

The History of Christianity

(taken from Eerdmans' Handbook to the History of Christianity)

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Introduction: The Christian Centuries, Part 9

(excerpts from Robert D. Linder's introduction)

Reform. Martin Luther (1483-1546) was born into a world ripe for reform. But the church was too late in taking Luther seriously. The Lutheran cause became the Protestant Reformation after 1517.

Yet, as so often happens, division and differences among Christians led to a further expansion of Christianity. Renewal and reform came to 16th century Western Christianity, but only at the cost of the break-up of the cultural and religious unity of western Europe. The Protestant Reformation produced the religious pluralism now so characteristic of Western Christianity; this pluralism in turn contributed much to a new period of growth, as well as providing the linch-pin of modern religious freedom and toleration.

Luther and John Calvin (1509-64) provided the necessary leadership for first- and second- generation Protestantism respectively. Luther became not only the voice and the catalyst for the Protestant Reformation but also the founder of the worldwide communion of Lutheran churches. Calvin's work gave rise not only to the Presbyterian and Reformed churches, for example in Scotland and the Netherlands, but also to the puritan movements in England and America, as well as various and assorted theological clusters in many other Christian groups. In a very real sense, particularly during Calvin's lifetime, Calvin's Geneva headquarters became 'the Protestant Rome.'

The seminal theological mind of John Calvin provided much of the Protestant movement with one of the most coherent and compelling statements of Christian theology ever formulated.

His *Institutes of the Christian Religion* stands as a towering landmark in Christian thought.

After its appearance people could disagree with it, but they could not ignore it. It provided personal assurance and theological stability for several generations of Calvinists and semi-Calvinists who set out to preach the gospel of Christ to all the world, so that the chosen, or elect, could respond to the offer of God's grace.



Psalms 29 & 30

August 24, 2025

Hartford Bible Church, Pastor Dan Hummel

Psalm 29:

“Peace in the Storm”

1. Ascribe (1-2)

2. The Voice (3-9)

3. King (10)

4. Strength (11)

5. Peace (11)

Psalm 30:

“Mourning into Dancing”

1. Anger vs. favor

2. Mourning into dancing