosophy, and revelation.

Christians of all communions will for many years into the future, I am confident, be studying the teaching and pastoral initiatives of the one who will be known, I am also confident, as John Paul the Great. As George Weigel, in his ***Witness to Hope: The Biography of John Paul II***, noted, John Paul II, for the first time in centuries, has effectively placed the papacy in the service of the entire Christian community and its mission to the world.

**Richard John Neuhaus is editor of First Things: A Monthly Journal of Religion and Public Life.**

## Timeline

**1920** Karol Wojtyla is born in Poland

**1938** Begins studies at Jagiellonian University

**1939** Germany invades Poland

- 1942** Wojtyla begins studying for the priesthood at an underground seminary
- 1945** Russia assumes control of Poland
- 1948** Wojtyla obtains doctorate in mystical theology; serves as parish priest
- 1956** Becomes professor of ethics at Krakow Seminary
- 1960** Publishes the influential book *Love and Responsibility*
- 1962-65** Actively participates in Vatican II
- 1963** Becomes archbishop of Krakow
- 1978** Elected pope, as John Paul II
- 1979** Journeys to Mexico and Poland
- 1981** Shot and seriously wounded
- 1983** Visits his would-be assassin in prison and extends forgiveness
- 1985** Addresses 80,000 young Muslims in Casablanca
- 1986** Inaugurates World Youth Day to celebrate the faith of young Catholics
- 1989** Solidarity sweeps semi-free elections in Poland; John Paul meets with Mikhail Gorbachev at the Vatican
- 1994** Attempts to influence the debate on family planning prior to UN Conference on Population and Development
- 1996** Makes pilgrimage to unified Germany

## **You Are There**

***When John Paul made a pilgrimage to Poland in 1979, fully one-third of the nation turned out to see him, welcoming him with displays like this one in Krakow:***

John Paul II drove into his city in an open car, past the exultant faces of men, women, and children he had baptized, confirmed, and counseled, past couples whose marriages he had blessed and whose parents he had buried. ... [F]or the next three nights, the streets surrounding the archbishop's residence and the roofs of nearby houses were thronged with young people—high school and university students and workers, celebrating a kind of papal street festival, clearly to the discomfort of the authorities. The first night, John Paul came out on a balcony and began a dialogue with the crowd, asking, "Who's making all this noise? I haven't heard so much noise since Mexico, where they cried, 'El Papa, El Papa.'" The youngsters took the cue and began the rhythmic chant, "El Papa, Sto lat, El Papa, Sto lat! [May you live a hundred years!]" They called for a speech, but the pope explained there wouldn't be any; he had a sore throat. So they sang together, as they would for the next three nights. ... Finally, at midnight, John Paul called off the songfest with the last word: "You are

asking for a word or two, so here they are—Good night!"

—*George Weigel in Witness to Hope: The Biography of John Paul II*

**For more information on this topic, see:**

The Holy See - The Holy Father - John Paul II  
[http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/john\\_paul\\_ii](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii)

TIME 100: Leaders & Revolutionaries - Pope John Paul II  
<http://www.pathfinder.com/time/time100/leaders/profile/popejohn.html>

CNN - Biography - Pope John Paul II  
<http://www.cnn.com/SPECIALS/1999/pope>

Catholic Information Network: John Paul II  
<http://www.cin.org/pope.html>

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# CHRISTIAN HISTORY

Issue 65: Ten Influential Christians of the 20th Century

## Missions and Ecumenism: John R. Mott

Evangelist *and* ecumenist

Mark Galli

As John Mott stood before the now famous 1910 Edinburgh Missionary Conference, he said, "It is a startling and solemnizing fact that even as late as the twentieth century, the Great Command of Jesus Christ to carry the Gospel to all mankind is still so largely unfulfilled. ... The church is confronted today, as in no preceding generation, with a literally worldwide opportunity to make Christ known."

It was evangelistic passion that made Mott his generation's most popular evangelist to university students and the promoter of the emerging ecumenical movement.

The New-York-born-and-Iowa-raised Mott was nurtured in a devout Methodist home. He was led into "a reasonable and vital faith" at Cornell University after hearing and speaking personally with C. T. Studd, the renowned cricket-player-turned-evangelist (and one of the "Cambridge Seven" who later worked with Hudson Taylor in China). Mott was struck by Studd's admonition, "Seekest thou great things for thyself? Seek them not. Seek ye first the kingdom of God." That same year, at the 1886 Northfield (Massachusetts) Student Conference led by Dwight Moody, Mott stepped up and became one of the 100 men who volunteered for foreign missions.

"The  
evangelization  
of the world  
in this  
generation" —  
*John R. Mott*

Mott's destiny, however, lay not in foreign missions but in evangelizing college students and inspiring others to foreign mission work. He became college secretary of the YMCA in 1888, when the organization was consciously evangelical and aggressively evangelistic. That same year, he helped organize the Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions (SVM), a branch of the YMCA and YWCA. By the time he spoke at SVM's 1951 convention, over 20,000 volunteers had gone to mission fields through its efforts.

Mott's energies could not be bound by one or even two such organizations, no matter their scope. In 1895 he helped found the World Student Christian Association and traveled some 2 million miles to further the federation's dream: to "unite in spirit as never before the students of the world," and so hasten the fulfillment of Jesus' prayer, "that all may be one." On every continent he visited, he established immediate rapport with students and church leaders, who flocked to hear him speak. His reputation for irenic yet impassioned appeal for dedication to the kingdom of God grew; heads of state sympathetic to his mission honored him upon arrival and consulted him in private.

In 1893 he helped found the Foreign Missions Conference of North America, and in 1910, he helped pull together and chair the massive Edinburgh Missionary Conference—its 1,200 delegates represented 160 mission boards or societies.

All these movements, and a few more with which Mott was involved, eventually blossomed at the World Council of Churches in Amsterdam in 1948. Mott was not only officially named honorary president at the inaugural session, he has since earned the informal title of "father of the ecumenical movement."

By the time Mott was 32, he was called "Protestantism's leading statesman," at 58, the "father of the young people of the world," and at age 81, in 1946, he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

In an era when liberals and fundamentalists debated fiercely, Mott took a middle view: "Evangelism without social work is deficient; social work without evangelism is impotent."

Still, evangelism was his first love. The title of his bestselling 1900 book is ***The Evangelization of the World in This Generation***, and in his last public appearance, he said, "While life lasts, I am an evangelist."

*Mark Galli is editor of Christian History.*

## Timeline

**1865** John Mott born in Livingston, New York

**1886** Dedicates his life to Christian service while at Cornell University; attends D.L. Moody's Northfield Conference and volunteers for the mission field

**1888** Becomes college secretary of the YMCA

**1895** Helps found World Student Christian Association

**1908** Federal Council of Churches adopts "The Social Creed of the Churches" to promote the social gospel

**1910** Mott chairs Edinburgh Missionary Conference

**1917** Participates in a U.S. diplomatic mission to Russia

**1926** Becomes president of the World Alliance of YMCAs

**1941** American Council of Churches formed as a response to the more mainline Federal Council of Churches (later known as the National Council of Churches)

**1943** First meeting of the National Association of Evangelicals

**1946** Mott shares Nobel Peace Prize

**1948** Named honorary chairman of the first meeting of the World Council of Churches in Amsterdam

**1955** Mott dies

## You Are There

When he himself addresses an assembly, [he] knits and kindles the craggy tender face; the voice vibrates with fierce emphases and stresses. ... The single words seem literally to fall from his lips (the trite expression is for once justified), finished off with a deliberation that never slurs one final consonant, but on the contrary gives that consonant the duty of driving its word home. And as for the sentences also—the conclusion of each, instead of dropping in tone, increases to a sort of defiant *sforzando*, which, when his earnestness is at its height, can be terrific.

—A participant's description of John Mott's chairmanship at the 1910 Edinburgh Missionary Conference

**For more information on this topic, see:**

Nobel Laureates: Biography of John Raleigh Mott

<http://www.nobel.se/peace/laureates/1946/mott-bio.html>

Encyclopedia Britannica

<http://www.britannica.com/bcom/eb/article/idxref/4/0,5716,301292,00.html>

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# CHRISTIAN HISTORY

Issue 65: Ten Influential Christians of the 20th Century

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## Civil Rights: Martin Luther King, Jr.

**No Christian played a more prominent role in the century's most significant social justice movement.**

Russel Moldovan

"We must keep God in the forefront. Let us be Christian in all our actions." So spoke the newly elected president of the Montgomery Improvement Association, which had just been organized to lead a bus boycott to protest segregated seating in the city buses. The president, and new pastor of Dexter Avenue Baptist, went on to say that blacks must not hate their white opponents. "Love is one of the pinnacle parts of the Christian faith. There is another side called justice, and justice is really love in calculation."

And so began his public role in the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s. The movement produced scores of men and women who risked their lives to secure a more just and inclusive society, but the name Martin Luther King, Jr., stands out among them all. As historian Mark Noll put it, "He was beyond question the most important Christian voice in the most important social protest movement after World War II."

He was born in Atlanta, Georgia, in 1929 as Michael King, but in 1935 his father changed both of their names to Martin Luther to honor the German Protestant Reformer. The precocious Martin skipped two grades, and by age 15, had passed the entrance exam to the predominantly black Morehouse College. There King felt drawn into pastoral ministry: "My call to the ministry was not a miraculous or supernatural something," he said. "On the contrary it was an inner urge calling me to serve humanity."

From Morehouse he moved on to Crozer Theological Seminary (Chester, Pennsylvania) and Boston University, both predominantly white and liberal, where he studied Euro-American philosophers and theologians. King was especially taken with social gospel champion Walter Rauschenbusch, whom King said "had done a great service for the Christian church by insisting that the gospel deals with the whole man, not only his soul but his body."

King also admired the nonviolent civil disobedience of Mahatma Gandhi: "Gandhi was probably the first person in history to lift the love ethic of Jesus above mere interaction between individuals to a powerful and effective social force on a large scale." King also believed "Christ furnished the spirit and motivation, and Gandhi furnished the method."

King left Boston in 1953 with his new wife Coretta to pastor at Dexter Baptist Church in Montgomery, Alabama. When he took the position, he said, he had not "the slightest idea that I would later become involved in a crisis in which nonviolent resistance would be applicable."

In December 1955, a young Montgomery woman named Rosa Parks was arrested for refusing to relinquish her bus seat to a white man. Local pastors rallied the black community for a city-wide bus boycott, named themselves the Montgomery Improvement Association, and unanimously elected King as president.

King immediately implemented his ideas, insisting throughout the boycott on a policy of nonviolence despite the threat of white violence. Even after his home was bombed, King forbade those guarding his home from carrying guns; instead, he told his followers, "Keep moving ... with the faith that what we are doing is right, and with the even greater faith that God is with us in the struggle."

Throughout the Montgomery campaign, critics complained about the ordained clergy's involvement in "earthly, temporal matters." King, however, believed "this view of religion ... was too confined." He saw his civil rights activity as an extension of his ministry: "The Christian gospel is a two-way road. On the one hand, it seeks to change the souls of men, and thereby unite them with God; on the other hand, it seeks to change the environmental conditions of men so the soul will have a chance after it is changed."

When a year later the boycott succeeded in ending bus discrimination, King was propelled into the national limelight. In 1957 he helped found the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), an umbrella for civil rights organizations. The next year, he published his first of seven books, *Stride Toward Freedom*.

Along with increasing national attention came increasing hostility: while autographing his book in a department store, an assailant stabbed King in the chest with a letter opener. It took some time to get him proper care, and his surgeon later told him, "If you had sneezed during all those hours of waiting, your aorta would have been punctured and you would have drowned in your own blood."

In 1959 King moved to Atlanta to become co-pastor with his father at Ebenezer Baptist Church. The next years saw him organizing peaceful demonstrations in Atlanta (1960), Albany (Georgia, 1961), Birmingham (1963), St. Augustine (Florida, 1964), and Selma (1965). King received death threats, was once stoned, was arrested several times and held in solitary confinement.

In addition, after King criticized the FBI in 1964 for cooperating with segregation authorities, the FBI stepped up its surveillance of King. A mixture of politics and personal animosity prompted FBI chief J. Edgar Hoover to try to discredit King as a womanizer and communist. There was, unfortunately, substance to the first charge but not the second (the most that can be said is that King's early advisers had formerly been members of the Communist Party). Hoover called King "the most notorious liar in the country," and the FBI went so far as to send a letter to King suggesting he commit suicide.

King became increasingly troubled with the dichotomy between his private and public selves, and the burden of leading the SCLC often seemed overwhelming. But his preaching continued to inspire his followers. His greatest oratorical moment came on August 28, 1963, when 250,000 demonstrators gathered at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D. C. All speakers had their speeches pre-approved, but in King's original, the now-famous phrase, "I have a dream," never appeared. King was the last speaker of the long, hot day. He noted the fatigued state of his audience, and he remembered a phrase he'd heard spoken by a young woman who had some months earlier led a service at the remains of a torched church.

"I have a dream," he began, "that one day on the red hills of Georgia, sons of former slaves and sons of former slave-owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood. ...

"I have a dream my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character."

In 1964, at the height of his influence, King became *Time* magazine's first black "Man of the Year," then the youngest person ever to win the Nobel Peace Prize. He donated the prize money (\$54,600) to civil rights organizations.

Beginning in 1965, King's popularity waned as his "dream" grew to include peace in Vietnam. With this, most of white America, as well as many African Americans, distanced themselves from King. But he refused to soften his language about the war: "On some positions, cowardice asks the question, is it expedient? And then expedience comes along and asks the question—is it politic? Vanity asks the question—is it popular? Conscience asks the question—is it right?"

In spring of 1968, King was in Memphis to help with a sanitation strike. On April 3, he told his audience, "I may not get there with you, but I want you to know that tonight that we as a people will get to the

promised land." The following day, James Earl Ray shot and killed King as he stood on the balcony of the Lorraine Motel.

The nation mourned King's death, and the civil rights movement fragmented irreversibly. King's influence may have waned in the last two years of his life, but 20 years after his death, his legacy was deemed so crucial to the nation's history that a national holiday was named after him.

*Russel Moldovan is pastor of Blanchard (Pennsylvania) Church of Christ, and author of Martin Luther King, Jr.: A History of His Religious Witness and His Life (American Universities Press).*

## Timeline

**1929** Michael (later Martin) King born in Atlanta

**1930** Black Muslims, a nationalist religious movement, formed in Detroit

**1934** Elijah Muhammad assumes leadership of Black Muslims

**1954** King becomes a pastor in Montgomery, Alabama

**1955-56** Leads Montgomery bus boycott

**1957** Becomes president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference

**1960s** Black Muslim leader Malcolm X preaches revolutionary violence to gain justice for blacks

**1963** March on Washington culminates in King's "I Have a Dream" speech

**1964** King wins the Nobel Peace Prize

**1965** Leads Selma-to-Montgomery march; Malcolm X assassinated

**1968** King assassinated in Memphis

**1976** Black Muslim Louis Farrakhan leads a splinter group to form the Nation of Islam

**1986** King's birthday becomes a national holiday

## You Are There

***By January 1956, with the Montgomery bus boycott in full swing, threatening phone calls, up to 40 a day, began pouring into King's home. Though he put up a strong front, the threats unsettled him. One midnight as he sat over a cup of coffee worrying, the phone rang again, and the caller said, "Nigger, we are tired of you and your mess now. And if you aren't out of this town in three days, we're going to blow your brains out and blow up your house." King later described what happened in the next few minutes:***

I sat there and thought about a beautiful little daughter who had just been born. ... She was the darling of my life. I'd come in night after night and see that little gentle smile. And I sat at that table thinking about

that little girl and thinking about the fact that she could be taken away from me any minute.

And I started thinking about a dedicated, devoted, and loyal wife, who was over there asleep. And she could be taken from me, or I could be taken from her. And I got to the point that I couldn't take it any longer. I was weak. ...

And I discovered then that religion had to become real to me, and I had to know God for myself. And I bowed down over that cup of coffee. I never will forget it. ... I prayed a prayer, and I prayed out loud that night. I said, "Lord, I'm down here trying to do what's right. I think I'm right. I think the cause that we represent is right. But Lord, I must confess that I'm weak now. I'm faltering. I'm losing my courage. And I can't let the people see me like this because if they see me weak and losing my courage, they will begin to get weak. ..."

And it seemed at that moment that I could hear an inner voice saying to me, "Martin Luther, stand up for righteousness. Stand up for justice. Stand up for truth. And lo I will be with you, even until the end of the world. ..." Almost at once my fears began to go. My uncertainty disappeared.

**For more information on this topic, see:**

The Martin Luther King, Jr., Center for Nonviolent Social Change  
<http://www.thekingcenter.com>

Martin Luther King, Jr. Papers Project  
<http://www.stanford.edu/group/King>

LIFE Martin Luther King Jr. Tribute  
<http://www.pathfinder.com/Life/mlk/mlk.html>

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# CHRISTIAN HISTORY

Issue 65: Ten Influential Christians of the 20th Century

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## Third World: Rumbblings to the South

In Africa and elsewhere, third-world Christians are shaking society.

Derek Peterson

Late in 1913 a barefoot figure carrying cross, calabash, and Bible crossed the frontier from Liberia to the Ivory Coast and began the most effective evangelistic crusade in modern African history. His name was William Wade Harris, a native Liberian. Tens of thousands followed Harris, establishing churches in regions that had never seen a missionary. Harris himself was arrested by French colonial officials, treated roughly, and expelled from the colony in 1915. But his followers persisted, forming congregations that were "discovered" when the missionaries arrived years later.

The Christian world in the twentieth century shifted its center south of the equator. This historic transference was largely carried out by African, and Latin American, Christians like Harris.

For some, the issues have been more social and political. John Chilembwe, a Baptist convert, established a self-run mission near his home in modern Malawi in 1910. When in 1914 the colonial state began to press-gang Africans into military service, Chilembwe protested: "Let the rich men, bankers, titled men, farmers and landlords go to war and get shot ... instead the poor Africans are invited to die for a cause that is not their own." He then called on Christians to fight against their oppressors. Despite his forces' early successes, colonial militias soon regained control and killed Chilembwe. Still, his memory inspired future nationalists to seek independence in Ghana, Tanzania, and elsewhere.

In South Africa, Desmond Tutu was one of a long line of clergymen who struggled against apartheid. Tutu, who grew up in mining towns along the eastern coast, first came to international prominence in 1985, when he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his work with the South African Council of Churches. He said the award was for those "whose noses are rubbed in the dust every day," the mothers trying to support their families, the fathers living in single-sex hostels, the 3.5 million people who had been forcibly resettled—"uprooted and dumped as if they were rubbish."

Christianity equally inspired spiritual awakening. Beginning as a small movement in Rwanda in the 1930s, the East African Revival is one of the most important forces shaping Christian life in contemporary Africa. Among its early leaders was the Ugandan Simeoni Nsibambi who, after receiving a vision from God, engaged in intensive Bible study for several days with the Anglican missionary and Keswick revivalist Joe Church. During a convention in 1933-34 at which Church and Nsibambi preached, mass revival broke out. By the late 1940s, revivalists from Uganda were holding mass meetings in Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda, and elsewhere, drawing tens of thousands.

This is but a small part of the third-world legacy, which will become even more evident in the twenty-first century as Christianity increasingly becomes a major faith in the southern hemisphere.

*Derek Peterson is an instructor of history at the University of Minnesota.*

**For more information on this topic, see:**

Desmond Mpilo Tutu Winner of the 1984 Nobel Prize in Peace  
<http://www.almaz.com/nobel/peace/1984a.html>

Gustavo Gutierrez, A Theology of Liberation  
<http://www.worldbank.org/poverty/povlit/povlit2p22.htm>

Luis Palau Evangelistic Association  
<http://www.gospelcom.net/lpea>

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# CHRISTIAN HISTORY

Issue 65: Ten Influential Christians of the 20th Century

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## Survey Results: What Do You Think?

How our scholars and general readers voted in the Most Influential Christians of the Century survey.

editors

One year ago, we asked you, our readers, to do two things: list the five most influential Christians of the twentieth century and then note five well-known Christians who were most *personally* influential. We posed the same two questions to historians who belong to the Conference on Faith and History, a group composed of mostly Christian historians who study Christianity's influence in history. We've ranked each of the four lists by the percentage of votes received for each person. Here's what we discovered.

### Surprises

- John Calvin (yes, the *sixteenth-century* reformer) garnered two votes among readers as most personally influential. These are hyper-Calvinists, no doubt, who firmly believe in the resurrection.
- Radical demythologizer Rudolf Bultmann did make the top 20 list of most influential. It's clear both readers and scholars believe you don't have to admire a person to recognize how much trouble he may have caused the church this century.
- The only non-Western Christian to place significantly was China's Watchman Nee.
- William Cameron Townsend, founder of Wycliffe Bible Translators (the largest Protestant mission agency in the world) didn't even make the top 20 most influential lists.
- Same with Bob Pierce, founder of World Vision (the largest non-governmental social service agency in the world).
- Same with missiologist Donald McGavran, founder of the church growth movement.

### Online differences

Responses from general readers (non-scholars) came in two forms, regular mail and e-mail, and we tabulated them separately to see if there might be some differences between the two. Three stood out.

First, pop Christian singer Keith Green tied for eighth on the online readers' most personally influential list (and Bill Gaither, Petra, and Stryper each earned a vote). Among regular mail respondents, Green tied for twenty-seventh. We surmise that the online readers are younger and have been nurtured more by contemporary Christian music.

Second, Henry Morris, of the Institute of Creation Research, tied for nineteenth most personally influential among online respondents but was hardly noticed by regular mail readers.

Third, among regular mail readers, positive thinker Norman Vincent Peale ranked thirteenth most personally influential, but with e-mail readers he tied for eighty-seventh. We're guessing the snail mail crowd is older and actually read Peale in the fifties and sixties when he was popular.

## Regrets

Two people we should have included in our survey:

- Herbert J. Taylor, businessman and philanthropist (and president of Rotary International who created its famous four-fold test) whose support (personal and financial) helped bring to life InterVarsity Christian Fellowship, Christian Service Brigade, and Young Life. He also sat on the boards of Fuller Theological Seminary and the National Association of Evangelicals.
- Henrietta Mears, founder of Forest Home Camp Grounds in southern California and Christian educator at Hollywood Presbyterian, who disciplined thousands of future missionaries and Christian leaders, such as Bill Bright of Campus Crusade and Richard Halverson, former chaplain of the U.S. Senate.

## General Readers: Most Influential (408 replies)

The main difference here between scholars and general readers is that James Dobson made the readers' most influential list (instead of the scholars' Reinhold Niebuhr). In fact, Dobson made three out of four of the lists in the survey. For both readers and scholars, Billy Graham was clearly the most influential Christian of the twentieth century, with a solid lead over the pack.

1. Billy Graham	89%
2. C. S. Lewis	64%
3. Mother Teresa	43%
4. Martin Luther King, Jr.	42%
5. John XXIII	29%
6. James Dobson	26%
7. Karl Barth	25%
8. Francis Schaeffer	20%
9. John Paul II	16.7%
10. Dietrich Bonhoeffer	16.4%

## Scholars: Most Influential (155 replies)

In light of our criteria, the two surprises here were Reinhold Niebuhr and Francis Schaeffer. Niebuhr was a neo-orthodox theologian who has had tremendous influence to be sure, but our take is that it was mainly limited to America and among scholars (especially in history and public policy) and members of mainline denominations. Francis Schaeffer made a deep impact on a generation of evangelical readers who came of age in the 1960s and 1970s, but it's hard to see his influence outside this sub-group.

Bonhoeffer was one of six (with Graham, Lewis, Mother Teresa, King, and Schaeffer) who made the top ten in all four lists.

1. Billy Graham	84%
2. C. S. Lewis	47%
3. Martin Luther King, Jr.	34%
4. Karl Barth	34%
5. John XXIII	29%
6. Mother Teresa	28%
7. John Paul II	20%
8. Reinhold Niebuhr	14%
9. Francis Schaeffer	12%
10. Dietrich Bonhoeffer	9%

## General Readers: Personally Influential (408 replies)

The fact that two of the top three here are apologists suggests that our readers, not just our scholars, value the life of the mind. But they also value the spiritual and the practical. This is the only

one of our lists that devotional writer Oswald Chambers (his classic book is *My Utmost for His Highest*) and Campus Crusade founder Bill Bright made.

It is interesting to note that though popes John XXIII and John Paul II make the most influential lists of both scholars and readers, neither scholars nor readers have found them as personally influential.

1. C. S. Lewis	49%
2. Billy Graham	32%
3. Francis Schaeffer	27%
4. James Dobson	22%
5. Dietrich Bonhoeffer	17%
6. Mother Teresa	12%
7. Martin Luther King, Jr.	11%
8. Charles Colson	10.5%
9. Oswald Chambers	10%
10. Bill Bright	9%

### Scholars: Personally Influential (155 replies)

It's no surprise that among intellectuals, apologists Lewis and Schaeffer top the list, and that keen thinkers like John Stott, Carl Henry, and J. Gresham Machen made the top ten. As historians, they've been especially influenced by George Marsden (premier historian of fundamentalism and evangelicalism) and Martin Marty (premier historian of religion in America). Reinhold Niebuhr's *Moral Man and Immoral Society* and *The Irony of American History* have been seminal influences in the field of history, secular or Christian.

That James Dobson made the top ten here is the biggest surprise. Most academics we know consider him simplistic and too politically conservative for their tastes.

Does the fact that Billy Graham ranks as high as third suggest that perhaps he played a role in these historians conversions?

1. C. S. Lewis	46%
2. Francis Schaeffer	28%
3. Billy Graham	20%
4. Martin Luther King, Jr.	19%
5. Dietrich Bonhoeffer	17%
6. Reinhold Niebuhr	12%
7. James Dobson	8%
8. John Stott	7%
9. Carl Henry	
—George Marsden	
—J. Gresham Machen	5%
—Alexandr Solzhenitsyn	
—Mother Teresa	
10. Karl Barth	4.5%
—Martin Marty	

## The Ten Most Influential Christians of the Twentieth Century: Recommended Resources

The biggest challenge when researching prominent figures from recent history isn't finding information, but deciding which of the numerous resources to concentrate on. We found these to be most helpful in preparing this issue.

### Karl Barth

Barth's *Church Dogmatics* fills a bookshelf, but a careful reading of volume one alone will richly reward the patient reader. His commentary on *The Epistle to the Romans* (Oxford, 1968) shook the theological world. It's another dense book but full of Barth's energy. For something completely different (especially for Mozart fans), check out his little work *Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart* (Eerdmans, 1986).

The best biography, *Eberhard Busch's Karl Barth: His Life from Letters and Autobiographical Texts* (Fortress, 1976) gives not only Barth's life but allows Barth to speak throughout.

### Billy Graham

William Martin's *A Prophet with Honor: The Billy Graham Story* (Morrow, 1991) leads the pack of Graham biographies. Martin had access to an astonishing amount of information, including nearly 200 interviews; the book's "Notes" section alone is 100 pages long. For photos, quotes, and coffee-table appeal, the best choice is *Billy Graham: God's Ambassador* (Time-Life, 1999) by Graham's longtime photographer, Russ Busby. Some of Graham's classic messages, as well as ministry news and other current information, can be found at his official Web site ([www.billygraham.org](http://www.billygraham.org)).

### John XXIII

For those interested in the life of Angelo Roncalli, plus a whole lot of information on the inner workings of Catholic hierarchy, it's tough to beat Peter Hebblethwaite's *Pope John XXIII: Shepherd of the Modern World* (Doubleday, 1985). For a collection of perspectives on the pope's main accomplishment, Vatican II, see the entry in Edwin S. Gaustad's *A Documentary History of Religion in America Since 1865* (Eerdmans, 1993).

### John Paul II

We were fortunate that George Weigel's *Witness to Hope: The Biography of John Paul II* (HarperCollins, 1999) was published in time to be a resource for this issue. This long but very readable book is well-researched and well-organized; the timelines at the beginning of each chapter are particularly helpful. Another recent book, *John Paul II: An Invitation to Joy* (Simon & Schuster, 1999), features many lovely photos, quotes, and brief summaries of the pope's views on subjects including life, ecumenism, and human rights. To see both John Paul II and John XXIII in the greater context of their tradition, Eamon Duffy's concise yet colorful *Saints & Sinners: A History of the Popes* (Yale, 1997) is a wonderful reference. The official papal Web site ([www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/john\\_paul\\_ii/index.htm](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/index.htm)) is also worth a look.

## Martin Luther King, Jr.

Again, the plethora of riches is daunting. By conducting extensive interviews and opening F.B.I. transcripts, David J. Garrow is able to delve deeply into both King's leadership and personal life in ***Bearing the Cross: Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference*** (William Morrow, 1999). For this issue, we kept returning to Taylor Branch's (so far) two-part history of the civil rights movement: ***Parting of the Waters: America in the King Years 1956-1963*** and ***Pillar of Fire: America in the King Years 1963-1965*** (Simon & Schuster, 1988, 1998). Russel Moldovan, who contributed the King article in this issue, focuses on King's specifically Christian motivation in ***Martin Luther King, Jr.: A History of His Religious Witness and His Life*** (American Universities Press, 1999).

King's "I Have a Dream" speech and his essay on civil disobedience, "Letter from a Birmingham Jail" (1963) are American classics and, with other King resources, can found at the Nobel Prize Internet Archive ([www.almaz.com/nobel/nobel.html](http://www.almaz.com/nobel/nobel.html)).

## C.S. Lewis

Lewis's best biographer so far is George Sayer, who drew on experiences as the author's pupil and friend to write ***Jack: C.S. Lewis and His Times*** (Harper & Row, 1988). The book is full of memories of Lewis the scholar (always Jack's focus, though he became famous for other things) and descriptions of how his relationships with his family, Joy Gresham, the Inklings, and others shaped his life and writing. Lewis tells his own story pretty well, too, in ***Surprised by Joy*** (Harcourt, Brace & World, 1956), though this book only goes as far as his midlife conversion to Christianity. The hub for Lewis discussion online is Into the Wardrobe: The C.S. Lewis Web Site (<http://cslewis.drzeus.net>). Lewis was also the subject of ***Christian History*** issue 7.

## John Mott

Mott's ***The Evangelization of the World in This Generation*** (1900), ***The Decisive Hour of Christian Missions*** (1910), and ***Liberating the Lay Forces of Christianity*** (1932), among others, will have to be accessed through the library. As far as biographies, there is only one, but it is thorough (816 pages): Howard Hopkins's ***John R. Mott: 1865-1955: A Biography*** (Eerdmans, 1979).

## William Seymour

We understand there is at least one work devoted to Seymour (Douglas Nelson's unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, "For Such a Time as This: The Story of Bishop William J. Seymour and the Azusa Street Revival," University of Birmingham, U.K., 1981), but we never had a copy in the office. There is a nice section on Seymour in Vinson Synan's easy-to-read overview, ***The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition: Charismatic Movements in the Twentieth Century*** (Eerdmans, 1997). Seymour also appears in ***Christian History*** issue 58: [The Rise of Pentecostalism](#).

## Alexandr Solzhenitsyn

His best fiction can be found in ***One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*** (1962), ***The First Circle*** (1968), and ***Cancer Ward*** (1968)—each is a study of one aspect of the Soviet system or another and an example of Solzhenitsyn's richly textured writing. ***The Oak and the Calf*** (Harper & Row, 1975; English translation, 1979) is Solzhenitsyn's account of his ten-year literary battle with the Soviet Union.

***The Gulag Archipelago*** (Harper & Row, 1973-1978) is a "thick" (in meaning and girth: seven books in three volumes) account of the massive Soviet prison system under Stalin.

Edward Ericson, who contributed the Solzhenitsyn piece in this issue, explains the paradoxical and sometimes confused response the Russian writer has elicited in ***Solzhenitsyn and the Modern World*** (Regnery Gateway, 1993).

The most recent biography is by British novelist D. M. Thomas: ***Alexander Solzhenitsyn: A Century in His Life*** (St. Martins, 1998). Solzhenitsyn is not pleased with the book, and maybe with good reason: ***Kirkus Reviews*** called it "an ultimately very satisfying biography" but admitted it was "slightly odd," and Amazon.com describes it as a "rare, controversial combination of exhaustive research and novelistic style."

The Nobel Prize Internet Archive also has a good page on this Nobel laureate ([www.nobelprizes.com/nobel/literature/1970a.html](http://www.nobelprizes.com/nobel/literature/1970a.html)).

## **Mother Teresa**

***Teresa of Calcutta: A Pictorial Biography*** (McGraw-Hill, 1980) by Robert Serrou offers a nice mix of stories, photos, quotes, and first-person accounts but is hardly an in-depth look. Malcolm Muggeridge's ***Something Beautiful for God*** (Harper & Row, 1971) reveals the interplay between the not-yet-believing Muggeridge and the saintly woman he idolizes. Another British journalist, Anne Sebba, attempts to venture into Teresa's hidden life in ***Mother Teresa: Beyond the Image*** (Doubleday, 1997), but the chip on her shoulder is so large she must have struggled to put pen to paper. Perhaps the dearth of comprehensive work is partially due to Teresa's private nature; she discouraged a would-be biographer by saying, "My life or yours, it's just a life."

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