

I. JOHN CALVIN

- A. Born at Noyon in Picardy, France, 10 July, 1509
- B. Died at Geneva, 27 May, 1564
- C. His youth
 - 1. Calvin was born the son of a notary and secretary to the chapter of Noyon Cathedral
 - 2. His Catholic mother died when he was a small child
 - 3. Two of his three older brother's died in youth; his other brother died in 1537
- D. His education
 - 1. Calvin was very well educated both in his youth and later in his life
 - 2. He attended the University of Paris in 1523 at the age of 14 years
 - 3. He received his master of arts degree in theology in 1528
 - 4. Afterwards, he earned his doctorate in law at Orleans
 - a. His father wanted him to become a lawyer
 - b. After his father's death he completed his legal training but never undertook the profession (His father died in 1531 when Calvin was about 22)
- E. His transition
 - 1. Between 1531 and 1534 Calvin experienced what he called a "sudden conversion" in his life.
 - 2. This is not a salvation conversion, but rather a determination to study theology rather than law.
 - 3. Calvin resigned his benefices May 4, 1534
 - 4. At this time he was involved with Robert Olivier (Olivetian) in the French Bible translation
- F. While in Paris he helped Nicolas Cop draft a speech sympathetic to Reform, and became a fugitive.¹
- G. In 1534 he left France and settled in Basel where he wrote *Institutes of the Christian Religion*
- H. In 1536 Settled in the city-state of Geneva where he and William Farel became civic powers as well as church powers until vanquished by rivals.
- I. In 1540 he married widow Idelette de Bure. His only child died as an infant
- J. He returned to Geneva in 1541 where he remained until his death
- K. In 1549 his wife died
- L. In his later life, Calvin's health was very poor.
- M. By his request buried in an unmarked grave.
- N. Notable aspects of Calvin's life
 - 1. Calvin never served as a Catholic priest, but his doctrinal statements reflect his



John Calvin (1509-1564)

Web Sites of Interest
www.pcusa.org
www.ccel.org/c/calvin
/

Thus it came to pass, that I was withdrawn from the study of philosophy, and was put to the study of law. To this pursuit I endeavored faithfully to apply myself in obedience to the will of my father; but God, by the secret guidance of his providence, at length gave a different direction to my course. And first, since I was too obstinately devoted to the superstitions of Popery to be easily extricated from so profound an abyss of mire, God by a **sudden conversion** subdued and brought my mind to a teachable frame, which was more hardened in such matters than might have been expected from one at my early period of life Having thus received some taste and knowledge of true godliness I was immediately inflamed with so intense a desire to make progress therein, that although I did not altogether leave off other studies, I yet pursued them with less ardor. (from *Commentary on Psalms, Introductory Notice*)

¹ <http://www.heroesofhistory.com/page69.html>

sentiments in favor of Catholic doctrine

2. Calvin was a prolific writer. The Catholic Encyclopedia says that he and Augustine were the two most prolific theological writers in history
3. Calvin seems to have been quite intelligent, well liked by his peers, a perfectionist who could be very critical of others, and a man who rejected compromise of any type
4. It is notable that Calvin was responsible for the execution (burning at the stake) of a so-called apostate named Michael Servetus (in 1553)
 - a. Servetus had published a pamphlet which rejected the trinity
 - b. Calvin is said to have claimed that if Servetus came to Geneva, Calvin would do what he could to prevent his getting away alive.
 - c. Some say that Calvin asked for death by the sword but a council overruled him

II. JOHN KNOX

- A. Born 1515 near Haddington, Scotland
- B. Died in Edinburgh Nov 24, 1572
- C. Theodore Beza was a friend and contemporary of Knox.
- D. Knox received a liberal education and was taught by the famous Dr. John Major.
 1. Major espoused that “civil authority was derived from the popular will.”
 2. This is in stark contrast with Romans 13
 3. Knox made this position by Dr. Major one of his most “emphatic” teachings
- E. John Knox became a priest without a university degree
- F. In 1543 he referred to himself as “a minister of the sacred altar”
- G. Knox probably became associated with the Reformation in 1545 at the age of 30
 1. Knox became associated with Protestant George Wishart at about this time
 2. Wishart was arrested and Knox offered to go with him but was refused
 3. On May 29, 1546 a band entered St. Andrews’ Castle and defied authorities for 15 months.
 4. Knox joined the garrison in 1547 and spoke in favor of the Reformation
 5. He was taken prisoner and remained so for 19 months at the hands of the French
- H. Knox returned to England and became a priest at Berwick
 1. Here he insisted that the congregation take the Lord’s supper while seated, rather than standing
 2. He said that standing was idol worship
- I. When Queen Mary ascended the throne in July 1553, Knox fled to Europe and ultimately arrived in Geneva in 1554. Here he met John Calvin.
- J. Knox spent 1555-56 in Scotland spreading Reformation teachings
- K. He was summoned by the Catholic Church but the summons was withdrawn because of Knox’s popularity and connections. When Knox left Scotland again, he was burned in effigy by the bishops.
- L. Knox wrote against Mary Tudor of England and Mary Queen of Scots.
- M. Knox returned to Scotland in 1559 resulting in a protestant uprising and civil war. Ultimately, the parliament of Scotland voted the reformed faith to be the state religion
- N. Mary Queen of Scots and Knox battled over this issue as Mary intended to return the country to Catholic control. Knox preached continually and Mary was forced to abdicate in 1567 and fled to England the following year. Knox had made and kept Scotland protestant.



Statue of John Knox

III. ULRICH ZWINGLI²

- A. Born in Wildhaus in Switzerland, 1 January, 1484; died 11 October, 1531 at the age of 47
- B. He was the third of eight sons of a well to do bailiff
- C. Many of his family members were Catholic clergy. His father decided early that he would have a career in the church
- D. He entered the University of Vienna in 1500
- E. In 1506 he completed his studies and received the degree of Master of Theology. Shortly before his graduation the parish of Glarus had selected him as its pastor, although he had not yet been ordained priest.
- F. Zwingli had primarily studied the humanities, but turned to Bible study in 1506. He considered himself an “Erasmian”
- G. In 1516 he became a preacher in the convent of Einsiedeln and began to espouse Reformed doctrine
- H. For a while, around 1518, he came to agree with Luther and his cause
- I. Zwingli, located in Zurich, obtained government endorsement for the instruction that the scriptures must be taught “without human additions.” In 1522 he began to abolish Roman Catholic ceremonies and wrote a treatise against fasting.
- J. Zwingli rejected both consubstantiation and transubstantiation.
- K. Opposition
 - 1. At first the Anabaptists agreed with Zwingli but then they separated over the issue of church government
 - 2. Lutherans separated with him over the Lord’s Supper (they held to transubstantiation)
 - 3. The Roman church opposed him because of his support of the reformation
- L. The Old Cantons attacked Zurich in the Fall of 1531 and Zwingli went to battle as a chaplain. He was struck down in the fighting at Kappel.



Ulrich Zwingli

IV. THEODORE BEZA

- A. Beza was born in Burgandy, France and died in 1605
- B. His father was well connected with relatives in the French Parliament (see www.fact-index.com/t/th/theodore_beza.html)
- C. Beza was educated at Orleans (where Calvin studied law)
- D. Sometime shortly before 1548 it is said he received Christ as Saviour
- E. In 1548 he joined John Calvin at Geneva and soon became his intimate friend and chief aid³.
- F. From 1549 to 1558, Beza was professor of Greek at Lausanne, where he wrote *De haereticis a civili magistratu puniendis* (1554), a defense of the conduct of Calvin and the Genevan magistrates in the notorious trial and burning of Servetus.
- G. In 1558 he became professor of Greek at Geneva, and in 1564 he succeeded Calvin in the chair of theology at Geneva.
- H. Beza came to be regarded as the chief advocate of all reformed congregations in France
- I. When Calvin died in 1564, Beza became his successor
- J. In his last years he confined his affairs to his home. His wife died childless in 1588



Theodore Beza

² <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/15772a.htm>

³ <http://www.encyclopedia.com/html/B/Beza-The.asp>

- K. He died in Geneva and was buried in the monastery of St. Pierre

V. PHILIP MELANCHTHON

- A. Born in Bretten on Feb 16, 1497; Died 1560
B. His father died in 1508 when he was 11
C. He attended Greek and Latin school then entered the university in Heidelberg. At age 14 he earned the Bachelor of Arts and at 16 the Master of Arts in Tübingen
D. He was a professor of Greek at Wittenberg in 1518
E. He became a close follower of Luther at that time. When Luther departed he was primarily responsible for the Reformation movement
F. He never went further than to receive a Bachelor of Theology. He devoted himself to Philology and History.
G. He was largely responsible for the Augsburg Confession which defines Lutheran doctrine
H. After Luther's death, his weakness and lack of theological training made it impossible for him to hold the title of Luther's successor. He suffered much at the "hands of theologians"



Philip Melancthon