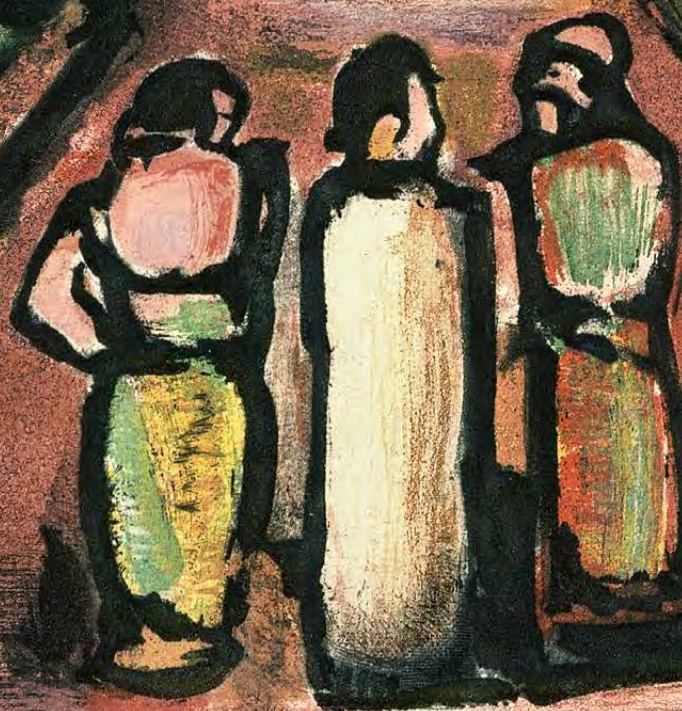


CHRISTIAN HISTORY

Issue 132

**"I have called
you friends"**

How spiritual friendship
helped Christianity spread



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Did you know?

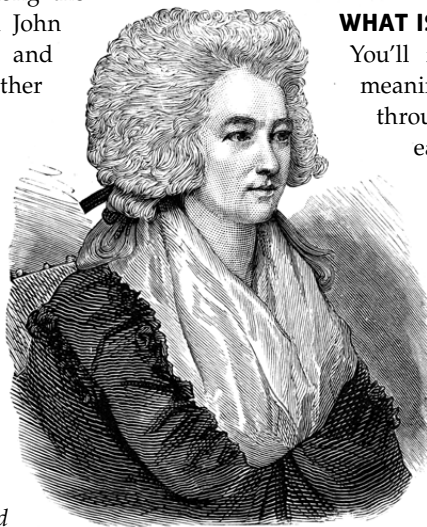
POMEGRANATES, ORGAN-PLAYING, AND CENTURIES OF CIRCLES OF CHRISTIAN FRIENDS

WHAT A FRIEND WE HAVE IN JESUS

Did Jesus have friends? Yes! In the New Testament, the Gospels contain stories of Jesus mentoring people, dining at the homes of friends, and of course, declaring at the Last Supper that he called his disciples friends (John 15:15). Even among the Twelve, he invited Peter, James, and John into a more intimate relationship and entrusted John with the care of his mother after his death (John 19:25–27).

WITH FRIENDS LIKE THAT....

Medieval Christians thought highly of friendship—but not all friendships lived up to the ideal. Teacher of rhetoric Boncompagno de Signa (whose name actually means “good friend” in Italian) wrote a short book about friendship in 1205, the *Amicitia*. He noted there that “friendship is a heavenly power which chooses to dwell only among the virtuous.” Yet most of the treatise discusses *bad*



WHAT IS SPIRITUAL FRIENDSHIP?

You'll find many reflections on the meaning of spiritual friendship throughout this issue. Who made each of the following remarks? Find the answers as you read—and write to *CH* telling us which are your favorites!

A) “We followed the guidance of God’s law and spurred each other on to virtue.”

FAITHFUL PROTEST What did this woman and her friends have to do with ending slavery? See p. 33.

PRAYING WITH THE CELTS How did Celtic Christianity enrich our understanding of friendship? See p. 15.

friends—including those who are power-seeking, mercenary, haughty, fair-weather, pleasure-seeking, and worthless.

POMEGRANATE-SEED FRIENDS

The first book written in Chinese by a European was on friendship; Jesuit missionary Matteo Ricci (1552–1610) wrote a collection of maxims for a Chinese prince as part of Ricci’s controversial approach of presenting Christianity as the completion of Chinese culture. The very last maxim, translated by Timothy Billings, reads: “When Wo-mo-pi (a renowned ancient scholar) cut open a large pomegranate, someone asked him: ‘Master, what things would you like to have as numerous as these seeds?’ To which he responded: ‘Fruitful friends.’”

FOUNDED BY FRIENDS

The Society of Friends (Quakers) emphasizes the relationship between believers as friends and equals. They drew their use of the word “Friend” to describe one another from John 15:15. (You can read more about these spiritual Friends in issue #117 of *Christian History*.)

Many women’s reform movements also grew out of friendships. Frances Willard (1839–1898) is well known for her activism with the Women’s Christian Temperance Union, serving as its second president, and for her speeches in support of women getting the vote. Friends supported her, but one went above and beyond. Anna Gordon (1853–1931), who played the organ for many temperance meetings, served as Willard’s personal secretary and traveling companion. She wrote a biography of her friend and eventually *also* became president of the WCTU.

STRUCK BY LIGHT Right: Why is it odd that artists often picture the apostle Paul on his own? See p. 6.

BUILT BY FRIENDSHIP Below: What does this building in Shanghai have to do with seven friends from England? See p. 34.

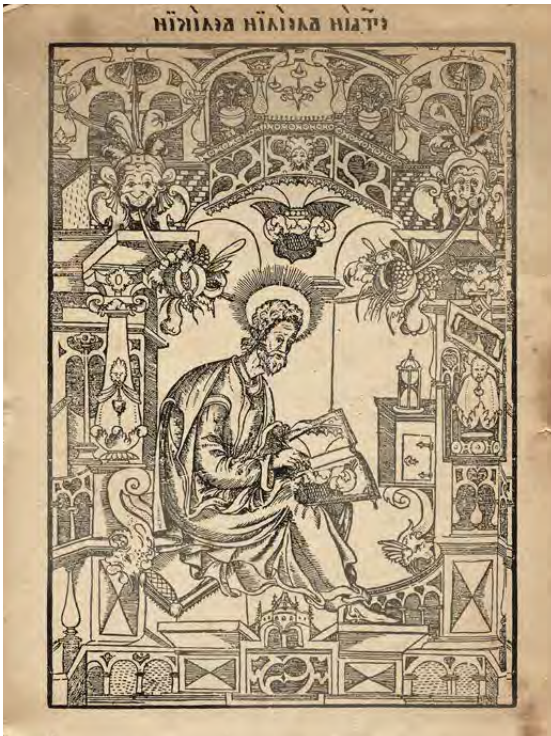


B) "A person without a soul-friend is like a body without a head."

C) "You and I are here, and I hope that Christ is between us as a third."

D) "Might I be but one of a little band of brothers who should ... leave behind them a proof of how much may be accomplished in consequence of the union of

SINCERELY YOURS Below: To whom might Basil of Caesarea be writing a letter? See p. 11.



only a few upon earth in spreading Christianity, oh how should I rejoice and be glad!"

E) "Unknowingly I was led by you [God] to him, so that through him I might be led, knowingly, to you."

F) "Never have I found such a nearness to any fellow-creature as to you. O that it may bring us nearer and nearer to God, till we are both swallowed up in the immensity of his love!"

G) "Is any pleasure on earth as great as a circle of Christian friends by a good fire?" ☐



WE NEED PERMISSION Above: Who is this group of friends, and why are they meeting with the pope? See p. 39.

Letters to the editor

Readers respond to *Christian History*



PRAISE FOR REFORMING WOMEN

Thank you very much for the copy of CH 131! It is really attractive, with so many neat illustrations and such a nice collection

of different figures. Thank you and blessings on your work.—*Elsie McKee, Princeton, NJ* (contributor to CH #131)

Another wonderful issue. It nicely supplements the Reformation series. Thank you for highlighting the work and passion of women in the Reformation period. Their contributions, sadly, are grossly overlooked. It is good to see (from your resources page) that much scholarship is being done to remedy this omission. May God bless you as you prepare for your next issue.—*Tom Edmunds, Washington, NJ*

Your magazine is interesting. I use some articles for lessons presented at a United Methodist Women's meeting. Sometimes it inspires them to study further on these subjects. I especially enjoyed your issue about Women in Church History.—*Anne Lippstreu, Alma, NE*

We love to hear about our materials being used in churches! Issues like Women of the Reformation open our eyes to many things we didn't know beforehand either.

GRATEFUL FOR THE GRAND MIRACLE

What a wonderful gift! Each year I try to find a meaningful Advent devotional, and this year one found me. It could not be more perfect because the devotionals are based on the writings of some of my favorite authors—especially C. S. Lewis and G. K. Chesterton. . . . I so appreciate the work of Christian History Institute. Thank you so much.—*Debra Ensor, Simpsonville, KY*

Thank you for your encouragement! And it's not too late to order copies of our new Advent devotional, The Grand Miracle—visit us online to learn more!

A BAPTIST GAP

Ever since the issue on Baptists in America came out, I have wanted to contact you to indicate that there is a huge gap in what was portrayed. You entirely fail to describe the Baptist groups or denominations that separated themselves from the mainline Northern (a.k.a. American) Baptist Convention. First, during the 1920s, the GARB or General Association of Regular Baptists broke away in protest against the "modernist" theology and tendencies of the NBC, forming their own missionary society. Second, in 1942 or 1943, the CBFMS (Conservative Baptist Foreign Mission Society) was formed, soon followed by the formation of the CBA (Conservative Baptist Association).

I know this well since my father, an ABFMS missionary in India since 1929, was asked to become the very first CBFMS missionary in the newly formed society. There were soon over five hundred CB missionaries around the world, while numbers of AB missionaries dwindled. Third, just about this time, many if not all of the ethnic conferences within the Northern Baptist Convention also broke away to form their own missionary societies and denominations, including the Swedish, German, Finnish, and others. I know this because my father was also asked to join the newly formed Swedish Baptist Mission (long known as the Baptist General Conference). He was present at the formation of this new society, and asked to become one of its missionaries, even though he was already committed to the CBFMS.—*Robert Eric Frykenberg, Madison, WI* (contributor to issues #87 and #94 of CH)

Any time we do a broad survey issue such as the Baptist one, we have to make choices on what to include. In this case, in consultation with our scholar-advisor, we focused most especially on themes of religious liberty and racial conflict. Nevertheless, you are right that—as we discussed the splitting of Baptists in the twentieth century—we should have at least made mention of other ethnic tensions and of all the ways responses to "modernism" were played out within the broad Baptist tradition.

When we do survey issues, we also view them as openings to focus more closely in later issues on aspects of the tradition. We can easily see a fruitful future issue of Christian History being developed on Northern Baptists. ☛

A Riveting Analysis of the Western Cultural Crisis

“Cardinal Sarah is a latter-day Christian prophet, and this book is his most urgent wake-up call yet to a West sleepwalking toward a paganized dystopia.”

—Sohrab Ahmari
Author, *From Fire, by Water*

“To call this book a *tour de force* would be an understatement. It’s an astonishing work: clear, simple, visionary—and filled with hope.”

—Most Rev. Charles Chaput
Archbishop of Philadelphia

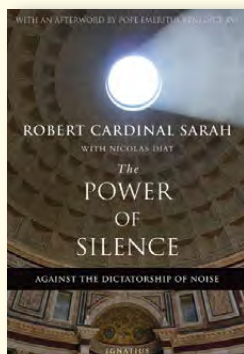
“No other work addresses with such clarity the profound moral crisis engulfing the world, and the solutions. A monumental book!”

—Raymond Arroyo
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“A riveting account of the issues of our times. The Cardinal pulls no punches in offering the most cogent analysis of what ails us today.”

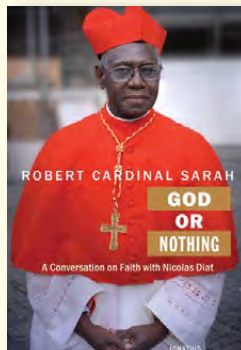
—Bill Donohue
Author, *Common Sense Catholicism*

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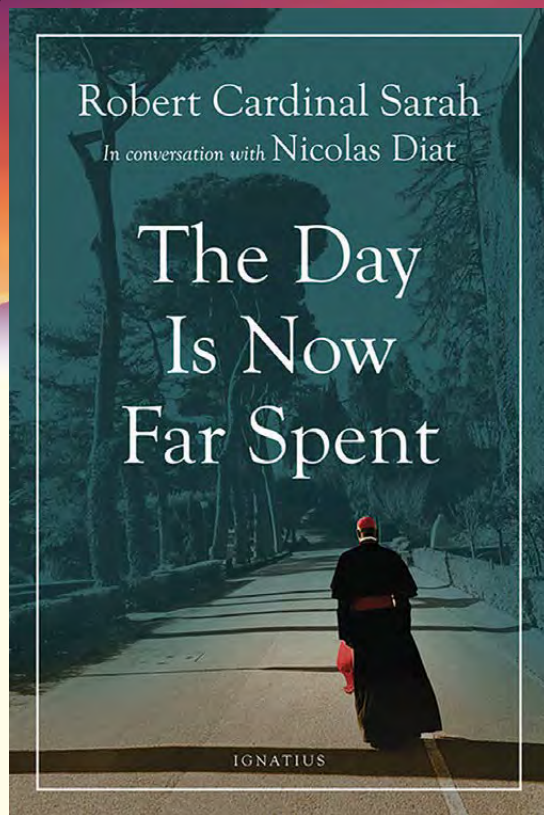
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◆ **THE DAY IS NOW FAR SPENT**

Cardinal Robert Sarah *with* Nicolas Diat

In what he calls his “most important book”, the best-selling author and brilliant Churchman analyzes the spiritual, moral, and political collapse of the Western world, concluding that “the decadence of our time has all the faces of mortal peril.”

A cultural identity crisis is at the root of the problems facing Western societies. Cardinal Sarah says, “The West no longer knows who it is, because it no longer knows and does not want to know who made it, who established it, as it was and as it is. This self-suffocation naturally leads to a decadence that opens the path to new, barbaric civilizations.” While making clear the gravity of our situation, he calls us to a renewal of devotion to Jesus Christ through prayer and the practice of virtue.

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Editor's note

I EXPERIENCED SPIRITUAL FRIENDSHIP before I had a name for it in the churches of my childhood: the Sunday school teachers who guided me, the women's circles uniting in prayer, the lay leaders who worked in harmony with my father (their pastor). The book that gave me a name for this experience—as I imagine it did for many young evangelical Christians of my era—was *The Four Loves* by C. S. Lewis.

I gained much from Lewis's words on *philia* (friendship), but one sentence regarding its Christian implications stuck with me: "For a Christian, there are, strictly speaking no chances. A secret master of ceremonies has been at work. . . . The friendship is not a reward for our discriminating and good taste in finding one another out. It is the instrument by which God reveals to each of us the beauties of others."

SO GREAT A CLOUD OF WITNESSES

Friendship between Christians always has an added dimension—that of the friends bringing each other closer to Christ and magnifying each other's gifts for kingdom work. Such friendship can arise between colleagues, classmates, siblings, spouses, and mentors/protégés—church history is full of famous examples of all of these kinds of friendships. In fact there are so many examples we had trouble narrowing down the list.

We soon realized several important things. First, spiritual friendship is not a modern invention but can be traced all the way back to the New Testament—to Jesus and his disciples and to the many who cooperated with Paul in his evangelizing mission.

Second, and connected to the first, is that in many cases spiritual friendship does not stop with the two or three friends who originally gather together. From the New Testament to the present day, spiritual friendship has often resulted in mission: friends who are united in Christ wish to bring others into the

same kind of fellowship with each other and with the Christian community.

Paul's mentorship of Timothy was an encouragement for Paul on his missionary journeys—and prepared Timothy to become bishop of Ephesus. Seven centuries later Aidan of Lindisfarne cooperated with his friend King Oswald of Northumbria to evangelize that region. As Reformation ferment brewed, Calvin's friends convinced him to stay in Geneva and pastor. In the eighteenth century, a Bible study between Christian friends at Oxford developed into the world-transforming Methodist movement; in the nineteenth, another set of student friends at St. Andrews, Scotland, began a mission society that ended up evangelizing India—and St. Andrews.

In fact the very book that introduced me to the concept of spiritual friendship owed its existence in part to *another* famous circle of spiritual friends—the Inklings, that group of Christian writers centered on Lewis and his academic colleagues. Lewis's own words came out of the experience of meeting together to share the trials of work, the fancies of the imagination, and a vision for the gospel.

While preparing this issue, I came upon a quote from Aelred of Rievaulx, a twelfth-century monk who wrote extensively about the topic. Lewis, a medievalist, may have been echoing it consciously; if not, it is in accord with the vision I learned from him all those years ago.

"You and I are here," Aelred wrote, "and I hope that Christ is between us as a third." Indeed. And as this issue proves, it is quite likely that shared friendship in Christ will soon introduce a fourth to the conversation, and a fifth, and many more. ☛



Jennifer Woodruff Tait
Managing editor

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St. Paul among friends

THE APOSTLE AND HIS COWORKERS FOR THE GOSPEL

Michael F. Bird

MOST DEPICTIONS OF THE APOSTLE PAUL in art portray him as a solitary figure: Paul at a desk writing an epistle, Paul sitting pensively in a prison cell, Paul holding his famous sword, Paul posing for an iconographer, Paul falling off a horse when he sees the risen Jesus. Many people seem to imagine Paul as an itinerant evangelistic preacher, taking his one-man show from town to town along the Mediterranean coast, making acquaintances along the way but never putting down any roots.

But the New Testament offers a different picture. Instead it shows Paul traveling with Barnabas (Acts 13–15) and with Silas (Acts 15–16)—even getting thrown into jail with Silas. It catalogs his long friendship with Timothy. Stories in Acts mention Paul “and his companions” (Acts 17:1) spreading the gospel—one companion was even the author of Acts; he first appears in Acts 16:10 and is traditionally believed to be Luke. (Assuming it was Luke, he stuck with Paul until the end, as 2 Timothy 4:11 records.)

Jesus had called his disciples his friends and expected them to love one another as friends (John 15:12–15). Paul’s ministry as the apostle to the Gentiles, like his Lord’s, was also not a one-man show

JESUS AND ME A 21st-c. artist, A. N. Mironov, shows Paul alone at the moment of his conversion.

or a solo enterprise. It was very much a team effort and depended on many hands working together. Paul’s preaching, debating, teaching, writing, traveling, pastoring, and more were only possible due to the cooperation of key colleagues. His partnerships and friendships with his coworkers in the gospel played a decisive role in his ministry and ultimately helped shape the very idea of friendship in antiquity.

FELLOW WORKERS

Paul’s notion of loving friendship was something of a revolution in the ancient world. Philosophers of the late Roman republic like Cicero (106–43 BC) and of the early empire like Seneca (d. 65 AD) wrote much about the nature, benefits, ethics, and goodness of friendship (see “A pure and holy love,” p. 18). Yet this friendship was restricted to people of the same sex, the same social class, and the same ethno-tribal group. Friendship with social inferiors was impossible: they could be slaves, retainers, or clients, but not really friends or intimates.

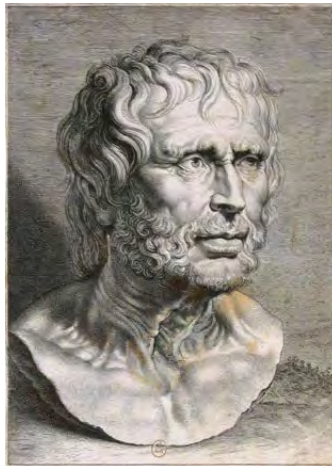


For Cicero, friendship, with its mutual assistance and reciprocal obligations, was a practical element of life within the city-state—the Roman equivalent of having someone who can drive you to the airport because you’d do the same for them. For Seneca friendship was merely a useful means for cultivating personal virtue—the Roman equivalent of being part of a self-help group.

But with Paul it was different. It surprises many people to realize that most of Paul’s letters mention coauthors. 1 Corinthians indicates Sosthenes as a coauthor alongside Paul. 2 Corinthians, Philippians, Philemon, and Colossians include Timothy as coauthor. 1 and 2 Thessalonians mention Timothy and Silas. Galatians, 1 and 2 Timothy, and Titus are the only Pauline writings that seem to come from Paul alone.

Instead of envisioning a solitary Paul sitting thoughtfully at a desk, we would do better to imagine the Holy Spirit inspiring him in his tent-making shop as he wrote to the Thessalonians and Corinthians with advice and suggestions from Timothy, Sosthenes, and Silas (1 Cor 1:1; 2 Cor 1:1; 1 Thess 1:1; 2 Thess 1:1). Or we could visualize Paul talking things over with Aristarchus in a prison cell and then whispering through the keyhole of a prison door ideas he wanted Timothy to record for the Colossians (Col 1:1; 4:10).

Or we could envisage Paul in prison being visited by Tychicus, who urged him to write something similar to what had been written for the Colossians but for wider circulation among the churches of southwestern Asia Minor—the letter to the Ephesians (Eph 1:1; 6:21–22). Or imagine Paul in a cell, malnourished and mistreated, scribbling on a piece of papyrus in the evening twilight,



ON MY TEAM An 11th-c. illustration (above left) shows Paul with many disciples including Sosthenes, Tychicus, and Epaphroditus. In the 16th c., El Greco depicted him writing to Titus (above).

NOT JUST SELF-HELP Left: Paul’s view of friendship was more inclusive than that of Roman philosophers like Seneca, pictured here.

taking suggestions from Epaphras, composing instructions for a slave-owner named Philemon concerning his runaway slave Onesimus—then handing the letter to Timothy through a window (Philm 1, 23).

Finally, think of Paul sitting at a *triclinium* (dining table) in Gaius’s villa in Cenchreae near Corinth, dictating his letter to Tertius, while pausing to ask Timothy, Erastus, Quartus, and Phoebe their opinions (Rom 16:1, 21–23).

ADMINISTERING PAUL’S INSTRUCTIONS

Paul’s courier service had to deliver sometimes scathing letters to far-off congregations and make sure the recipients followed instructions correctly. Timothy, Titus, Phoebe, Tychicus, Epaphroditus, Epaphras, and others had the unenviable task of seeing Paul’s wishes implemented, putting out fires, defending their friend from criticism, assuaging concerns arising from his remarks, healing divisions, and consoling those suffering. On a practical level, they also were trying to organize a collection for the Jerusalem church and leading other budding churches through sectarian debates



with local Jewish groups and persecution from civil authorities.

Paul often described people with language that clearly highlights their importance to his apostolic mission and conveys his obvious fondness for them: “coworker,” “brother” or “sister,” “beloved friend,” “partner,” “fellow prisoner,” or even “fellow soldier.” These are people whom Paul said strove beside him in the cause of the gospel, who struggled with him to advance the kingdom of God, and whose names were written in the Book of Life.

A good example of Paul’s confidence in their competence can be observed in 1 and 2 Corinthians. Paul commended Timothy as his emissary with high praise: “For this reason I have sent to you Timothy, my son whom I love, who is faithful in the Lord. He will remind you of my way of life in Christ Jesus, which agrees with what I teach everywhere in every church” (1 Cor 4:17). Paul loved him like a son, and he was the ideal conduit to communicate Paul’s own imitation of Christ to the Corinthians in person.

Paul also poured great praise on Titus: “As for Titus, he is my partner and coworker among you” (2 Cor 8:23). After a tumultuous exchange with the Corinthians, Paul said that he was glad to be reunited with Titus in Macedonia, because he “told us about your longing for me, your deep sorrow, your ardent concern for me, so that my joy was greater than ever” (2 Cor 7:7). Titus’s own happiness about how the Corinthians were now doing vindicated Paul’s boasting (2 Cor 7:14). Time and again the invaluable contribution of these friends to his apostolic labors and the deep affection that he had for them rises to the surface.

LOTS OF LOVE

In Philippians, though, we can find the most lucid account of Paul’s practice of Christian friendship—and the most subversive of Greco-Roman ideas. Many scholars have noted the affinity that Paul’s letter to the Philippians has with the popular genre of friendship



FRIENDS ARE FRIENDS FOREVER Paul would have been influenced by Cicero (*above*), but also by Old Testament models such as David and Jonathan (1 Sam 18:1-4)—who a 16th-c. artist (*left*) imagines bonding over Goliath’s head!

letters in antiquity: repeated expressions of affection, the language of people being of one mind and one soul, mutual giving and receiving, common joys and struggles, and the sharing of a moral framework. Paul did not use the actual word “friend” (Greek, *philos*), though; Philippians is something of a literary hybrid combining ancient ideas about friendship, family, and fellowship.

Even so, Paul was clearly subverting common pagan notions through the deep affection, familial bond, and mutual interests expressed in the letter. Paul’s opening thanksgiving and prayer for the Philippian believers found its basis in “your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now,” and he especially noted, “It is right for me to feel this way about all of you, since I have you in my heart and, whether I am in chains or defending and confirming the gospel, all of you share in God’s grace with me. God can testify how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus” (Phil 1:5, 7-8).

Paul addressed the Philippians in warm and affectionate tones (Phil 1:12; 2:12; 3:1, 13, 17; 4:1, 8). When he thanked them for their generous provision of material support, he saw this as proof of their concern for him, of their mutual giving and receiving, and he used the metaphor of sacrificial worship (Phil 4:10-20).

Paul also named specific individuals who embodied the love, friendship, affection, and concern between himself and the Philippians—first his dear friend Timothy. “I have no one else like him,” Paul declared, “who will show genuine concern for your welfare. For everyone looks out for their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ. But you know that Timothy has

Don't call it a list

Paul's spiritual friendships—and ours

In 1987 preaching professor Fred Craddock preached a sermon about Paul's list of friends in Romans 16. He imagined in modern-day terms how each of these people might have contributed to Paul's ministry.

In the list there is a husband and wife, Aquila and Priscilla. There's a man and his mother, Rufus and his mother. There is a brother and sister, Nereus and his sister. There are brothers, Andronicus and Junias. There are sisters, Tryphaena and Tryphosa. There is an old man, Epaphroditus. Isn't that an interesting profile of the church? There's a single woman, Mary. There's a single man, Herodion. Not a lot of nuclear family there at all except as Christ has called them together. . . .

Paul didn't call it a list: Aquila and Priscilla, they risked their necks for me. Andronicus and Junias, we were in jail together. Shoot, they're great Christians. There's Mary. Mary worked hard. She was there when everybody else quit. She's the one who always said, "Now, Paul, you go on home. I'll put things up. I'll put the hymnals away, and I'll pick up all the papers and straighten the chairs. You go on home. You're tired." "Well, Mary, you're tired too." "Yes, Paul, but you've got to ride a donkey across Asia tomorrow. You go on. I'll pick up here." Mary worked hard.

Epaphroditus, the first person converted under my preaching, and I didn't sleep a wink that night saying, "Thank God, finally somebody heard." The first one to respond to the gospel. What a marvelous day that was.

Tryphaena and Tryphosa, obviously twins. You hear it, don't you? In the names? Tryphaena and Tryphosa. They always sat on this side, and they both wore blue every Sunday. I never knew them apart really. One of them had a mole on her cheek, but I didn't know if it was Tryphaena or Tryphosa. I never did get them straight.

And Rufus. Tell Rufus hello, and tell his mother hello because she's my mother too. Some woman earned from this apostle the title "mother." Can't you see her, this woman able to be mother to Paul? He probably stayed in their home. She was a rather large woman, always wore an apron. A lot of things stuffed in the pocket of the apron. Hair pulled back in a bun. Fixed a good breakfast. Paul said, "I'm sorry. I can't stay. I have to be on my way." "Sit down and eat your breakfast. I don't care if you are an apostle. You've got to eat." Tell my mother hello.

This is not a list. . . .

KEEP THE LIST

Do you have a piece of paper? Do you have a piece. . . . Well, use your worship bulletin. Would you write in the margin



WRITING TO MY FRIENDS 16th-c. artist Rembrandt was fascinated by Paul, painting him many times; here he pictured him at his writing desk.

somewhere or at the bottom these words: "I THANK MY GOD IN ALL MY REMEMBRANCE OF YOU."

Write a name. You choose the name. You remember the name. And another name. . . . Keep the list. Keep the list because to you it's not a list. In fact, the next time you move, keep that. Even if you have to leave your car, and your library, and your furniture, and your typewriter, and everything else, take that list with you. In fact, when your ministry has ended and you leave the earth, take it with you.

I know. I know. When you get to the gate, St. Peter's going to say, "Now, look, you went into the world with nothing. You're going to come out of it with nothing. Now, what do you have there?"

"Well, it's just some names." . . .

He'll say, "I want to see it." And you'll give it to him, and he'll smile and say, "I know all of them. In fact, on my way here to the gate I passed a group. They were painting a great big sign to hang over the street. And it said, 'Welcome Home.'"

—Excerpt from "When the Roll Is Called Down Here" by Fred Craddock, Bandy Distinguished Professor of Preaching and New Testament Emeritus in the Candler School of Theology at Emory University. Reprinted by permission of John B. Craddock.



proved himself, because as a son with his father he has served with me in the work of the gospel" (Phil 2:20–22).

Then, from the Philippian congregation, Paul named their own delegate to his missionary ventures, Epaphroditus, who was ill, but had now recovered: "Welcome him in the Lord with great joy, and honor people like him, because he almost died for the work of Christ. He risked his life to make up for the help you yourselves could not give me" (Phil 2:29–30).

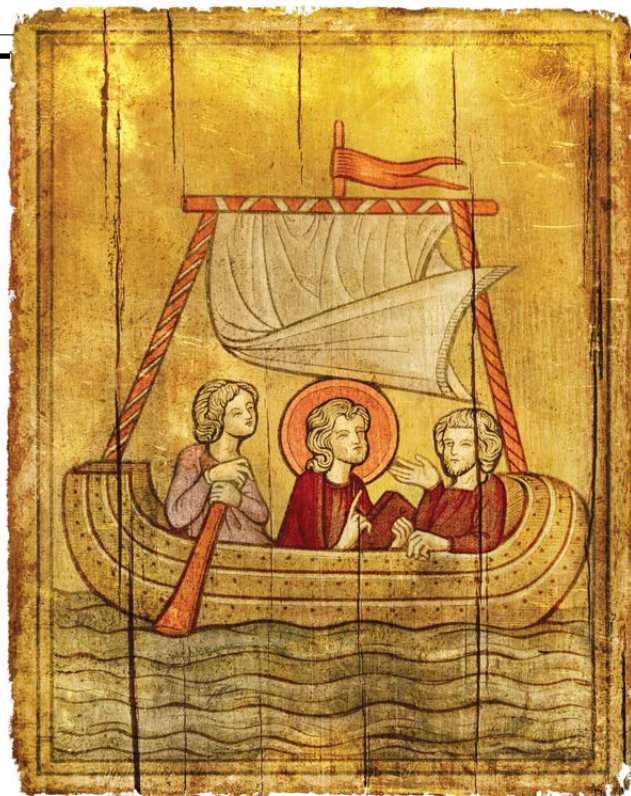
Some of Paul's congregations were high maintenance, a cause for constant angst and anxiety. But Paul's letter to the Philippians demonstrates a bond of love and joy shared between that church and its apostle—characterized by gospel fellowship, familial affection, and spiritual friendship.

ADOPTED INTO THE FAMILY

While Christianity shared many of the characteristics of friendship found in Greco-Roman philosophical and rhetorical schools, Paul's Christian vision of friendship as love for Jesus and love for one another as brothers and sisters truly revolutionized the notion of friendship in antiquity and beyond.

These radical ideas of sincere love and the adoption of each other as family—what scholars call "fictive kinship"—were shared with others irrespective of sex, ethnicity, class, and status. They surface in several places in Paul's letters, particularly in his transformation of the word *philadelphia* from its ancient meaning of love of one's blood-relatives or tribe to love of anyone who professes faith in Jesus as Lord. Paul wrote to a potentially fractious cluster of house churches in Rome: "In brotherly and sisterly love, let your devoted and deep affection for one another be known and pursue the honor of others over yourself" (Rom 12:10, author's translation).

We can easily gloss over such words as mundane today, but they were by no means self-evident in the ancient world. Paul was telling Christians to have a



COLABORERS Paul (with halo), Silas, and Timothy travel together for the gospel in a medieval illustration (*above*); centuries later a 19th-c. engraver (*left*) imagines Paul composing Ephesians in prison accompanied by a friend, probably Tychicus (Eph. 6:21).

family level of love for people who were not part of their biological family and to seek the honor of others in a social context characterized by fierce rivalry and competition for one's own honor. This was a completely countercultural view of friendship.

Paul also commended the Thessalonians for their exercise of *philadelphia*. He wrote: "As for brotherly and sisterly love, there is no need to write to you about that topic, since you have yourselves learned from God how to love one another, and in fact this is how you treat all the brothers and sisters spread throughout the whole of region of Macedonia" (1 Thess 4:9–10, author's translation).

Paul's new articulation of the virtue of *philadelphia* gave to the burgeoning Christian movement the importance of friendship as love for everyone who loves Jesus irrespective of sex, ethnicity, or social status. If Paul's gospel was, most simply, "What a friend we have in Jesus," then his ethic included the moral imperative, "Any friend of Jesus is a friend of mine!" ☐

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“Our single object and ambition was virtue”

SPIRITUAL FRIENDSHIP AMONG THE CAPPADOCIANS

Megan DeVore

“... A BODY might as well live without a soul, as me without you, Basil, beloved servant of Christ,” mourned Gregory of Nazianzus (329–389) in an epitaph for his friend Basil the Great (330–379). Normally a poet of gifted eloquence, Gregory was at a loss for words, wavering between commemoration and despondency. Their friendship, made in young adulthood, had lasted over six eventful decades; in it we see shared joys, raw honesty, offense, compassion, encouragement, betrayal, loyal love, and heartbreaking loss.

CAPPADOCIAN COMPANIONS

Gregory and Basil were part of a wider circle of friends now commonly referred to as “the Cappadocians.” This circle came together in the region of Cappadocia (in modern-day central Turkey) during the mid-to-late fourth century, consisting of siblings Basil and Gregory of Nyssa (c. 335–c. 395), their older sister Macrina (c. 330–379), their cousin Amphilochius (c. 339–c. 400), and Basil’s schoolmate Gregory of Nazianzus.

We typically remember the Cappadocians for their contributions to theology; their expositions regarding

CENTERED ON GOD Today we can still view these ruins of a chapel at an early Christian monastery in Göreme, Cappadocia.

the nature of Christ and the role and person of the Holy Spirit continue to inform current Trinitarian understanding. Yet their story and their influence spread further. Living in an era of easily provoked partisan conflicts and fragile political and ecclesial relationships, the Cappadocians had to navigate theological disagreements that morphed quickly into actual antagonism.

Though the Great Persecution by the Roman Empire had ended half a century prior, serious challenges remained for local churches and their leaders. In such a setting, true friendships were a lifeline, and friendship bolstered the various ministries of the Cappadocians.

For example, there is the story of Basil and Macrina. Basil received the best education available during his day, even spending time in highly regarded Athens. His ambition to become a teacher of rhetoric would have earned him one of the highest salaries achievable at the time. However, at age 26 he abandoned his grandiose



plans and choose a lifestyle of simplicity that continued for the rest of his life. What caused such drastic change? A transformation of heart and vision, instigated by his sister.

She voiced truth in loving confrontation: Basil was wasting his life upon transitory things. His ambitions would always be replaced by further ambitions, and the wisdom he thought he had accrued was ephemeral at best.

Basil listened. He was baptized and rose in service to the local church and surrounding community. A little over a decade later, others recognized his gift of wisdom: he was appointed as a bishop and entered fully into this life of pastoral ministry. His worship-oriented theological writings about the Holy Spirit—impacting believers to this very day—might never have been penned had Macrina not courageously challenged her brother and friend.

TRUTHFUL ENCOURAGEMENT

Though separated by nearly 200 miles, cousins Amphilochius and Basil exchanged numerous letters over the decades. In these letters they provided a steady stream of encouragement for each other, sharing reassurance, joviality, vulnerable honesty, hard questions, and even exasperation. Basil sent one such letter early in their friendship,

when Amphilochius had just been ordained and was apparently experiencing significant self-doubt. Basil exhorted:

He who has ensnared you with the inescapable nets of His grace . . . has brought you now into the midst of Pisidia. . . . Remain strong, and do before the people whom the Lord most high has entrusted to your right hand. Like a helmsman who has assumed the command of a ship, stand boldly. . . . For Christ has sent you forth.

The letters are not always serious (in one Basil jests self-deprecatingly about having little left of his teeth, and in another he calls an opponent a “fat sea monster”), but they reveal honest reflection. It is evident that their friendship provided an opportunity to talk things over with a trustworthy confidant—a lifeline in the middle of an antagonistic and shifting social landscape.



MY OTHER FRIENDS Above: Gregory of Nazianzus (second from left) and Basil (far right) share this 15th-c. icon with Paraskeve (a virgin martyr) and John Chrysostom.

THE PREACHER Left: Gregory of Nazianzus gets this famous icon by Andre Rublev (left) all to himself, holding a Gospel book to show his allegiance to Scripture.

Macrina, too, was an encourager. Though she was known for her discernment, her formal education and opportunities to travel were limited compared to those of her male friends and relatives. Her ministry became one of service and discipleship within her local community. She possessed an unfailing enthusiasm for prayer, sacrificial generosity, and loving commitment on behalf of others, and even convinced her mother to transform their family estate into a religious community. Macrina worked to free slaves, care for the homeless, find parents for abandoned children, and assist those impacted by natural disasters (such as a severe drought in 369).

Her other brother, Gregory of Nyssa, occupied a different station. As a bishop of immense public renown, he found himself in the political crosshairs of a Roman emperor. In a rapid series of chaotic political events, Gregory was dismissed from his position and became distraught to the point of inaction. Only Macrina’s encouragement reminded him that his abilities and influence were gifts of God. God had not abandoned him. Her reproof would echo through the remainder of his life: “Do you not see the grace of God in it all?”

When Macrina died two years after Gregory’s trial, Gregory penned two works highlighting his sister’s life and legacy. By turning him back to Christ on more than one occasion, her friendship had saved him from despair. Now his writings ensured that the story



DON'T YOU FORGET ABOUT ME Above: Gregory of Nyssa, too, is commonly portrayed holding a Gospel book.

A CORD OF THREE STRANDS Right: In the Chora Museum (formerly a Byzantine church) in Istanbul, you can still see this mosaic of Basil and the two Gregories.



of Macrina's life—her devotion to Scripture, faithful wisdom, truthful speech, and resolute service—would impact countless others.

A FRIENDSHIP CAN FALTER AND STILL FORGIVE

As in all relationships with contrasting personalities, however, friction and conflict affected the friendships of the Cappadocians. Basil and Gregory of Nazianzus's differences appear to have been the starkest among them. A man of conviction, resolve, and tendency to haste, Basil was both brilliant and intimidating.

Gregory's sensitive, patient, and introverted tendencies granted him great insight, yet often left him vacillating. The former was drawn to rhetorical performance and the public sphere; the latter, poetry and speculation.

Though the two bound their lives in friendship over eventful decades, Basil's personality was such that, in historian Philip Rousseau's words, he was "a man dependent at all times on the affection of others, deeply hurt when they failed to match his expectations and demands, and frequently unaware of the pain he inflicted." More than once he harmed his friendships in this way, including his relationship with Gregory.

The details of the specific events are somewhat unclear. As a respected bishop, Basil often stood in the spotlight, defending orthodox Christianity against a slew of heretical teachers. To gain assistance he plotted to place Gregory of Nazianzus as a bishop—finding for him a region more strategic for

Two bodies, but a single spirit

Basil and I were both in Athens. We had come, like streams of a river, from the same source in our native land, had separated from each other in pursuit of learning, and were now united again as if by plan, for God so arranged it...

When, in the course of time, we acknowledged our friendship and recognized that our ambition was a life of true wisdom, we became everything to each other: we shared the same lodging, the same table, the same desires, the same goal. Our love for each other grew daily warmer and deeper.

The same hope inspired us: the pursuit of learning. This is an ambition especially subject to envy. Yet between us there was no envy. On the contrary, we made capital out of our rivalry. Our rivalry consisted, not in seeking the first place for oneself but in yielding it to the other, for we each looked on the other's success as his own.

We seemed to be two bodies with a single spirit. Though we cannot believe those who claim that everything is contained in everything, yet you must believe that in our case each of us was in the other and with the other.

Our single object and ambition was virtue, and a life of hope in the blessings that are to come; we wanted to withdraw from this world before we departed from it. With this end in view we ordered our lives and all our actions. We followed the guidance of God's law and spurred each other on to virtue. If it is not too boastful to say, we found in each other a standard and rule for discerning right from wrong.

—From a sermon by Saint Gregory of Nazianzus, bishop (Oratio 43, in laudem Basilii Magni, 15, 16–17, 19–21; PG 36, 514–423)



Basil's line of defense than it was a safe place for Gregory to minister. Basil summoned his friend not with a straightforward request but by pretending a grave illness. On his panicked journey to Basil, Gregory learned of the lie. He did not complete the journey and began the first of many letters of reproof.

"Do you not know me, or yourself?," one letter from Gregory to Basil reads. At another point he wrote, "As for me, I have gained one thing from your friendship: I shall not trust friends." Yet in time Gregory forgave, mercifully remembering Basil's primary motive—to defend the truth of orthodox Christianity. Basil could not engage in this battle alone; he needed a network of friends and truth-speaking leaders in surrounding communities.

Ultimately Gregory was convinced (though still somewhat coerced) and took on the position of bishop. He was a skilled preacher, but his initial reaction to his new call proved true to the end. His gifts lay primarily in spiritual direction and writing, not public leadership. As far as we know, he never enjoyed his episcopal position, and frustrations surrounding the situation again temporarily damaged his friendship with Basil.

Slowly and with caution, the two reconnected through letters. Shared prayer requests turned into fond promises for visits. Even Basil's tendency to "insensitive ineptitude" (as Rousseau so aptly put it) could not obliterate such a long-standing Christian friendship, but their reconciliation only became less guarded over time and was not restored without effort.

ANCHORED IN THE GOSPEL

In every story about the Cappadocians and in their own writings, a consistent theme remains evident: throughout their long friendships, they invited one




WORD TO THE WISE Above: Basil's scroll here is meant to show biblical wisdom, too.

THE ENCOURAGER Above left: Macrina is most often portrayed holding an icon of her brothers and their best friend.

another to the closest possible investigation and incarnation of Scripture. They saw the gospel in every passage of the biblical text, and they were convinced that to be baptized meant to undertake a new life of relationship with the Father through Christ and with the Spirit. Their friendships grew out of their living worship of the God whose own existence is in perfect community.

As Gregory of Nazianzus would later reminisce about their community, "The one Spirit was animating several people . . . placing our words in the service of the One Wise Word." Like their lives the friendships among the Cappadocians were not always easy, yet their mutual desire to glorify God held them together.

This vision sustained them through their varied experiences, and it allowed their friendships to be courageously honest, forgiving, compassionate, and seasoned. Ultimately it showed the transforming work of the Triune God. The Cappadocians would, I think, have it no other way. 

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The head of the body of Christ

SOUL-FRIENDSHIP AND THE CELTIC MISSIONARY IMPULSE

Garry J. Crites

ACCORDING TO THE NINTH-CENTURY *Martyrology of Oengus*, a young Irish priest frequently visited Brigid (d. 523), the abbess of a powerful monastery in Kildare. One day Brigid took the young cleric aside and asked if he had an *anamchara* (literally, "soul-friend"). When he replied in the affirmative, Brigid said, "We need to sing a requiem for your soul-friend, because he is dead." Asked how she knew, Brigid replied, "When you were eating, I saw the food going directly into your torso, because you have no head. You need to go and find another soul-friend, because a person without a soul-friend is like a body without a head."

This powerful abbess, ostensibly a friend of St. Patrick (and according to one controversial *Vita* an ordained bishop), knew that every believer—priests of the church included—needed a soul-friend.

So what exactly is an *anamchara*, a soul-friend?

NO STARRY-EYED LOVERS

One of the challenges in historical research is that one cannot assume that words mean the same thing in different ages. When I say "I love you" to someone, I import a whole set of implications from my personal experience, my social group, and my cul-

THE MORE, THE MERRIER The founding of this monastery on Iona by Irish monks brought the tradition of the *anamchara* to Scotland.

ture; I cannot assume that a man in second-century Rome meant the same thing if he said "*Te amo*" to his companion.

We are faced with a similar problem with the Middle Irish word *anamchara*. It is tempting to romanticize the word into an endearment of starry-eyed lovers—"soulmate." But that completely misses the implications of the term in Irish literature and culture. Using *anamchara* to identify one's closest friend to whom the deepest secrets of one's life may be revealed comes closer—but still misses the mark.

At the core of what makes an *anamchara* is spiritual concern. It is not a term of camaraderie; it is essentially penitential. The *anamchara* was for Irish Christians the spiritual mentor to whom believers revealed the darkest corners of their hearts—knowing that these beloved guides would support the disciples, confront their sin, and provide a remedy.

To ultimately trace down the word, we must begin not in the abbeys of medieval Ireland, but in



TWO OF A KIND Left: Anglo-Saxon king Oswald of Northumbria and Irish monk Aidan worked as friends to spread the gospel.

FAR AFIELD Below: Monk and missionary Brendan the Navigator, legend has it, eventually set off into the Atlantic Ocean to search for the Garden of Eden.



the monastic cells of late ancient North Africa. A common theme among the desert fathers was how it benefited Christians to have a spiritual mentor who could encourage them in their walk with Christ. Evagrius Ponticus (345–399), a student of the teachings of the controversial Origen, spoke in the *Praktikos* (a guide to ascetic living) of the importance of elders who, because of spiritual insight, were able to prepare young ascetics for spiritual battle and heal the inevitable wounds of combat.

Some decades later monk and abbot John Cassian (c. 360–c. 435) recalled how Abbot Moses of Upper Egypt insisted that monks need elders to whom they should reveal their darkest secrets. The very act of confession to a spiritual guide, Moses believed, would lessen the power of sin's grasp on younger disciples.

Cassian also established ascetic principles for his monastery in Marseilles. He was even more explicit than Evagrius about the importance of soul-friends. One of his *Conferences* (reminiscences of teaching sessions of the desert fathers) focused exclusively on spiritual friendship, an indissoluble bond in which two or more people are joined in a shared dwelling by the grace of God and for mutual spiritual benefit. In *Institutes* (c. 420), designed to provide a model for the monastic life, he spoke of the importance of young monks finding senior monks to whom they could share their deepest thoughts, holding back nothing.

FROM EGYPT TO IRELAND

We know that Cassian's writings in particular were mainstays of Irish monastic libraries by the Merovingian period (mid-fifth century). At the end of a long working day, a reader would recite the *Institutes* and the *Conferences* to the monks of the community as they ate their evening meals. It is not surprising, then, that the ethos of North African monasticism helped to mold Celtic spirituality and contribute to Christianizing an already-existing Celtic belief in mystical friendship transcending time, place, and position. Brigid, Colmille (Columba), Máel Ruain, Fursa, even Patrick—each attested to the importance of the soul-friend in a Christian's life, providing a listening ear, guidance in trouble, and companionship.

Perhaps the best example of the role the *anamchara* played is the Irish penitential—a manual for confessors to use in the reconciliation of repentant Christians. Building on Cassian's perspective that the solution to sin lay in healing and restoration rather than punishment alone, penitentials contained detailed catalogs of sins categorized according to type of offense, social levels of offender and offended, and motive of the



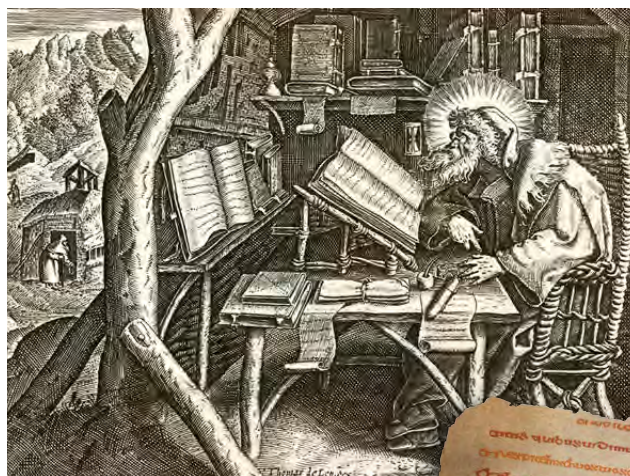
offender. They included appropriate penitential practices (usually fasting) for remediating the transgressions and restoring the transgressor to the community.

A confessor using the Irish penitential did not have to be a priest. He or she was often a trusted layperson to whom the penitent Christian could pour out every thought and deed. The aim was not immediate sacramental absolution but to be healed of the sin (ascetics had long believed that various foods caused lusts only overcome with fasting) and restored to the community.

WANDERING FRIENDS

Early Celtic literature, both secular and sacred, is replete with stories of wandering Celts. From the pre-Christian genres of *immrama* and *echtraí*, in which Celtic heroes traveled from their homes to the otherworldly *Tír na nÓg*, to the *Voyage of St. Brendan the Navigator*, the Celts are portrayed as pilgrims always ready for a quest beyond the far horizon. When they became Christians, they did not stop traveling. Celtic Christianity was a missional religion.

Colmcille's (521–597) mid-sixth-century founding of a monastery on the Scottish island of Iona represented the first missionary effort sent from Ireland. It also created the staging area for future missionary initiatives into Scotland, England, Wales, and the Continent. According to one tradition, Colmcille's *anamchara* encouraged him to leave Ireland for Iona. He had been involved in a heated dispute between monasteries in which several people were killed. Some called for his excommunication, but his soul-friend, Brendan of Birr, suggested penitence: Colmcille would go into exile until he had converted as many people to Christ as had died in the conflict. According to his biographer, the saint continued to practice spiritual friendship while in exile.



OLD FRIENDS From Evagrius Ponticus in Egypt (above) to Lindisfarne in Northumbria (left), the *anamchara* tradition spread.

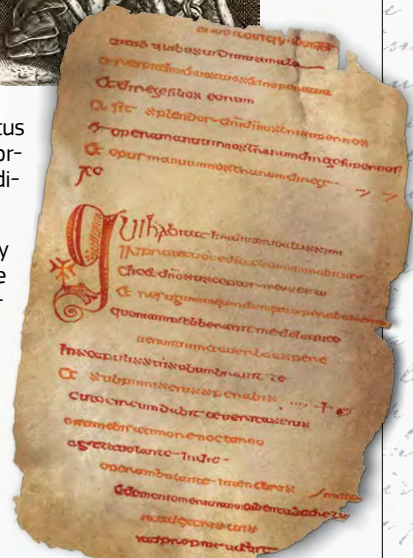
OOPS! Right: This psalter copied by Colmcille from one owned by the monk Finnian sparked the controversy that led to Colmcille's exile.

Missionaries from Iona carried the tradition of soul-friends across the British Isles and beyond. When Aidan (d. 651) left Iona to lead a monastery on the English island of Lindisfarne off the Northumbrian coast, he carried a Christianity so steeped in Celtic tradition that he could not even preach in English well (which church historian Bede found charming), and he celebrated Easter according to the Irish calendar (Bede wholeheartedly disapproved).

But Bede noted the deep spiritual bond that grew between the godly King Oswald (c. 604–641) and Aidan—a relationship between a student and his mentor or, arguably, between a Christian believer and his *anamchara*. The soul-friend paradigm would also play out through the missionary efforts of St. Fursa, St. Columbanus, and others, and missionaries carried the penitentials used for spiritual counsel to the Continent.

In time, though, the penitentials would be banned in much of Christendom. The church's commitment to the sacramental authority of ordained clergy to absolve sins superseded lay soul-friends dispensing remedies for sin. The *anamchara* of the penitentials, clearly intended to build up the Body of Christ in monastic settings, would ultimately be put out of business at the hands of the church in episcopal settings. They would seek for the head of the body in other ways. ☐

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“A pure and holy love”

Written as an imaginary dialogue with a fellow monk called Ivo, “On Spiritual Friendship” by monk Aelred of Rievaulx (1110–1167) was a popular medieval expression of what it meant to be a friend to other believers. Here Aelred explains how he came to write about the subject—and why God created friendship.

Wavering among various loves and friendships [as a boy at school], my spirit began to be tossed this way and that and, ignorant of the law of true friendship, was often beguiled by its mirage. At last a volume of Cicero’s *On Friendship* fell into my hands. Immediately it seemed to me both invaluable for the soundness of its views and attractive for the charm of its eloquence....

When my good Lord was pleased to restore the wanderer, to lift the fallen, and to heal the leprous with his saving touch, I abandoned the promise of the world and entered a monastery.

I immediately devoted myself to the study of the sacred writings, though previously, with eyes bleary and accustomed to the carnal gloom, I had not been able to see even their literal meaning. I began to acquire a taste for the sacred Scriptures and found that the slight knowledge the world had transmitted to me was insipid by comparison. Then I remembered what I had read in Cicero about friendship, but to my surprise it did not taste the same to me.

Even at that time, nothing not honeyed with the honey of the sweet name of Jesus, nothing not seasoned with the salt of the sacred Scriptures, wholly won

WHAT IS ON YOUR HEART? Aelred’s words on friendship resonate with many Christians: “Yes, most beloved, open your heart now and pour whatever you please into the ears of a friend.”

my affection. Musing on Cicero’s thoughts again and again, I began to wonder whether perhaps they might be supported by the authority of the Scriptures.

But when I read the many passages on friendship in the writings of the holy fathers, wishing to love spiritually but not able to, I decided to write on spiritual friendship and to set down for myself rules for a pure and holy love.—*from the Prologue*

You and I are here, and I hope that Christ is between us as a third. Now no one else is present to disturb the peace or to interrupt our friendly conversation.... What statement about friendship can be more sublime, more true, more valuable than this: it has been proved that friendship must begin in Christ, continue with Christ, and be perfected by Christ....

In my opinion, nature itself first impressed on human minds the feeling of friendship, which experience then developed and the authority of law finally sanctioned. For God, who is supreme in power and goodness, is a good sufficient unto himself; he is himself his own good, his own joy, his own glory, and his own happiness.... He left no class of creatures isolated, but from the many he linked each one in a kind of society.... What plot of land or what stream turns up only one stone of a single kind? Or what forest produces only one tree of a single species?... Among sentient creatures, who could easily express how great a mirror of friendship and how great an image of a loving society they reflect? They so follow the leader, so frolic together, so express and display their attachment in actions and sounds together, and so enjoy one another’s company with eagerness and pleasure that they seem to relish nothing more than what resembles friendship. Among angels, too, divine wisdom so provided that not one but several classes should be created.... Thus there was a host of angels to banish loneliness and a communion of charity in the various classes to multiply their joy.

Finally, when God fashioned the man, to recommend society as a higher blessing, he said, “it is not good that the man should be alone; let us make him a helper like himself”... this power created a woman from the very substance of the man. In a beautiful way, then, from the side of the first human a second was produced, so that nature might teach that all are equal or, as it were, collateral, and that among human beings—and this is a property of friendship—there exists neither superior nor inferior.—“*Spiritual Friendship*,” translated by Lawrence Braceland

The Meaux Circle and the Holy Triumvirate

CALVIN'S MINISTRY GREW OUT OF SEVERAL PARTNERSHIPS IN REFORM

Jon Balserak

SOMETIMES FRIENDSHIPS ARE forged in the furnace of trials. Such was the case with many who labored to reform the church in France in the circles connected to King Francis I's sister, Marguerite de Navarre, in the early decades of the sixteenth century (see *CH* #131 for more).

These evangelicals (as they called themselves) were Renaissance humanists; their interests lay in a return to ancient sources, which they believed possessed truth that had been buried for centuries. They read ancient texts by Christian writers like Justin Martyr, Tertullian, and Augustine and also by pagan authors like Plato, Aristotle, and Cicero. They regarded all of this material as of the utmost significance, and it would contribute to their rediscovery of the gospel.

CIRCLE OF REFORM

Chief among these circles was a group of colleagues that arose in the city of Meaux in the first few decades of the sixteenth century. Sometimes called the Circle of Meaux (*le cénacle de Meaux*), this group included Guillaume Farel (1489–1565), Antoine Froment (1508–1581), Marie Dentière (c. 1495–1561), Jean Le Comte de La Croix, Gérard Roussel, Pierre Caroli, Clément Marot, and many others.

As it grew the Circle developed into a pervasive reforming subculture within French Catholicism—a subculture that spread across much of France. They spread their reform with the aid of Marguerite, who had evangelical leanings herself and was their principal and most powerful patron.

The Circle of Meaux owes its beginnings to Bishop Guillaume Briçonnet (c. 1472–1534). Prior to his move to Meaux, he had worked to reform the abbey of St Germain des Prés outside of Paris. Once he arrived in Meaux and began reform work, he called on friends to assist him. In 1521 he asked his former teacher Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples (c. 1455–1536) for help. Lefèvre, known in Latin as Faber Stapulensis, was a brilliant biblical interpreter and theologian. He had already



HOW THINGS BEGIN Guillaume Briçonnet's friendship with Marguerite of Navarre began the chain of relationships that would ultimately encourage the young Calvin.

made a name for himself and was embroiled in a series of controversies over his novel ideas concerning biblical exegesis. He would play an extremely important role within the Circle of Meaux.

Lefèvre had become an admirer of Martin Luther in 1520. Luther's reformation of the German church had commenced in 1517, and by 1520 he was working aggressively to fight doctrinal corruption and introduce the gospel into the Catholic Church. Lefèvre, Briçonnet, and other members of the Circle of Meaux became increasingly supportive of Luther's endeavors and set themselves to advance the true *Evangel* (i.e., the gospel) throughout their French homeland.

Following Luther's lead they put in place a robust and innovative program of biblical instruction. Inspired by Luther's 1522 German New Testament translation



and his sermon collections, Lefèvre produced a French New Testament the next year. His famous translation of the Psalms also followed in 1524. He wished these to be available to all men and women in France. Briçonnet paid for Lefèvre's Bible translations to be published and distributed them for free to the laity.

The Meaux group also gave daily Bible lessons on the Psalms and on Romans to the more spiritually advanced men and women in the church. In 1525, based on their preaching and on Lefèvre's biblical exegesis, members of the group published a book of sermons in French. Their humanist interests and intense devotion to ancient learning—and particularly ancient texts and all things Greek, Hebrew, and Latin—found perfect expression in these text-based efforts to bring change to what they regarded as a morally corrupt and doctrinally bankrupt French Catholic Church.

Invariably their pursuit of reformation brought the Meaux group into conflict not only with the French Catholic authorities but also with one another. Francis I had early on exhibited broad support for humanist learning, resulting in a relatively benign attitude toward the Meaux Circle. Yet his attitude began to change in the 1520s and into the 1530s, when he became more inclined to turn against these evangelicals if they sought their aims with greater vigor.

With the church and the king against the Circle of Meaux, the Paris Faculty of Theology joined the fray. These scholars had opposed Briçonnet, Lefèvre, and the Meaux group from the early 1520s onward but had been thwarted in doing anything about it. Now they were free to pursue members of the group and began seeking to have them arrested.

CITY OF FRIENDS Meaux (pictured here in the 17th c., 100 years after Lefèvre and his friends were active) became a center of reform that spread through France.

In November 1533 Nicholas Cop, newly appointed rector of the University of Paris, gave an address that smacked of Lutheranism—at least, in the judgment of the Sorbonne (as the University of Paris was commonly called). This address led to numerous arrests, including the attempted capture of John Calvin.

The opposition did not deter them. In October 1534 a group associated with Marguerite de Navarre's evangelical network posted placards all over Paris, and in a few other cities such as Tours and Orléans, denouncing the Roman Catholic Mass as idolatry. The authorities responded aggressively and executed several people believed to have been involved in perpetrating the act. From then on Francis I's attitude toward evangelicalism and the Meaux group hardened.

A CORD OF THREE STRANDS

Despite their trials the Circle's influence extended and took root in a younger generation, most notably through Farel and his friendship with Calvin and another young evangelical, Pierre Viret (1511–1571). Calvin would later write when he dedicated his commentary on Titus to Farel and Viret: "It will at least be a testimony to this present age and perhaps to posterity of the holy bond of friendship that unites us. I think there has never been in ordinary life a circle of friends so heartily bound to each other as we have been in our ministry."

Viret, 22 years younger than Farel, was born in Orbe, Switzerland, and came to France to begin studies



Farel encouraged Viret to begin preaching prior to their arrival in Geneva. He would do the same for Calvin, another young protégé, when Calvin made his way to Geneva in 1536 intending only to stay for one night.

As the well-known story sets out, Farel went to Calvin's room that night and urged him to stay to work for reform in Geneva. Calvin by this time had become famous as the author of the *Institutes of the Christian Religion* and declined Farel's

By 1538 Calvin and Farel had both been expelled from Geneva for a complex collection of reasons—related, in part, to the stubbornness of a city not ready for change and also to the overbearing brashness of the two men, who tried to impose reform too hastily. Calvin went to Strasbourg and Farel to Neuchâtel.

The efforts of Viret, Farel, and others (like Bucer) eventually prevailed, and Calvin moved back to Geneva. Having been mentored by Bucer in Strasbourg, Calvin returned to Geneva more spiritually mature and ready to work more intelligently for reform in the city. He also returned married to Idelette de Bure, whom his friends in Strasbourg had urged him to wed.

I am completely finished; I will not be able to keep this church alive. Therefore, I hope you and others will forgive me if I move every stone to ensure that I am not deprived of him."

While Calvin and Viret wrote to one another, both could count Farel as their strongest influence. His enormous impact on the two men led Bucer to nickname the three a "Holy Triumvirate." The letters Farel wrote to his younger protégés are full of spiritual nourishment and, not infrequently, vehemence. He was willing to say what needed to be said, even when it was difficult.

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friends united in mission

FRIENDSHIP MILESTONES



Tent rocks in Cappadocia today

EARLY CHURCH

c.33 Paul is converted and joins the early Christian community.

374 Ambrose becomes bishop of Milan, where he will influence Augustine.

379 Basil dies after reconciling with Gregory of Nazianzus.

c. 383 Gregory of Nyssa writes *Life of Macrina*.

c. 390 Evagrius writes *Praktikos* on soul friendship.

c.420 John Cassian writes the *Institutes* and the *Conferences*.

c.500s The Celtic tradition of the *anamchara*, or "soul-friend," develops.

MEDIEVAL CHURCH

616 Oswald becomes a Christian at Iona.

1115 Scholar Peter Abelard mentors, then seduces, Héloïse d'Argenteuil.

c.1164–67 Aelred writes *On Spiritual Friendship*.

1205 Boncompagno de Signa writes *Friendship*.

1208 Francis of Assisi begins attracting followers.

REFORMATION

1516 Bishop Guillaume Briçonnet gathers a circle of reformers around him.

1534 Íñigo López de Loyola and fellow students begin to meet for prayer.

1541 Guillaume Farel mentors Calvin and Viret through letters.

MODERN CHURCH

1723 Jonathan Edwards is impressed by Sarah Pierpont; they later marry.

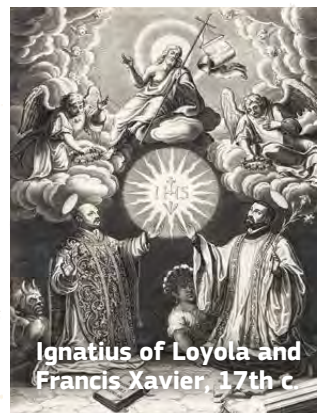
1729 Charles and John Wesley and William Morgan form a study group at Oxford.

1744 John Wesley begins meeting with preachers in conferences for mutual support.

1748 Charles Wesley meets Sally Gwynne; they later marry.

1783 The Eclectic Society, a group of Anglican clergy and influential laity, is formed.

1787 English author Hannah More becomes friends with John Newton and William Wilberforce.



Ignatius of Loyola and Francis Xavier, 17th c

c.1790 Henry Venn founds the Clapham Sect, which includes More, Newton, Wilberforce, and other Christians working for reform of English society.

1806 Five Williams College students meet under a haystack to discuss how to reach Asia for Christ.

1824 Six students at St. Andrews University in Scotland form a society to promote missions.

1835–37 Sarah Worrall Lankford and Phoebe Worrall Palmer begin meeting with women for prayer.

1877 Temperance advocates Frances Willard and Anna Gordon meet at a revival meeting.

1885 Seven English students answer the call for missionaries to China put out by Hudson Taylor.

1895 Amy Carmichael forms a group of indigenous female missionaries in India, the Starry Cluster.

1926 C. S. Lewis and J. R. R. Tolkien meet.

c.1933 Lewis and Tolkien adopt the name "Inklings" for their informal gathering of Christian writers and academics, who meet until 1949.



Lindisfarne Gospels, c. 715

Friendship Milestones • Ministry Milestones

Gospel-centered friendships abound in church history; here are some milestones for those we focus on in this issue.

By Jennifer Woodruff Tait

MINISTRY MILESTONES



Titian, *Jean Calvin*, 16th c.

EARLY CHURCH

c.33–c.64 Paul and his circle travel far, sharing the gospel with Gentiles.

370 Basil becomes bishop of Caesarea.

372 Gregory, his brother, becomes bishop of Nyssa. Basil manipulates Gregory of Nazianzus into becoming a bishop, causing a rift.

374 Amphilochius, cousin of Gregory of Nazianzus, becomes a bishop.

c. 380 Peter (brother of Basil, Macrina, and Gregory of Nyssa) becomes a bishop. Gregory of Nazianzus becomes archbishop of Constantinople.

381 Gregory of Nazianzus and Evagrius Ponticus participate in the Trinity-affirming First Council of Constantinople.

387 Ambrose baptizes Augustine, who later becomes bishop of Hippo.

563 Colmcille founds a monastery on the Scottish island of Iona.

MEDIEVAL CHURCH

634 Oswald asks Iona monks to teach his subjects.

635 Aidan from Iona becomes a missionary in Lindisfarne.

1147 Aelred, an English Cistercian monk, becomes abbot of Rievaulx.

1210 The Franciscans become an official religious order.

REFORMATION

1521 The Circle of Meaux spreads “Lutheran” ideas in France.

1534 Guillaume Farel of the Meaux Circle encourages his friend Pierre Viret to preach.

1536 Farel persuades John Calvin to stay in Geneva and work for reform.

1540 Loyola’s friends become an official religious order, the Society of Jesus or Jesuits.

1601 Matteo Ricci publishes *You lun* (a treatise on friendship) as part of evangelistic work in China.

MODERN CHURCH

1738 The Wesley brothers begin to organize followers for prayer and mutual support.

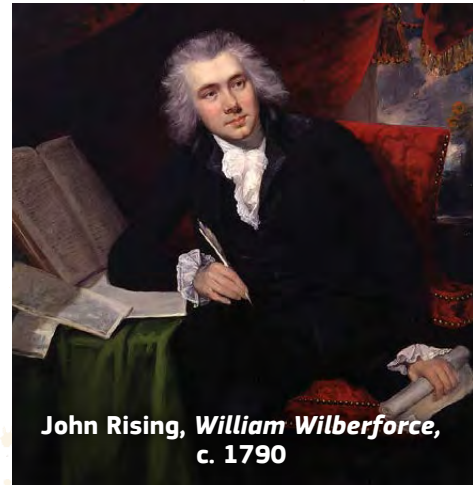
1799 Eclectic Society members found the Church Missionary Society.

1810 The Haystack Prayer Group and others found the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM).

1829 Alexander Duff from the St. Andrews Seven becomes the Church of Scotland’s first missionary to India. Four others from St. Andrews also become missionaries.

1833 The British Parliament passes the Slavery Abolition Act, a culmination of Wilberforce and More’s work.

1839 Palmer and Lankford’s meetings launch Palmer and her husband on a career of speaking and writing.



John Rising, *William Wilberforce*, c. 1790

1879 Willard becomes president of the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union with Gordon as her secretary.

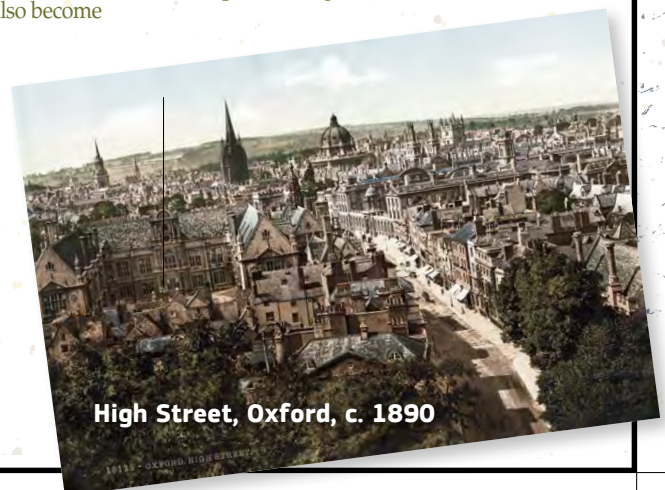
1886 The Cambridge Seven arrive in China.

1901 Carmichael and the Starry Cluster rescue their first child prostitute, leading to the founding of the Dohnavur Fellowship.

1902 Dixon Hoste of the Cambridge Seven becomes Hudson Taylor’s successor.

1914 Gordon becomes president of the WCTU.

1931 Lewis converts to Christianity, in part through Tolkien’s influence.



High Street, Oxford, c. 1890



“As the heart of one man”

THE FRIENDSHIP OF ANDREW FULLER AND JOHN RYLAND

Michael A. G. Haykin

DID FRIENDSHIP CHANGE in the eighteenth century? Some scholars have argued that it did—as one historian, Keith Thomas, traces the history of friendship, he argues that it came in those years to be based “wholly on mutual sympathy, and cherished for its own sake rather than for its practical advantages.” Friends were understood to be “intimate companions, freely chosen, without regard to an ulterior end.”

While other stories in this issue make it clear that freely chosen intimate companions played an important spiritual role well before the eighteenth century, this phrase is a beautiful description of the circle of friends around pastor-theologian Andrew Fuller (1754–1815). Almost unknown today, in its own time this circle prompted far-reaching missionary efforts, despite some disagreements on how those efforts would be accomplished.

BIBLICAL BLACKSMITH

As the son of dairy farmers in Soham, Cambridgeshire, Fuller received only minimal formal education that

READY TO PREACH THE GOSPEL Fuller is second from right in the back row in this picture of the founders of the Baptist Missionary Society.

ended around the age of 12. He was tall and sturdily built; members of the gentry like William Wilberforce (1759–1833), who deeply admired Fuller, found him to be “the very picture of a blacksmith” in his physical appearance and bearing.

Fuller mainly served as the pastor of a Baptist church in Kettering, Northamptonshire, and had been converted out of a hyper-Calvinist milieu. Common to many English Baptist communities of that day, hyper-Calvinism was a branch of Calvinism that laid extreme stress on the sovereignty of God and claimed that the gospel only needed to be preached to those already disposed to believe. The self-taught Fuller had to find his own way to a new and, he felt, more biblically sound position with regard to conversion, piety, and preaching.



In his memoir he later compared this theological struggle to trying to find his way “out of a labyrinth.” He came to the conclusion that, as he wrote in a public letter in 1810, “the true churches of Jesus Christ travail in birth for the salvation of men. They are the armies of the Lamb, the grand object of whose existence is to extend the Redeemer’s kingdom.”

His lack of formal education did not impede Fuller, who became by wide admission the finest theologian of the transatlantic Baptist community in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. David Phillips, a nineteenth-century Welsh biographer, called Fuller “the elephant of Kettering,” an allusion to the weighty theological influence that even before Fuller’s death was being described as “Fullerism.”

In 1792 Fuller and other Baptist pastors met in Kettering to discuss the need to spread the gospel, contrary to the tenets of hyper-Calvinism. Twelve of them signed a charter beginning the Baptist Missionary Society (called at first the Particular Baptist Society for the Propagation of the Gospel Amongst the Heathen). They chose John Thomas and William Carey (1761–1834) as their first missionaries. (You can see the signatures of Thomas, Carey, and Fuller and some of their colleagues on p. 28.)

Carey was already known as a strong proponent of worldwide missionary activity—a controversial position among Baptists. Earlier that very year he had written *An Enquiry into the Obligations of Christians to Use Means for the Conversion of the Heathens* (1792), which put forth theological and practical arguments for preaching the gospel to the unconverted.



THE FRIENDS WHO STAYED HOME Fuller (*left*) derived great joy on a theological and personal level from his friendship with fellow Baptist pastor and missionary advocate John Ryland Jr. (*above*).

Carey had been converted from Congregationalism to the Baptists through his association with Fuller and his friends, and he had received adult believer’s baptism from Fuller’s friend and fellow Particular Baptist clergyman, John Ryland Jr. (1753–1825).

Carey may have been the “father of modern missions,” but his association with Fuller and Ryland grounded this missionary activity. They invited him to preach in local churches, welcomed him into a local association of Baptist preachers, and mentored him in the faith. While Carey’s missionary work takes center stage in stories today, the modern missionary movement owes much to the lifelong friendship between Ryland and Fuller—the two pastors who stayed home and sent Carey and other missionaries out.

A “LONG AND INTIMATE FRIENDSHIP”

Ryland and Fuller first met in 1776 as young men at an annual meeting of the Northamptonshire Association of Baptists. The two young pastors were wrestling with a number of extremely important theological issues, especially what they found to be



the deadening effects of hyper-Calvinism on their Baptist community.

The two discussed at length how to pursue the renewal of their churches. (Fuller wrote later about the decline in membership among Baptists at the time: "Had matters gone on but for a few years [more], the Baptists would have become a perfect dunghill in society.")

Within a year of meeting, the two were the closest of friends. After Fuller moved from Soham to Kettering in 1782, they were only 13 miles apart and had frequent opportunities to talk, to pray, and to spend time together until 1793 when Ryland became principal of Bristol Baptist Academy, more than a hundred miles away.

In this time before trains and automobiles, letters were the main way that Ryland and Fuller kept their friendship alive and intact. Maintaining a friendship through frequent letters was of course common in the nineteenth century. Ryland also kept up a life-long correspondence with pastor and hymn writer John Newton; the older Newton once wrote to him, "I wish my letters may be a bridle to you and yours a spur to me."

In 1816, the year following Fuller's death, Ryland penned the first biography of Fuller. It proved popular: a second edition was published in 1818. In the introduction, Ryland wrote of his friendship with Fuller:

Most of our common acquaintance are well aware, that I was his oldest and most intimate friend; and though my removal to Bristol, above twenty years ago, placed us at a distance from each other, yet a constant correspondence was all along maintained; and, to me at least, it seemed a tedious [painful and upsetting] interval, if more



LEAVING A LEGACY Above: Fuller's church at Kettering is now named after him.

THE "GOSPEL INN" Left: Carey, Fuller, and others met in the back parlor of this house in Kettering to begin the discussions that led to the Baptist Missionary Society.

than a fortnight elapsed without my receiving a letter from him.

Their friendship, unbroken until Fuller's 1815 death, was an obvious source of joy to both of them. In the year that he died, Fuller described his relationship with Ryland as a "long and intimate friendship" that he had "lived in, and hoped to die in."

Nine days before he died, Fuller asked one last request of Ryland: to preach his funeral sermon. Ryland agreed, though it was no easy task for him to hold back his tears as he spoke.

Toward the end of the sermon, Ryland reminisced about the fact that their friendship had "never met with one minute's interruption, by one unkind word or thought, of which I have any knowledge" and that the wound caused by the loss of "this most faithful and judicious friend" would never be healed in this life. Ryland's statement speaks volumes about the way these two men treasured their relationship and saw it as a means of human flourishing.

WE READ THE SAME BOOKS

From the early days of their friendship, Fuller and Ryland quickly discovered that they shared, as Ryland put it, "a strong attachment to the same religious

REVIVAL INSPIRATION Ryland and Fuller bonded over their shared love of the writings of colonial American preacher and philosopher Jonathan Edwards who had sparked the Great Awakening.

principles, a decided aversion to the same errors, a predilection for the same authors.”

In particular they both read the American theologian Jonathan Edwards (1703–1758) and appreciated his thought regarding conversion and revival, spirituality, and missions.

They displayed one fundamental aspect of a good spiritual friendship: a union of hearts, and a related oneness of soul in a shared passion for the glory of Christ and the extension of his kingdom. Yet, as Ryland affirmed in his biography of Fuller, their “intimate friendship did not blind either of us to the defects or faults of the other; but rather showed itself in the freedom of affectionate remark on whatever appeared to be wrong.”

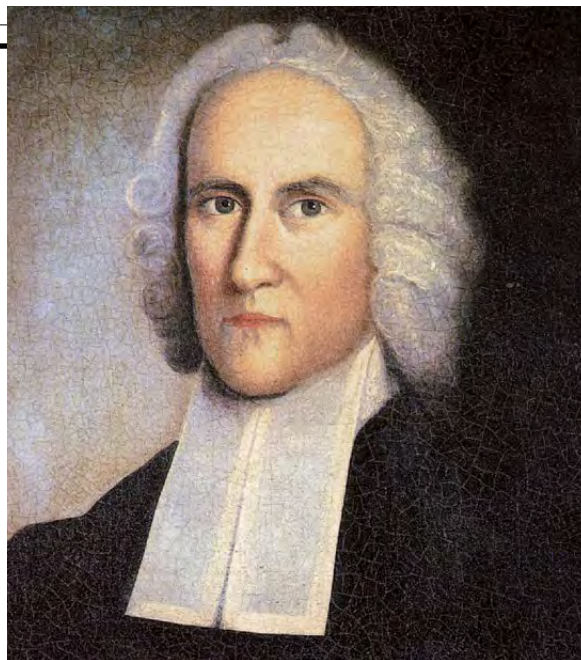
The two friends may not have had a minute’s interruption of their love for each other, but that did not mean that they did not differ. Ryland wrote that there was only “one religious subject” about which “there was any material difference of judgment” between the two friends. That subject was an extremely volatile one in the eighteenth-century transatlantic Baptist community: the twin issues of open and closed Communion and open and closed membership.

“WITHOUT . . . GIVING OFFENCE”

The vast majority of pastors and congregations in the Particular Baptist denomination, including Fuller, adhered to a policy of closed membership and closed Communion—that is, only believers baptized on adult profession of faith could become members of their local churches and only these baptized believers could partake of the Lord’s Supper in their meetinghouses.

Fuller wrote three short treatises on the subject: *Thoughts on Open Communion* (1800), *Strict Communion in the Mission Church at Serampore* (1814), and *The Admission of Unbaptized Persons to the Lord’s Supper Inconsistent with the New Testament* (published after his death in 1815).

Ryland, on the other hand, felt convicted that both the Lord’s Supper and membership in the local church should be open to all Christians, regardless of whether or not they had undergone believer’s baptism. When Ryland was the pastor of the College Lane Church in Northampton, for instance, one of the leading deacons of the church, a certain Thomas Trinder, did not receive believer’s baptism until six years after he had been appointed deacon. Fuller would never have tolerated such a situation in the church at Kettering.



However, Ryland and Fuller were secure enough in their friendship to disagree about this controversial subject without it destroying their fellowship. The only time it came close to doing so was in connection with the Baptist Missionary Society’s ecclesial practice at Serampore, India. And it is here that William Carey comes back into the story.

Carey, sent out to India in 1793, had moved from Calcutta to Serampore in 1801 to open a mission station. This station, headed by Carey along with Joshua Marshman (1768–1837) and William Ward (1769–1823)—all friends of Ryland and Fuller—adopted a policy of open Communion in 1805.

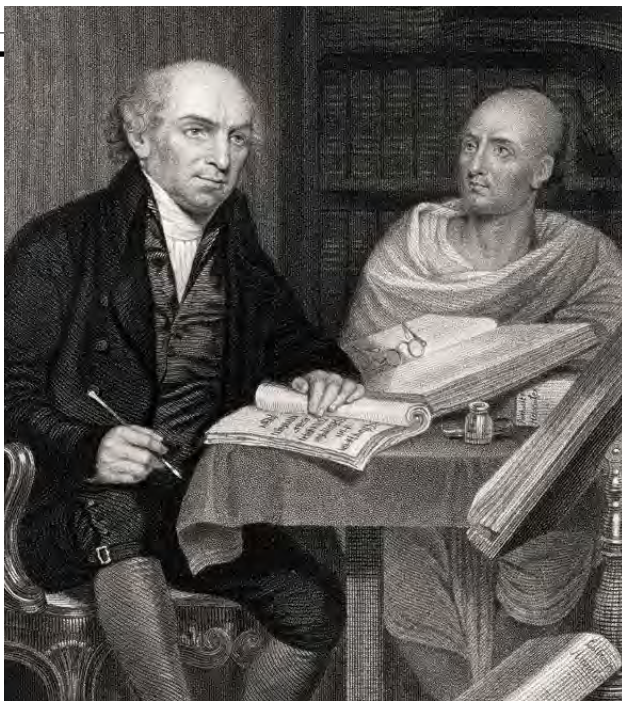
The Serampore missionaries knew of Fuller’s position, of course—his *Thoughts on Open Communion* had originally been addressed to them. But writing to him in 1805, the Serampore missionaries informed him that they had come to the conviction that:

[N]o one has a right to debar a true Christian from the Lord’s table, nor refuse to communicate with a real Christian in commemorating the death of their common Lord, without being guilty of a breach of the Law of Love.

They went on to affirm:

We cannot doubt, whether a Watts, an Edwards, a Brainerd, a Doddridge, a Whitefield, did right in partaking of the Lord’s Supper, though really unbaptized, or whether they had the presence of God at the Lord’s Table?

Deeply disturbed by this reasoning and the decision made by the Serampore missionaries, Fuller exerted all of his powers of influence and persuasion to convince Carey and his associates to embrace closed Communion at Serampore, which they eventually did in 1811. In *The Admission of Unbaptized Persons to the Lord’s Supper Inconsistent with the New Testament*, he would later write,



WRITING WELL In this famous engraving, Carey sits with Mritunjaya, one of the Brahmin *pandits* (religious leaders) who helped him translate the Bible into Indian languages.

The best feelings of the human heart are those of love and obedience to God; and if I deny myself of the pleasure which fellowship with a Christian brother would afford me, for the sake of acting up to the mind of Christ, or according to primitive example, I do not deny the best feelings of the human heart, but, on the contrary, forego the less for the greater. It is a greater pleasure to obey the will of God than to associate with creatures in a way deviating from it.

In a pinch, it seemed, Fuller would have valued obedience over friendship—but his continued association with Carey and the others showed that he preferred to have both.

Ryland was not slow to criticize this reversal of policy by the Serampore missionaries. But he later said of his disagreement with Fuller: “I repeatedly expressed myself more freely and strongly to him, than I did to any man in England; yet without giving him offence.”

Neither did Carey, who also disagreed with Fuller’s position, take offence at Fuller—then or later. When he heard of Fuller’s death in 1815, he wrote almost immediately to Ryland and told him: “I loved him very sincerely. There was scarcely another man on the Earth to whom I could so completely [*sic*] lay open my heart as I could to him.”

A LITTLE BAND OF BROTHERS

In the end, though we most remember Carey’s name, the story of the friends who sent him out to the mission field—supporting him with prayers, donations, and guidance—is no less crucial.

Christopher Anderson (1782–1852), a Scottish Baptist leader, knew well Fuller’s circle of friends, and he thought they exemplified the kind of friendship essential to the spread of the gospel—united in a common mission to spread Christ, even if they sometimes disagreed on the means to accomplish it. Anderson remarked after Fuller’s death in an 1822 letter to a colleague:

[I]n order to much good being done, co-operation, the result of undissembled love, is absolutely necessary; and I think that if God in his tender mercy would take me as one of but a very few whose hearts he will unite as the heart of one man—since all the watchmen cannot see eye to eye—might I be but one of a little band of brothers who should do so, and who should leave behind them a proof of how much may be accomplished in consequence of the union of only a few upon earth in spreading Christianity, oh how should I rejoice and be glad!

In order to such a union, however, I am satisfied that the cardinal virtues, and a share of what may be considered as substantial excellence of character, are absolutely necessary, and hence the importance of the religion which we possess being of that stamp which will promote these.

Such a union in modern times existed in [Andrew] Fuller, [John] Sutcliff, [Samuel] Pearce, [William] Carey, and [John] Ryland. They were men of self-denying habits, dead to the world, to fame, and to popular applause, of deep and extensive views of divine truth, and they had such an extended idea of what the Kingdom of Christ ought to have been in the nineteenth century, that they, as it were, vowed and prayed, and gave themselves no rest. ¶

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Andrew Fuller
W. Ward.
V. Thomas
Marshman

Together traveling on

Christian friendship between spouses

Spiritual companionship has always formed a part of Christian marriage, but some relationships make this more apparent than others. Such was the case with Charles Wesley (1707–1788) and Sarah Gwynne (1726–1822). In August of 1748, Anglican priest and itinerant Methodist preacher Wesley stayed at the home of Marmaduke Gwynne, a wealthy Methodist convert who regularly housed evangelicals. When Marmaduke introduced the nearly 40-year-old traveling preacher to his 20-year-old daughter Sarah (usually called Sally), the two felt a strong connection.

At first Wesley wrote to Gwynne as a mentor in faith, signing his letters “Your faithful sympathizing brother and friend.” Soon the relationship grew into romantic love. But throughout their courtship—and the decades-long marriage that followed—it was obvious that the spiritual connection did not fade when the romantic one blossomed. In fact many of Wesley’s love poems for Gwynne became part of an unpublished collection of hymns he compiled on friendship, intended to be sung by Methodists!

His first love poem to her begins, “Two are better far than one, / For counsel or for fight! / How can one be warm alone / Or serve his God aright? Join we then our hearts and hands; / Haste, my sister, dearest friend. . . .” The following spring, shortly before their wedding, Wesley wrote to her: “Never have I found such a nearness to any fellow-creature as to you. O that it may bring us nearer and nearer to God, till we are both swallowed up in the immensity of his love!”

A WONDERFUL SWEETNESS

Of course there are many other examples. Were Paul’s colleagues Priscilla and Aquila spiritual friends of this nature as well as spouses? We don’t know, though Acts 18:26 might imply it. But Martin and Katie Luther certainly spring to mind, as do Jonathan Edwards (1703–1758) and Sarah Pierpont (1710–1758).

Pierpont’s piety first impressed Edwards when she was 13 and he was 17. He scribbled down this description: “She is of a wonderful sweetness, calmness, and universal benevolence of mind; especially after this Great God has manifested himself to her mind. She will sometimes go about from place to place, singing sweetly; and seems to be always full of joy and pleasure.” They married four years later, and he used her conversion narrative in *Thoughts on the Revival of Religion in New England* (1740).

Some husband and wife teams were controversial. Katharina Schütz (c. 1497–1562) defended her husband



“TWO ARE BETTER FAR THAN ONE” At the heart of many great Christian marriages has been an experience of spiritual friendship.

Matthew Zell (1477–1548) in her 1524 book *Apologia for Master Matthew Zell, Her Husband, Who is a Pastor and Servant of the Word of God in Strasbourg, Because of the Great Lies Invented About Him* (see CH #131 for more about this power couple). The marriage of C. S. Lewis (1898–1963) and Joy Davidman Gresham (1915–1960), an American divorcée, also sparked shock. He acknowledged her influence on several of his later works, but his male friends objected to him bringing her into previously male-only discussion spaces (see “Surprised by friendship,” p. 37).

Other famous romantic spiritual friendships went disastrously wrong, such as Héloïse d’Argenteuil (1100–1164) and Peter Abélard (1079–1142). The two corresponded about philosophy and soon discovered a meeting of the minds—but this led to a premarital affair, a secret marriage, his castration at the hands of Héloïse’s uncle and guardian, and their entry into separate religious orders. The sad story ended with the two writing to each other again, now as monk and abbess.

In the best of these stories, though, we glimpse the kind of partnership that Wesley expressed in his finest love lyric for Gwynne, sung at many Methodist marriages since: “Didst [God] not make us one, / That we might one remain, / Together travel on, / And bear each other’s pain, / Till all thy utmost goodness prove, / And rise renew’d in perfect love?”—Jennifer Woodruff Tait



Holy clubs and Tuesday meetings

CIRCLES OF SPIRITUAL FRIENDS WERE AT THE HEART OF THE METHODIST MOVEMENT—TWICE

Kelly Diehl Yates

CHARLES WESLEY (1707–1788) struggled spiritually while a student at Christ Church, Oxford, England. Desiring to grow in faith, in 1729 he formed a group of men called the “Holy Club” to study the Bible, read spiritual books, and pray with each other. At first only three men attended: Charles, his brother John (a fellow at nearby Lincoln College), and their friend William Morgan (see CH #123). John later wrote to Morgan’s father: “Our design was to read over the classics, which we had before read in private, on common nights, and on Sunday some book in divinity.”

Over time more young men joined the gathering, including George Whitefield, Benjamin Ingham, and James Hervey. Whitefield (1714–1770) soon became a legend himself—crisscrossing the Atlantic, preaching across England, Ireland, Scotland, and the British colonies, and spurring on the Great Awakening.

Many at Oxford found the group laughable—and annoying. Other students gave them what they considered to be demeaning nicknames: Reforming Club,

BIBLE MOTHS, COME TO ORDER John Wesley (*second from right*) meets with friends at Oxford.

Godly Club, Sacramentarians, Bible Moths, Bible Bigots, and Supererogation Men. One name, *Methodist*, stuck, as it described the system of spiritual method to which group members adhered: Bible study and prayer, fasting, giving generously, evangelizing, and visiting the poor and imprisoned, including some on death row.

GROWING IN GROUPS

Anglicans had been forming groups for prayer and spiritual disciplines since the mid-1600s. Yet the Wesleys took this concept further. Filled with zeal for God’s truth after profound spiritual experiences in 1738, the Wesley brothers began preaching across England. They discovered that people grew in their faith when organized, just as the brothers had grown through the Holy Club. Borrowing an idea from their

friends the Moravians, they organized groups called “bands” divided by gender, marital status, and age for prayer and mutual support.

Eventually bands mostly disappeared and larger coed groups called “societies” replaced them. John Wesley wrote a set of *Rules for the United Societies* (1743) for his followers; this had no denominational requirement. The only prerequisite for participation was a “desire to flee from the wrath to come, to be saved from their sins.” The purpose of the societies was to encourage each person’s way of “working out their own salvation.” John or Charles (or later, one of their trained lay preachers) appointed a leader over 12 people who met weekly.

As the movement grew, so did the size of the societies. Unusual for the time, the groups included both genders, and women led many class meetings of the societies. These weekly gatherings led by experienced Christians became a foundational part of Methodism.

One of the reasons John Wesley initiated these groups was to raise money to build preaching houses—he urged Methodists to receive Communion at their parish churches, but lay self-educated Methodist preachers would not have been allowed into Church of England pulpits. Each member brought a penny, and preaching houses sprang up across England.

Class meetings opened with a hymn or prayer. The leader shared recent spiritual experiences and sometimes a passage from the Bible, and then each member provided a testimony of God’s work in his or her life. They closed in prayer and a hymn. To participate, members needed a current ticket that indicated they had been interviewed about the state of their soul every three months by one of the preachers. A member of the class meeting could join a larger society, which functioned almost like churches we know today. Several class meetings made up a society.

People voluntarily chose to engage in class meetings, but Wesley expelled members if they did not show Christian growth in their lives. He placed them into “penitent bands” if they sought restoration. These provided a safe place for repentant sinners to get help and support in overcoming temptation. Since Methodists forbade drinking distilled liquors, they often met on Saturday evenings to keep members from bars and pubs.

By the time John Wesley died in 1791, the Methodist movement boasted over 71,000 British and over 43,000



REVIVING HOLINESS What Wesley began in Oxford (above) took on a new form under Phoebe Palmer (left).

American members. Today the World Methodist Council reports a membership of over 40.5 million.

TUESDAYS WITH METHODISTS

Meanwhile the seeds of a new phase of the movement were being planted. In 1785 a 14-year-old named Henry Worrall from Sheffield, England, joined one of Wesley’s societies, receiving his first membership ticket from John Wesley himself! Worrall

married Dorothea Wade and moved to New York City, where he raised his family as Methodists. We remember his daughters Sarah Worrall Lankford (1806–1896) and Phoebe Worrall Palmer (1807–1874) today as the women who started the Holiness movement (see CH #82). But before there was a Holiness movement, there were meetings of spiritual friends called the “Tuesday Meetings for the Promotion of Holiness.”

Why did the idea of small groups meeting together for spiritual encouragement need to be revived among Methodists? Methodists in the colonies under the leadership of Francis Asbury had originally organized themselves into societies and classes as Wesley intended, but this practice had mostly died out by the 1830s. The two sisters would revive it in a new way.



The road to the Tuesday Meetings began with Lankford and Palmer seeking an experience of entire sanctification (also called “Christian perfection,” “holiness,” and the “second blessing”). Both Wesley brothers had written about the possibility of this kind of total consecration to God and testified that they knew believers who had experienced it. Sarah Worrall Lankford claimed entire sanctification in 1835 and began meeting with others who sought it. She and her husband, Thomas, lived with Phoebe and her husband, Walter, so they held the meetings at home.

JESUS SAVES ME AS NEVER BEFORE

Forty women attended that first meeting. Lankford, who had prayed that the “broad seal of heaven should be affixed [to the meeting],” asked for testimonies. A woman stood and cried out, “Pray for me, pray for me, in the name of the Lord Jesus, I entreat you, pray for me!” They all knelt and prayed for her. Many women claimed, “Jesus saves me this afternoon as never before.” Unlike Wesley’s societies the Tuesday Meetings did not follow a specific formula, but rather included a fluid mix of Bible study, preaching, and prayer.

Yet in the midst of all these holy moments in her own parlor, Phoebe Palmer remained consumed with grief. She had lost two babies in infancy, and in 1836 her three-year-old daughter, Eliza, died after her nurse accidentally threw a lamp into her crib. Unsurprisingly Palmer entered a dark time of the soul. For a year she agonized, cried, and prayed, begging God for entire sanctification.

Finally she testified to the experience in 1837 and began to take a more active role in the meetings. In 1839 Palmer and Lankford welcomed men to the meetings; the next year the Lankfords moved out of the Palmer house and Phoebe Palmer took over the leadership. The meetings grew to include hundreds—with at least four Methodist bishops. People from all parts of the English-speaking world attended.



IN THE NAME OF CHRIST One of the ways Palmer and her friends lived out the lessons of the Tuesday Meetings was by helping establish a mission (left) in the notorious Five Points slum in Manhattan (above) in 1850.

George Hughes, an attendee, wrote: “The ‘beauty of holiness’ alone has drawn together a weekly attendance of hundreds in a private residence for fifty years.” The textbook for the meetings was never Wesley, but the Bible. Like Wesley’s class meetings, the Tuesday Meetings welcomed people from all denominations. The leaders taught a heavenly cheerfulness and maintained that an inner Christian experience would produce an outer life that revealed faith on the inside.

Eventually, Palmer published *The Way of Holiness* (1843) and other books to help spread holiness theology, took on a speaking ministry, and (with Walter) became editor of the newspaper *Guide to Holiness*. After Palmer died at age 66, the recently widowed Lankford married her widower brother-in-law, Walter Palmer, and the two continued to lead meetings and edit *Guide to Holiness*.

John and Charles Wesley and Sarah Lankford and Phoebe Palmer knew God never meant Christians to travel life’s journey alone. Their organized meetings provided a catalyst for holy friendship. These groups offered a way for Christians to grow in their faith; strong Christians bred strong churches, and strong churches changed the world. ☐

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Saints against slavery

A world-changing set of friendships

Hannah More (1745–1833) was intelligent and educated, but she was born with two strikes against her: she was poor and she was female. In a time when society offered few opportunities to those of either status, More needed friendship to help her succeed. Spiritual friendship made possible her extraordinary accomplishments as an abolitionist, reformer, and one of England's first best-selling authors. Transcending age, gender, and class, one spiritual friendship in particular changed not only More, but the entire British Empire.

More's early fame arose because leading literary figures of the time—including critic and lexicographer Samuel Johnson, actor and theater manager David Garrick, and statesman and publisher Horace Walpole—befriended her, supported her, and promoted her work. Then, during the peak of her celebrity in the 1780s, More read a collection of spiritual letters written by the Rev. John Newton (1725–1807), former slave ship captain and author of the hymn “Amazing Grace.” Something awakened in More upon reading Newton's book, and she began to set her mind on more spiritual things. Eventually she visited Newton's church and heard him preach, and the two began a deep friendship.

Around that time More also met a new convert to Christianity whom Newton was mentoring, William Wilberforce (1759–1833). Upon converting, this young member of Parliament famously declared, “God Almighty has set before me two great objects: the suppression of the slave trade and the reformation of manners [decency in public and private behavior].” Hannah More joined him in these efforts, as did Newton and others. Their group of Christian friends and reformers became known as the Clapham Sect, named after the church in South London where member John Venn was a pastor. Critics ridiculed the group and perjoratively called them the “saints.”

WHICH OF YOU WROTE THIS?

Fifteen years Wilberforce's senior and by then confirmed in her single life, More held toward Wilberforce a sisterly affection, mirrored by his brotherly love toward her. As a woman More had none of the political power Wilberforce possessed. He urged her, therefore, to use the power of her pen to advocate for reform at every level of society. More wrote anonymous treatises aimed at converting the upper class to genuine faith. The two were so similar in belief that some attributed her anonymous works to Wilberforce.

While visiting More in her rural home, Wilberforce lamented the impoverished conditions he witnessed



AN IMPOSING RÉSUMÉ Hannah More and her friends in the Clapham Sect campaigned for abolition, public decency, education, and prison reform.

among the laborers in that region. He and More devised a plan to open a school where the children of the poor could be taught to read, do arithmetic, and understand the Bible. With Wilberforce's financial support, More and her sister eventually established a dozen schools, then launched a project to produce affordable reading material for newly literate adults as well.

When Wilberforce helped establish England's first animal welfare society, More wrote stories and songs linking kindness to animals with the practice of piety and morality. The moving abolitionist poem “Slavery,” which remains More's most famous work today, was published on the same day Wilberforce planned to introduce antislavery legislation in Parliament. They both recognized that laws would not change unless hearts and minds changed first.

Remarkably Wilberforce and More both died just weeks apart in 1833—the year that Parliament passed the Slavery Abolition Act, which set most slaves in the British Empire free. Their friendship had kindled in each other a desire to be friends to all—and to their Creator. Their bond demonstrates the power friends have not only to shape one another, but also to shape the world. —Karen Swallow Prior, professor of English at Liberty University and author of *Fierce Convictions: The Extraordinary Life of Hannah More—Poet, Reformer, Abolitionist and other works*.



From hallowed halls to a higher calling

HOW FELLOWSHIP AMONG COLLEGE FRIENDS SPURRED MISSION MOVEMENTS

John Roxborough

IN FEBRUARY 1885 seven young men associated with the University of Cambridge sensationally left fame and fortune as sports heroes to go to China as missionaries. Sixty years earlier, six of Thomas Chalmers's students from the University of St. Andrews had made a commitment to become missionaries. Those at St. Andrews had modest social backgrounds and needed to prove themselves academically. Those at Cambridge were independently wealthy, aristocratic, and had either fame in sports or secure military or church careers. All were young people discovering, in company with others, that there was more to believing that "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself" than they realized.

These famous "sevens" echo many people's university experiences—excited by ideas, challenged by expanding horizons and passionate debates, exploring faith and doubt, and forming friendships. This enthusiasm often comes with intense self-reflection, an impatience to feel settled in relationship with God, and in some cases a struggle with depression. When Stuart Piggin and I wrote about the St. Andrews Seven some

ACTIVISTS FOR JESUS Students at St. Andrews started a library, devoured missionary literature, wrote papers to share, and debated missionary methods.

years ago, learning of their struggles helped affirm that we had not been alone in our own adventures of faith.

GOING INTO ALL THE WORLD

The Great Commission (Mark 16:15) had been explicitly embodied in missionary societies since the founding of the Particular Baptist Society for the Propagation of the Gospel Amongst the Heathen in 1792. However it still faced indifference and even opposition in 1824 when six students formed the "St Andrews University Juvenile Missionary Society" to review and support missions and hear from famous missionaries like Joshua Marshman from India and Robert Morrison, pioneer translator of the Bible into Chinese.

Like the students, Marshman and Morrison were attracted to St. Andrews by professor Thomas

Chalmers (1780–1847). As the group researched missions, questions arose about what God wanted them to do practically; as their friendships grew, so did their concern for China and India. Six eventually set their hearts on missionary service: John Adam, Alexander Duff, David Ewart, William Sinclair Mackay, Robert Nesbit, and John Urquhart.

Of these, the oldest was John Adam, just 20. He had been converted during a stay in Geneva and had been studying Latin, Hebrew, and Greek. Duff shared lodgings with his old school friend, Urquhart. Nesbit was studying theology. Less is known of Mackay and Ewart, but Chalmers inspired them all to connect faith to moral philosophy and political economy as well as to Christian mission.

When Adam met Urquhart, he immediately drew him into the group which began meeting for prayer and reading on Sunday mornings; Duff, Urquhart, and Adam frequently joined Chalmers's family for evening meals. The founders of the Student Missionary Society were hard-working students, successful in winning prizes and scholarships, but had already turned their minds and efforts to purposes beyond. Even the attractions of golf at St. Andrews, where the sport originated, held little appeal.

Chalmers continued to influence the young missionaries-to-be over shared meals. Deciding to support missionaries and Bible societies had been important in his own conversion, and he often spoke at mission meetings and served as an active member in the St. Andrews town missionary society founded in 1822. Other student societies had already been founded in Scotland: at the University of Aberdeen in 1820 and the University of Glasgow in 1821. The University of Edinburgh would follow in 1825.

At St. Andrews the student society grew rapidly, though most professors regarded mission societies as "puritanical and unacademic," making it difficult to find somewhere to meet. Study routines were important, including Bible study. As opinion became polarized, the group published a magazine to support their cause; others published in opposition, and for a year rival student magazines went head to head. After two years membership reached 70. But studying missions only went so far. It was time to act.

Urquhart became the first to declare his decision to become a missionary. When he died unexpectedly in 1827, his devastated friends wondered if they were meant to take up the challenge. Duff (1806–1878) resolved to go to Calcutta as the pioneer missionary of the Church of Scotland. Over the next few years, Nesbit, Adam, Mackay, and Ewart also served in India. Another



MENTOR *Left:* Chalmers was the most celebrated preacher in Britain when he left his parish ministry in Glasgow to teach at his old university.

PROTÉGÉ *Below:* Duff became the most famous of Chalmers's students, reaching thousands in India for Christ.



10 society members became ministers; one member was chair, another secretary, of the foreign missions committees of their denominations.

Duff's decision that his school would use English, not a vernacular Indian language, ran counter to missionary wisdom then and since; but in the 1830s, it met a felt need and laid foundations for higher education in India. His philosophy of mission allowed factions in the Scottish church to cooperate through the shared belief that education lay at the heart of Christian mission. Those who went to India were gifted teachers, remarkable for their engagement with the intellectual life of India and their sense of the importance of science, philosophy, ethics, and economics.

Significantly the St. Andrews society was among the pioneers of student-led Christian witness in British universities—indeed, the intellectual world of the university was itself a mission field.

SEVEN MORE

Sixty years later in 1880s Britain, pressing Christian issues included not only the call to conversion but also the much-talked-about possibility of a "higher life" of Christian commitment. Mission meetings led by American evangelist D. L. Moody (1837–1899) encouraged conversion *and* further consecration, as did Hudson Taylor (1832–1905) of the China Inland Mission (CIM) in his call for missionaries to China's nine inland provinces.

Taylor had simply been praying for 70 missionaries, but as one by one students with university or military connections applied, he realized that a prayer for



"university men" to go to China was also being answered. Out of this came the "Cambridge Seven"—a group of students whose stories of interwoven lives, friendships, and deep experiences of Christian commitment and soul-searching would inspire missionaries for years to come. They toured Britain in a wave of publicity and excitement, leading to a climactic farewell from Exeter Hall in London on the eve of their departure on February 5, 1885.

Only six were actually from Cambridge: Stanley P. Smith, captain of the rowing team; C. T. Studd, captain of the cricket squad; William Cassels, a Church of England curate; Cecil Polhill-Turner, a lieutenant in the Royal Dragoons; his brother Arthur, in training for the priesthood; and Montague Beauchamp, also in training for ministry. The non-Cambridge member was Dixon Hoste, a lieutenant in the Royal Artillery.

Studd was one of England's most famous cricket players; he had helped beat Australia only for the Australians to then defeat England and have the event labeled as the death of English cricket: "The body will be cremated and the ashes taken to Australia." Studd and the English team then went to Australia and won back the trophy, now named the "Ashes." With the potential of a brilliant sports career, he headed for the mission field instead.

They arrived in Shanghai on March 18, 1886. At first some tried to bypass the challenge of learning Chinese by praying for the gift of tongues. But once in Shanxi province, they proved willing to place themselves under the leadership of Chinese pastor Hsi whose ministry of prayer, exorcism, and use of morphine to cure opium addicts went beyond anything they'd experienced in England.

Later Cassels, Arthur Polhill, and Beauchamp relocated to Szechwan, where a Church of England diocese was established as part of the CIM with Cassels consecrated bishop. In 1903 Hoste succeeded Taylor as general director of the CIM. Beauchamp functioned as



AT HOME Far left: The Seven finally agreed to obey the CIM requirement of Chinese dress.


GOD'S TEAM Studd (left) said: "Cricket would not last, and honour would not last, and nothing in this world would last, but it was worthwhile living for the world to come."

an independent missionary, using family wealth to support the CIM and build its headquarters in Shanghai.

None of the men lost their sense of God's call on their lives, but not all stayed with the CIM. Studd (1860–1931) resigned in 1890, ministering in India and then the Congo and forming the Heart of Africa Mission—now the Worldwide Evangelization Crusade. In 1904 Smith

resigned after adopting a "wider hope" theology, which held that salvation in Christ was possible for those who had never been evangelized. He remained in China and in good relationship with the CIM. Cecil Polhill left in 1900 after the Boxer uprising; he and Studd were early visitors to Azusa Street in February 1908 as the Pentecostal movement began to blossom in the United States. Polhill later became the first president of the Pentecostal Missionary Union in Britain.

FOURTEEN FOR CHRIST

At St. Andrews the students had gained as good an understanding of overseas mission as it was possible to get at that time without leaving England. At Cambridge the popular adulation of sporting heroes was pressed into the service of the gospel—but as they responded to the immediacy of the need, the fervor of revival, and holiness piety, they found a channel in the CIM. The two groups represented different eras but were similarly young, intense, capable, and earnest—sometimes embarrassingly so. Friendships during their spiritual, social, and academic formation gave them strength and wisdom they carried into their years of service and sacrifice ahead, united in ongoing growth in Christ even as their paths diverged. 

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Surprised by friendship

Seventeen years that changed literature

When C. S. Lewis (1898–1963) and J. R. R. Tolkien (1892–1973) met for the first time at a faculty meeting at Oxford University on May 11, 1926, Lewis's first impression of his colleague was unfavorable. In his diary he described Tolkien as "a smooth, pale, fluent little chap. . . . No harm in him: only needs a smack or so."

As Lewis and Tolkien got to know one another, friction only increased. It became clear they had little in common. Lewis was gregarious; Tolkien quiet and reflective. They had different academic specialties: Tolkien was a philologist, devoted to the study of language, while Lewis was an expert in literature and philosophy. And they came from different religious traditions. Lewis later said that meeting Tolkien triggered two of his old childhood prejudices: "At my first coming into the world I had been (implicitly) warned never to trust a Papist, and at my first coming into the English Faculty (explicitly) never to trust a philologist. Tolkien was both."

It got worse. Within months the faculty at Oxford became entrenched in a bitter debate about which courses should be required for students in the English School, and the two found themselves on opposing sides. Tolkien felt the English curriculum should be based on close study of only ancient and medieval texts. Lewis, on the other hand, believed that students would benefit from a broad survey of texts ancient and modern.

Tolkien fought energetically for his curriculum with an unconventional but brilliantly strategic approach: fostering a love of ancient myths among the faculty. To that end he founded the "Coalbiters" club, which met each week to read Norse myths in their original languages and translate them bit by bit around the circle. Having loved these ancient myths since childhood, Lewis found himself immediately drawn in. As the Coalbiters recited the tales of Odin, Freya, and Loki, Lewis and Tolkien grew in admiration for one another. Soon they forged a friendship.

FROM COALBITERS TO INKLINGS

The group served its purpose: Tolkien won the curriculum debate, and the meetings came to an end. But the two new friends decided to meet each week, first sharing lunch and conversation and then exchanging drafts of the poems and stories they were writing.

This simple plan had a profound impact. Both men thrived as they offered encouragement, criticism, and advice. These critique sessions were so fruitful that they invited others to join them, including Owen Barfield, David Cecil, Hugo Dyson, and Charles Williams. Lewis's brother, Warren Lewis, became a regular member, as did Tolkien's son Christopher. They called themselves the



"BY A GOOD FIRE" C. S. Lewis (*second from right*) sits outside an inn in Godstow with three lesser-known Inklings: James Dundas-Grant, Colin Hardie, and Robert "Humphrey" Havard, as well as Havard's son Peter.

Inklings. All in all 19 men joined this writers' circle, and they met weekly for 17 years. Members brought rough drafts of works in progress. They read them aloud, heard honest critique, and revised their work in response.

These writers had different outlooks, competing interests, contrasting backgrounds, and varied Christian traditions—but found common ground in their common labor. As Lewis once explained: "Friends are not primarily absorbed in each other. It is when we are doing things together that friendship springs up—painting, sailing ships, praying, philosophizing, fighting shoulder to shoulder. Friends look in the same direction." A stranger becomes a friend, said Lewis, when we "fight beside him, read with him, argue with him, pray with him."

The work of the Inklings changed the landscape of literature; the experience transformed their lives. Warren Lewis called the Inklings "a famous and heroic gathering" and said their meetings were characterized by "an outpouring of wit, nonsense, whimsy, dialectical swordplay, and pungent judgment such as I have rarely heard equaled." Tolkien expressed his appreciation with simple enthusiasm: "That was true joy!" And Lewis mused, "Is any pleasure on earth as great as a circle of Christian friends by a good fire?" He added, "What I owe to them all is incalculable."—*Diana Pavlac Glycer, professor, Honors College of Azusa Pacific University and author of Bandersnatch: C. S. Lewis, J. R. R. Tolkien, and the Creative Collaboration of the Inklings (from which this was adapted).*

Haystacks, starry clusters, and baptizing bishops

HOW GOD USED FRIENDSHIPS TO SPARK MISSION THROUGHOUT CHURCH HISTORY

Jennifer A. Boardman



AMBROSE AND AUGUSTINE (4TH CENTURY)

In 374 Ambrose (c. 340–397) became bishop of Milan, an appointment made in part due to his theological commitment to orthodox Nicene Christianity during Arianism's controversial rise. Augustine (354–430) was a young teacher of rhetoric and struggling with faith when he first heard the bishop speak. He noted in his spiritual autobiography, *Confessions*: "So I came to Milan and to Bishop Ambrose, who was known throughout

LED TO GOD Bishop Ambrose baptizes Augustine, who had once only desired to learn rhetoric from him.

the world as one of the best of men. . . . Unknowingly I was led by you [i.e., God] to him, so that through him I might be led, knowingly, to you."

Interested in rhetoric, Augustine appreciated Ambrose's preaching and desired to learn from his speaking style rather than from his religious ideas. He recalled,

This man of God welcomed me with fatherly kindness and showed the charitable concern for my pilgrimage that befitted a bishop. I began to feel affection for him, not at first as a teacher of truth, for that I had given up hope of finding in your [God's] Church, but simply as a man who was kind to me.

The more Augustine listened to the meaning behind Ambrose's words, however, the more the younger man found his interest in Christianity growing. For instance when Ambrose explained a difficult Old Testament passage figuratively instead of literally (as Augustine had been reading it), Augustine's frustration with Scripture began to give way to curiosity.

Augustine came to orthodox faith through hearing a child say, "Pick it up and read!" in the garden of his house; one year later Ambrose baptized him on April 24, 387, in Milan. Ambrose guided Augustine through intense preparation leading up to his baptism throughout the whole season of Lent, including daily instructions and various rites. A colleague wrote of Ambrose's care for the baptismal candidates: "Ambrose used to do so much for the [applicants for baptism] as scarcely five bishops could do after his death." Augustine's son Adeodatus was baptized with him, as was his friend Alypius who had been with him at his conversion.

A relationship that had started when a young teacher desired to learn from a master rhetorician, Augustine and Ambrose's friendship now evolved into spiritual brotherhood. Augustine himself became first a priest and then a bishop before his mentor's death—and eventually one of the most famous theologians in the history of Christianity.



THE EARLY FRANCISCANS (13TH CENTURY)

More than 800 years ago, a rich man who had been called by God to embrace a poor man's existence walked the Italian countryside. He quickly attracted a group of men who dedicated their lives to poverty, chastity, and obedience as they preached repentance and celebrated the life of Christ.

Francis of Assisi (c. 1181–1226) was born into a wealthy Italian family and for years lived a lavish lifestyle courtesy of his father. But he slowly heeded God's call on his life and in 1208 devoted himself to a life of poverty. He began itinerant preaching and was soon joined by Bernard of Quintavalle, a local magnate, and Peter of Cattaneo from the local cathedral's staff. The traditional story tells that these three went into the Church of St. Nicholas and repeatedly opened the Gospel book there to seek God's will, finding that every time it opened to passages where Jesus asked his followers to give everything up for him.

As Francis gathered more followers, the "brothers" lived in an abandoned leper colony near Assisi, but they mostly traveled the surrounding areas to preach repentance. Drawn up for his early followers, Francis's first rule was the *regula primitiva* or "primitive rule": "To follow the teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ and to walk in his footsteps."

Instead of following one of the existing monastic orders—many of which had become corrupt and wealthy—Francis desired only to live the way Christ and his apostles lived: in poverty, by obedience, and with chastity. Francis and the brothers went to Rome to ask Pope Innocent III if they could become a religious order, and their request was granted in 1210. Soon the Franciscan Order that had begun with these 12 poverty-embracing men spread to include a women's order



BROTHERS FOR CHRIST Spiritual friendship and accountability were at the heart of the creation of both the Franciscans (above) and the Jesuits (above left).

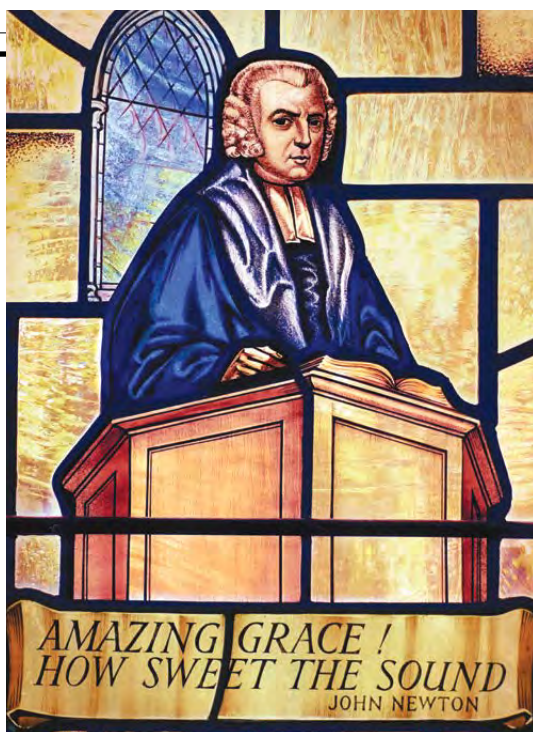
(called Poor Ladies or Poor Clares) and a lay order (called the Third Order).

Francis and his 11 echoed Jesus and his apostles, buoyed by Christian fellowship and devotion. Today all three Franciscan orders continue in mission and faith worldwide.

THE JESUIT FOUNDERS (16TH CENTURY)

In August of 1534, a group of seven friends, all students at the University of Paris, traveled to a church outside the city. Here the group, led by Íñigo (Ignatius) López de Loyola (1491–1556), descended the stairs to the basement and made their way to the cold crypt. There Ignatius, Francisco Xavier (1506–1552), Peter Faber (1506–1546), Salmeron, Diego Laínez, Nicolás Bobadilla, and Simão Rodrigues together pronounced religious vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience. They called themselves "Friends in the Lord" (translated into Latin as *Societas Iesu*) and considered one another to be brothers "placed together in Christ."

The group of seven friends went to Italy in 1537 to seek approval for their new order from Pope Paul II, who permitted their ordination as priests. In 1540, under Pope Paul III, the Society of Jesus—as it was commonly known—was declared an official religious order of the Roman Catholic Church. After this declaration the new order decided to concentrate on three



points of mission: (1) to create schools throughout Europe focusing on classical studies and theology; (2) to send missionaries to unreached parts of the world (including modern-day Paraguay, Japan, Ontario, and Ethiopia); and (3) to stop the spread of Protestantism. Although the Jesuits were concerned with maintaining apostolic order in Rome, they also recognized the truth of Protestantism's complaint that Catholicism had its fill of corrupt leaders practicing lukewarm spirituality. To this end Ignatius wanted his clergy to be both well-learned and to have true conversions of the heart—assisted by silent retreats, meditation on the life of Christ, and spiritual mentorship.

His original document organizing the society addressed “whoever desires to serve as a soldier of God beneath the banner of the Cross in our Society,” and it reminded the priests and brothers who joined that they were members of “a Society founded chiefly for . . . the defense and propagation of the faith and for the progress of souls in Christian life and doctrine.” Today over 16,000 Jesuits are involved in such ministries around the world.

THE ECLECTIC SOCIETY (18TH CENTURY)

Founded in 1783, the Eclectic Society was a discussion group of Anglican friends that lived up to its name (which means “diverse”). It included John Newton (1725–1807), former captain of slave ships turned abolitionist as well as author of the hymn “Amazing Grace”; John Venn (1759–1813), a priest and member of the Clapham Sect (see “Saints against slavery,” p. 33); Richard Cecil (1748–1810), another well-known priest; and Thomas Scott (1747–1821), preacher and author of the best-selling *Commentary on the Whole Bible* (1788).

The group met every other week in a pub; after tea and prayer, the men would take three hours to discuss



PROMOTING THE GOSPEL John Newton (*far left*) and his friends were influential in creating the Church Missionary Society.

PRAYING HAY This monument marks where yet *another* group of friends created a mission society—under a haystack.

a topic decided at the previous meeting. From pastoral care to biblical exposition to questions of how Paul would have preached in the London of their day, the Eclectic Group's discussions changed the way they ministered in their communities.

As these influential and devout men met throughout the years, the topic of international missions regularly cropped

up. In 1799 the group posed this discussion question: “What methods can we use more effectually to promote the knowledge of the Gospel among the Heathen?” In response they created the Church Missionary Society for Africa and the East on April 12, 1799. The name later changed to the Church Mission Society (CMS).

CMS sent its first missionaries to West Africa in 1804, and it continues to exist today as a mission-sending organization out of Oxford, England, with missionaries serving across Africa, Asia, South America, the Middle East, and Europe. Their innovative answer to their own question—*How can we spread the gospel to the world?*—resulted in the message of Christ reaching 40 countries by some 200 years later.

THE HAYSTACK REVIVAL (19TH CENTURY)

The modern American mission movement did not start in a church or a seminary, and it did not begin among pastors or even college graduates. Instead the movement started in a rural field where a few young, devout friends joined to pray for the spiritual needs of Asia.

In August 1806 five Williams College students—Samuel Mills, James Richards, Francis LeBaron Robbins, Harvey Loomis, and Byram Green—met in Williamstown, Massachusetts, to pray and discuss how to reach Asia for Christ. Up to this point, Americans had only sent missionaries domestically to the western frontier and to work among Native Americans. As the friends discussed Christian missions, a thunderstorm struck, and they rushed to seek shelter under a haystack. A later author wrote:

The brevity of the shower, the strangeness of the place of refuge, and the peculiarity of their topic of prayer and conference all took hold of their imaginations and their memories.

CALVARY LOVE Women of the Starry Cluster (at right) and Carmichael (below) care for orphaned children.

By 1808 this haystack prayer group and other Williams students had begun a mission organization called The Brethren. Together they formed the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) in 1810. By 1812 the ABCFM sent its first missionaries to India; Adoniram Judson (1788–1850) and Ann Judson (1789–1826) were among the missionaries in the inaugural group (see CH #90).

In the first 50 years of its history, the ABCFM sent out 1,250 missionaries who translated the Bible into local languages, built educational systems, and even advised foreign governments. Although it no longer exists by the same name, it merged its operations with other extant mission organizations in the twentieth and also influenced other evangelistic groups such as InterVarsity Christian Fellowship. It is a humbling reminder that a worldwide movement could grow out of the spiritual passion of five young friends taking cover from a thunderstorm.

AMY CARMICHAEL AND THE STARRY CLUSTER (20TH CENTURY)

After years of serving in Ireland, Belfast, and England, 28-year-old Amy Carmichael (1867–1951) arrived in India to serve as a missionary in 1895. Carmichael lived with the Walkers, a missionary family; she soon adopted indigenous dress and quickly went to work beside the Walkers' daughter and a group of Christian Indian women.


These women—called the Starry Cluster—traveled throughout the villages in the southern tip of India to minister to those in need. They held Daniel 12:3 closely and took their name from it: "Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever." Many were high caste and abandoned their caste to be baptized and join this group of Christian friends. We know some only by the English names Amy gave them in her letters, such as Jewel of Victory (her first convert), Blessing, and Pearl. Her closest friend became Ponnammal, a young high-caste Indian widow.

In their travels during 1901, Carmichael met Preena, a seven-year-old Hindu temple prostitute who had repeatedly run away from her captors. Disgusted and moved by Preena's description of her abuse, Carmichael and the Starry Cluster created a home in the village of Dohnavur to house young orphans, some of whom had been subjected to the evils of temple prostitution. Five years after Carmichael first rescued Preena, they were caring for 15 babies, and the Dohnavur "family" included 70 people in total.



Carmichael and the Starry Cluster dedicated their lives to these abandoned Indian children, all while refusing to ask for money (she insisted on only praying for their resources; see CH #128). It was hard, often thankless work, and they faced many trials, including great pressure from temple priests. But Carmichael and the Starry Cluster were dedicated to their children, their mission, and their Lord. Due to their perseverance and faith, the Dohnavur Fellowship continues its work with orphans in India to this day.

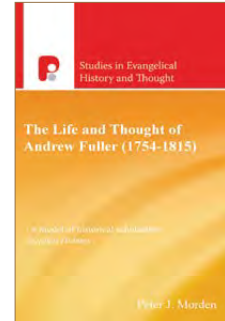
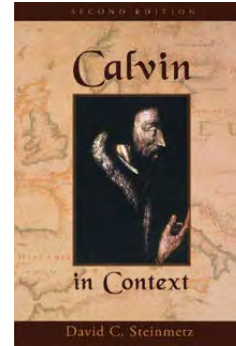
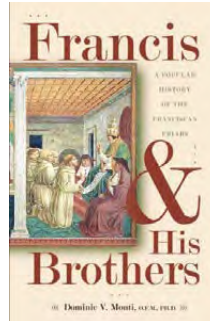
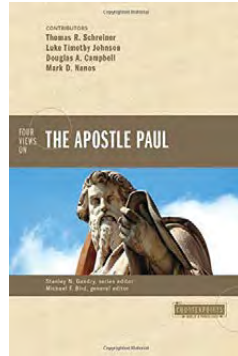
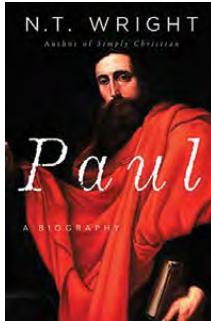
In her book *If*, Carmichael wrote:

If by doing some work which the undiscerning consider "not spiritual work" I can best help others, and I inwardly rebel, thinking it is the spiritual for which I crave, when in truth it is the interesting and exciting, then I know nothing of Calvary love. 

Jennifer A. Boardman is a freelance writer and editor. She holds a master of theological studies from Bethel Seminary with a concentration in Christian history.

Recommended resources

WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE STORIES FEATURED IN THIS ISSUE? CHECK OUT THESE RECOMMENDATIONS FROM OUR EDITORS AND FROM THIS ISSUE'S AUTHORS.

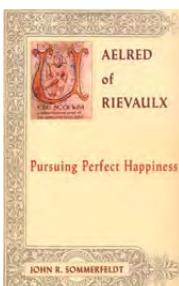


BOOKS

There are countless books on **Paul**; some that will help introduce you to his life and context are F. F. Bruce, *Apostle of the Heart Set Free* (1977); Everett Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity* (1993); Wayne Meeks, *The First Urban Christians* (2nd ed., 2003); Helmut Koester, *Paul and His World* (2007); Neil Elliott and Mark Reasoner, *Documents and Images for the Study of Paul* (2010); Thomas Schreiner, Luke Timothy Johnson, Douglas Campbell, and Mark Nanos, *Four Views on the Apostle Paul* (2012); Ryan Lokkesmoe, *Paul and His Team* (2017); and N. T. Wright, *Paul* (2018) and the *Paul for Everyone* series.

Learn more about the **Cappadocians** with Carolinne White, *Christian Friendship in the Fourth Century* (1992); Philip Rousseau, *Basil of Caesarea* (1994); Anthony Meredith, *Gregory of Nyssa* (1999); Raymond Van Dam, *Families and Friends in Late Roman Cappadocia* (2003); and Brian Daley, *Gregory of Nazianzus* (2009). For **Augustine**, begin with Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo* (2000) and Henry Chadwick, *Augustine of Hippo* (2009).

Quite a bit has been written on Celtic Christianity and the **anamchara** tradition as well—not all of it well rooted in history. You might start with Oliver Davies, *Celtic Spirituality* (2000) and Tracy Balzer, *Thin Places* (2007). Discover more on **Aelred of Rievaulx** in John Sommerfeldt, *Pursuing Perfect Happiness* (2005) and in the scholarly edition of *On Friendship* edited by Marsha Dutton (2010).



For the **Franciscans** start with Cajetan Esser, *The Origins of the*

Franciscan Order (1970); J. R. H. Moorman, *A History of the Franciscan Order* (1988); and Dominic Monti, *Francis and His Brothers* (2009). For the **Jesuits** look at William Bangert, *A History of the Society of Jesus* (1986) and John O'Malley, *The First Jesuits* (1993) and *The Jesuits* (2014).

Books on Calvin that focus on the influence of the **Circle of Meaux** and the “**Holy Triumvirate**” include Machiel van den Berg, *Friends of Calvin* (2009) and David Steinmetz, *Calvin in Context* (2010), as well as the books on Marguerite de Navarre recommended in issues #122 and #131.

More on **Andrew Fuller** and his circle can be found in Michael Haykin, *One Heart and One Soul* (1994) and *The Armies of the Lamb* (2001); and Peter Morden, *The Life and Thought of Andrew Fuller (1754–1815)* (2015).

There are also many introductions to **Methodism**; some that focus on the use of small groups by the Wesley brothers and the Worrall sisters include Charles Edward White, *The Beauty of Holiness* (1986); Elaine Heath, *Naked Faith* (2010); Kevin Watson, *The Class Meeting* (2013), *Pursuing Social Holiness* (2014), and (with Scott Kisker) *The Band Meeting* (2017); and D. Michael Henderson, *John Wesley's Class Meeting* (2016).

A great introduction to **Hannah More** and her circle is *Fierce Convictions* (2014) by Karen Swallow Prior; you may also want to look at *Hannah More* (2004) by Anne Stott.



The only book-length studies of the **Haystack prayer meeting** date from the early twentieth century: *The Haystack Prayer Meeting* (1906) by the Haystack Centennial Committee and *The One Hundredth Anniversary of the Haystack Prayer Meeting* (1907) by the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions.

For more about the **St. Andrews Seven**, check out Stuart Piggin and John Roxborough, *The St. Andrews Seven* (1985); for more on the **Cambridge Seven** read John Pollock, *The Cambridge Seven* (1955) and Alwyn Austin, *China's Millions* (2007). There are many books about **Amy Carmichael** and her friends: you might start with Elisabeth Elliot, *A Chance to Die* (2005) and Iain Murray, *Amy Carmichael* (2015), as well as Carmichael's own *Gold Cord* (1932).

Books about the **Inklings** also abound, but those focusing on their fellowship as writers in community include Humphrey Carpenter, *The Inklings* (1978); Diana Pavlac Glyer, *The Company They Keep* (2007) and *Bandersnatch* (2016); and Carol and Philip Zaleski, *The Fellowship* (2015).

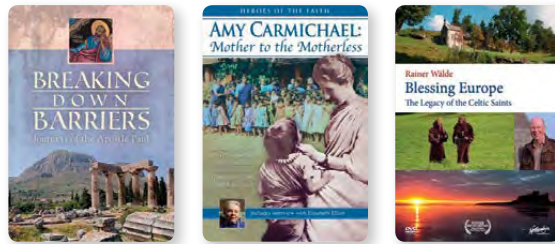
Finally read a little more from famous **Christian spouses** in *The Christian Lover* (2019) by Michael Haykin.



CHRISTIAN HISTORY ISSUES

Read these past issues of *Christian History* online; some are still available for purchase:

- 12: [John Calvin](#)
- 36: [William Carey](#)
- 47: [Paul and His Times](#)
- 53: [William Wilberforce](#)
- 54: [Eastern Orthodoxy](#)
- 60: [How the Irish Were Saved](#)
- 67: [Augustine](#)
- 69: [The Wesleys](#)
- 80: [The First Bible Teachers](#)
- 82: [Phoebe Palmer](#)
- 93: [Benedict and Monasticism](#)
- 113: [Seven Literary Sages](#)
- 117: [Quakers](#)
- 120: [Calvin, Councils, and Confessions](#)
- 122: [The Catholic Reformation](#)
- 128: [Müller and the Brethren](#)



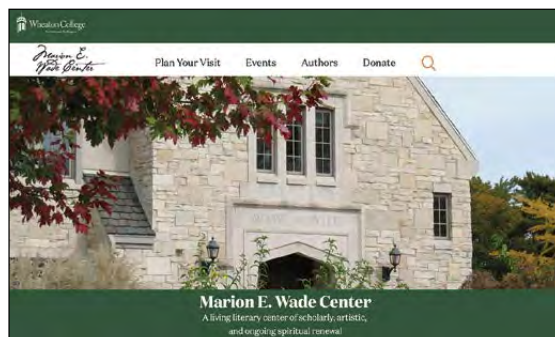
VIDEOS FROM VISION VIDEO

Videos on people and movements featured in this issue include *Amy Carmichael, Mother to the Motherless*; *Apostle Paul and the Earliest Churches*; *Blessing Europe: Legacy of the Celtic Saints*; *Breaking Down Barriers*; *Calvin, Zwingli, and Br. Klaus*; *Faithful Witness: William Carey*; *The Fantasy Makers*; *A Heart Set Free: Charles Wesley*; *The History of Orthodox Christianity*; *Ignatius of Loyola*; *I, Paul*; *John Wesley: The Man and His Mission*; *J. R. R. Tolkien*; *The Life and Faith of C. S. Lewis*; *Paul the Apostle*; *The Story of Amy Carmichael and the Dohnavur Fellowship*; *This Changed Everything*; *William Wilberforce*; and *Zwingli and Calvin*.

WEBSITES

Many writings of those featured in this issue who wrote prior to 1900 are available to read online or download for free at sites such as the [Christian Classics Ethereal Library](#), the [Post-Reformation Digital Library](#), [Project Gutenberg](#), and the [Medieval Sourcebook](#) and [Modern History Sourcebook](#).

Find more about Augustine at [Augustine: Texts and Translations](#); the Franciscans at the [Order of Friars Minor](#); the Jesuits at [Jesuits.org](#); the Circle of Meaux and Calvin at the [Calvin Studies Society](#); the history of Methodism at the [General Commission on Archives and History of the UMC](#); More, Wilberforce, and their friends at the [Abolition Project](#); Fuller at the [Andrew Fuller Center](#); Carey and the Baptist Missionary Society at the [Center for Study of the Life and Work of William Carey](#) and [BMS World Mission](#); the history of modern missions in general at the [Boston University Missiology Collection](#); and the Inklings at the [Wade Center](#) (Wheaton College) and the [Center for the Study of C. S. Lewis and Friends](#) (Taylor University). ☒



Are Women Human (yet)?

GENDER AND THE INKLINGS

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TAYLOR UNIVERSITY, JUNE 4-7, 2020

PLENARY SPEAKERS

MONIKA HILDER, author of *Surprised by the Feminine: A Rereading of C. S. Lewis and Gender*.

JANE CHANCE, author of *Tolkien, Self and Other* and *Tolkien's Art: A Mythology for England*.

KIRSTIN JEFFREY JOHNSON, co-editor of *Informing the Inklings: George MacDonald and the Victorian Roots of Modern Fantasy*.

DON KING, author of *Yet One More Spring: A Critical Study of Joy Davidman*.

DIANA GLYER, author of *The Company They Keep* and *Bandersnatch*.

JASON LEPOJÄRVI, author of *God is Love, But Love is Not God: C. S. Lewis's Theology of Love*.

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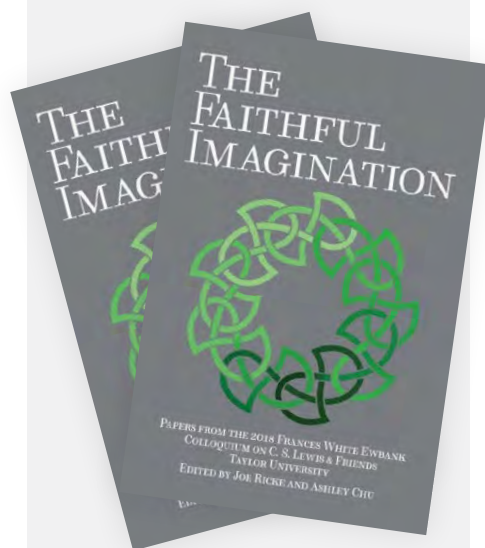
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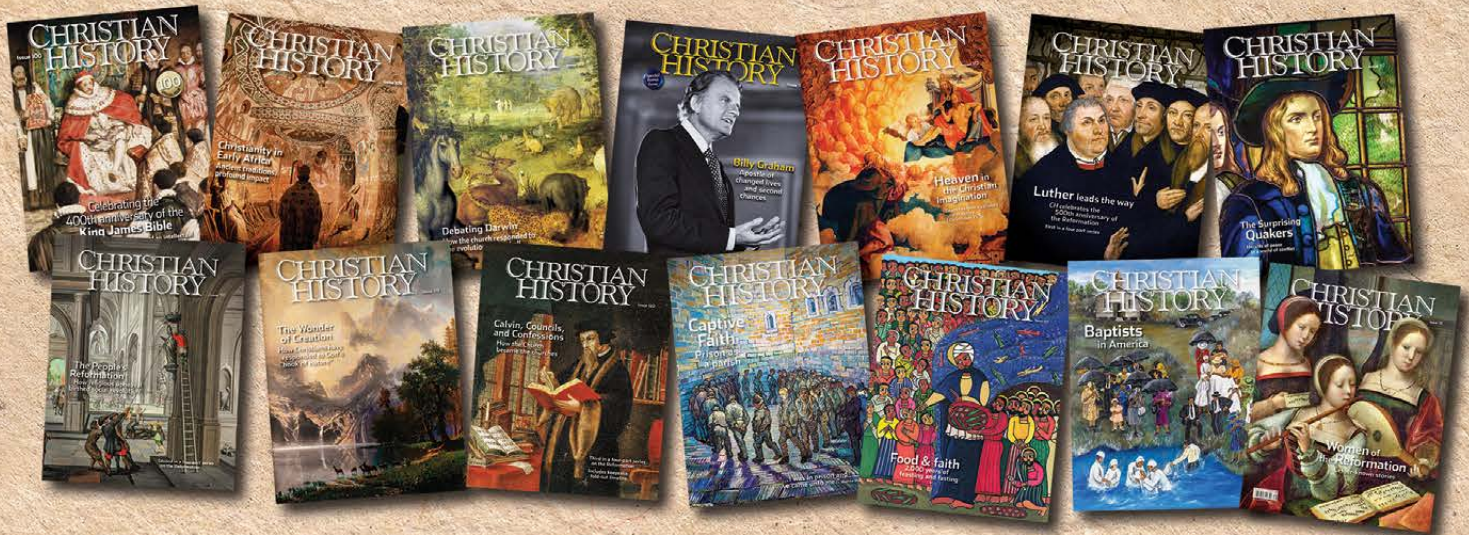
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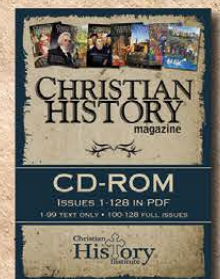
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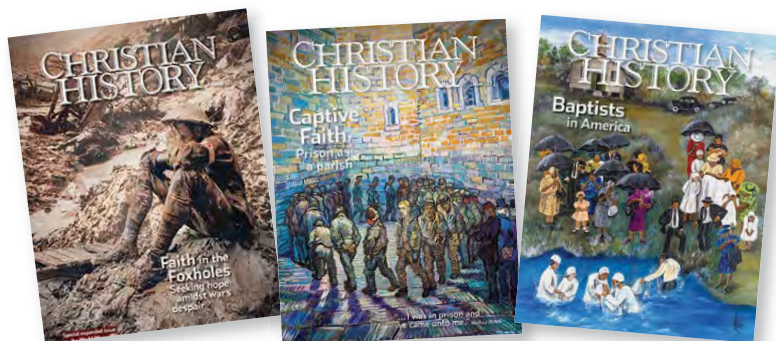
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