

Reading Christian Biographies
A Selected Bibliography, by Steven J. Cole
Revised, April, 2004

The following books on church history and biographies of great Christians have been helpful to me. I have tried to list the individual biographies in rough chronological order under each section.

REFERENCE WORKS:

1. *Eerdmans Handbook to the History of Christianity* [Eerdmans], ed. by Tim Dowley. An excellent all-round reference work, with many short articles on key people and movements.
2. *The New International Dictionary of the Christian Church* [Zondervan], ed. by J. D. Douglas. Short biographical articles on thousands of people and movements in church history.
3. *Dictionary of Christianity in America* [IVP], ed. by Daniel Reid, Robert Linder, Bruce Shelley, & Harry Stout. Short articles on key people and movements in American church history.
4. *Great Leaders of the Christian Church* [Moody Press], ed. by John Woodbridge. Short biographies of the leaders of Christianity from Peter to Francis Schaeffer.

CHURCH HISTORY:

1. *Christian History Magazine*, published by *Christianity Today*. Each issue treats a different person or era in church history. Well done, informative, & readable.
2. *Christianity Through the Centuries* [Zondervan], by Earle Cairns. Concise (500 pages) readable church history.
3. *Worldly Saints* [Zondervan], by Leland Ryken. The Puritans as they really were. First rate! Don't miss it!
4. *Light From Old Times* [Evangelical Press], by J. C. Ryle. A history of some of the 17th century martyrs under Bloody Mary. It will impress you with their commitment to the gospel.
5. *Christian Leaders of the 18th Century* [Banner of Truth], by J. C. Ryle. Brief biographies of George Whitefield, the Wesleys, and other lesser known but greatly used servants of God.
6. *By His Grace and For His Glory* [Baker], by Thomas Nettles. A historical, theological, and practical study of the doctrines of grace in Baptist history. Shows how the early Baptists were solidly Calvinistic.
7. *Revival & Revivalism* [Banner of Truth], by Iain Murray. Subtitled, "The Making & Marring of American Evangelicalism, 1750-1858." I've read it twice. Gives much insight into the evangelical mess we're in today and how it came about.
8. *Evangelicalism Divided* [Banner of Truth], by Iain Murray. Subtitled, "A Record of Crucial Change, 1950-2000." He traces the theological compromise of men like Billy Graham in American evangelicalism.

GREAT PREACHERS & CHRISTIAN LEADERS:

1. *Walking With the Giants* [Baker], by Warren Wiersbe. Outstanding! Numerous short biographies of great preachers you should know. Part 2 deals with "Classic books on the ministry." Every pastor and church leader should read this and the next one.
2. *Listening to the Giants* [Baker], by Warren Wiersbe. Similar to the book above, plus a sample sermon from each preacher. The chapter, "A Basic Library," is worth the price of the book.
3. *The Company of the Preachers* [Kregel], by David Larsen. A lengthy history of preaching, consisting of short biographies of preachers from the Old Testament to the modern era. Flawed by the author's aversion to Reformed truth and at times sounding like a doctoral thesis, but a useful survey with many interesting details of some of the characters God has used to preach His Word.
4. *The Man Who Shook the World* (new title, *The Apostle*), by John Pollock. A readable biography of Paul.
5. *Paul: Apostle of the Heart Set Free* [Eerdmans], by F. F. Bruce. A more scholarly treatment of Paul.
6. *The Legacy of Sovereign Joy* [Crossway Books], by John Piper. Subtitled "God's Triumphant Grace in the Lives of Augustine, Luther, & Calvin." Excellent reading!

7. *The Life of William Farel* [Bible Truth Publishers], by Frances Bevan. Farel was Calvin's predecessor and mentor at Geneva, a bold preacher of the gospel.
8. *Here I Stand, a Life of Martin Luther* [Abingdon Press], by Roland Bainton. Hard to follow the details at points, but a classic biography of the great reformer.
9. *Martin Luther: A Guided Tour of His Life and Thought* [P & R Publishing], by Stephen Nichols. A recent, helpful introduction to Luther.
10. *Martin: God's Court Jester* [Fortress Press], by Eric Gritsch. Many interesting facts as he tells Luther's story and theology.
11. *This Was John Calvin* [Baker], by Thea Van Halsema. A basic introductory biography of the great reformer.
12. *John Calvin* [Lion Publishing], by T. H. L. Parker. The best treatment of Calvin by a leading 20th century Calvin scholar. His *Calvin's Preaching* [Westminster/John Knox Press] is an excellent study of Calvin's emphasis on the Word. Highly recommended!
13. *The Life of John Calvin* [Evangelical Press], by Theodore Beza. Beza was Calvin's successor at Geneva, so this is a firsthand look at Calvin.
14. *God's Outlaw, William Tyndale* [Evangelical Press], by Brian Edwards. The story of William Tyndale, who was persecuted for putting the Bible into English.
15. *The Life of John Knox* [Free Presbyterian Publishers], by Thomas M'Crie. The life of the bold Scottish reformer.
16. *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners* (in volume 1 of *The Works of John Bunyan*) [Baker], by John Bunyan. The autobiography of the author of *Pilgrim's Progress*.
17. *John Bunyan* [Banner of Truth], by Frank Mott. A short biography.
18. *The Hidden Smile of God* [Crossway], by John Piper. Subtitled, "The Fruit of Affliction in the Lives of John Bunyan, William Cowper, and David Brainerd. Really good!
19. *Richard Baxter* [Christian Focus], by Richard Baxter. Autobiography of the influential Puritan pastor.
20. *John Owen, Prince of the Puritans* [Christian Focus], by Andrew Thompson. Biography of the most scholarly Puritan theologian.
21. *John Owen: The Man and His Thought* [Evangelical Press/ P & R Publishing], by Sinclair Ferguson & others. Essays on various aspects of Owen's life and theology.
22. *Out of the Depths* [Moody Press], by John Newton. The fascinating autobiography of the slave trader turned pastor, author of the beloved hymn, "Amazing Grace."
23. *The Roots of Endurance* [Crossway], by John Piper. Subtitled, "Invincible Perseverance in the Lives of John Newton, Charles Simeon, and William Wilberforce." Really good!
24. *The Journal of John Wesley* [Moody Press], ed. by Percy Parker. Wesley was an interesting bundle of contradictions. John Pollock also has a biography of Wesley that I've read, but it may be out of print.
25. *Wesley and Men Who Followed Him* [Banner of Truth], by Iain Murray. Murray is more lenient on Wesley than I would be. His life shows that God can use some imperfect vessels!
26. *George Whitefield* [Crossway Books], by Arnold Dallimore (2 vol.). (A one-volume edition by Dallimore is published by Good News Publishing, although I haven't read it.) Whitefield was a mighty Calvinistic evangelist, friend of the Wesleys and Edwards.
27. *George Whitefield* [Lion Publishing], by John Pollock. Whitefield was an interesting man, zealous for souls, and greatly used by God.
28. *The Life and Times of Howell Harris* [Need of the Times Publishers], by Edward Morgan. An 1852 biography of a remarkable Welsh revivalist preacher who lived 1714-1773. Harris knew Whitefield and the Wesleys.
29. *Howell Harris and the Dawn of Revival* [Evangelical Press of Wales], by Richard Bennett. A detailed account, based on Harris' diaries, of the first three years of his spiritual pilgrimage.
30. *Jonathan Edwards, a New Biography* [Banner of Truth], by Iain Murray. An excellent treatment of the great revivalist preacher and theologian, called the greatest mind ever in America.
31. *Jonathan Edwards, a Guided Tour of his Life and Thought* [P & R Publishing], by Stephen Nichols. A recent, helpful introduction to Edwards and his theology.

32. *Marriage to a Difficult Man: The Uncommon Union of Jonathan and Sarah Edwards* [Audubon Press], by Elisabeth Dodds. Their story from his wife's perspective. He was difficult because he was a genius, not because he was hard to get along with. They had a wonderful marriage. Recently back in print!
33. *Cotton Mather* [Barnes & Noble], by Barrett Wendell. An American Colonial Puritan preacher. You will be amazed at his education and intellectual output.
34. *Asahel Nettleton: Life and Labors* [Banner of Truth], by A. A. Bonar. Nettleton was a Calvinistic evangelist, opposed to Finney, who saw upwards of 30,000 conversions under his preaching.
35. *Robert Murray McCheyne* [Zondervan], by A. A. Bonar. Devotional Scottish preacher who died at 29, but has had lasting impact on many.
36. *C. H. Spurgeon* [Moody Press], by Arnold Dallimore. The best shorter biography of this godly pulpit giant.
37. *C. H. Spurgeon Autobiography* [Banner of Truth], 2 vol. Long, but well worth reading. A remarkable man!
38. *Spurgeon, Heir of the Puritans* [Eerdmans], by Ernest Bacon. Short, but good treatment.
39. *A Marvelous Ministry* [Soli Deo Gloria], by Tim Curnow & others. Subtitled, "How the All-round Ministry of Charles Haddon Spurgeon Speaks to us Today." I learned several new and interesting facts.
40. *The Forgotten Spurgeon* [Banner of Truth], by Iain Murray. Deals with the three major controversies of Spurgeon's life. Read after you've read Dallimore.
41. *Spurgeon & Hyper-Calvinism* [Banner of Truth], by Iain Murray. How Spurgeon battled those who took Calvinism too far. In some of his views, I think that Spurgeon was inconsistent with all of Scripture.
42. *Spurgeon & Son* [Kregel], by Craig Skinner. A biography of Spurgeon's son, Thomas, a preacher who later succeeded his famous father at the Metropolitan Tabernacle.
43. *A Passion for Souls: the Life of D. L. Moody* [Moody Press], by Lyle Dorsett. The author (as well as Moody) is critical of the doctrines of grace, but it is still an interesting read on a man God used to reach thousands.
44. *Moody* [Evangelical Press], by John Pollock. May be out of print (I saw 2 on Amazon.com). I like Pollock as a biographer.
45. *John Charles Ryle: Evangelical Bishop* [Reiner Publications], by Peter Toon. Godly 19th century Anglican bishop, known for his *Expository Thoughts on the Gospels* and other devotional writings.
46. *George Muller of Bristol* [Revell], by A. T. Pierson. Written in early 20th century, biography of the godly man of prayer who founded orphanages in England. This book changed my life when I first read it in 1970.
47. *George Muller: Delighted in God* [Harold Shaw], by Roger Steer. Best recent biography of Muller. Great!
48. *George Muller Autobiography* [Whitaker House]. Now back in print.
49. *Answers to Prayer* [Moody Press], by George Muller. Excerpts from his diary, showing dramatic answers to prayer.
50. *A Man of the Word* [Baker], by Jill Morgan. The life of her father, G. Campbell Morgan, well known preacher and author.
51. *Ordained of the Lord* [Loizeaux Brothers], by E. Schuyler English. The life of H. A. Ironside, another great Bible expositor.
52. *J. Gresham Machen* [Eerdmans], by Ned Stonehouse. Machen stood firm against liberalism in the Presbyterian Church. He founded Westminster Seminary when Princeton went liberal.
53. *D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones* [Banner of Truth], by Iain Murray (2 vol.). The first volume covers the first 40 years of the man who has been called the greatest preacher in the English language in the 20th century. Vol. 2 is 800 pages, but I was sad when it ended. You ought to know this great man of God!
54. *The Sacred Anointing* [Crossway], by Tony Sargent. A good treatment of Lloyd-Jones' preaching.
55. *Martyn Lloyd-Jones, a Family Portrait* [Baker], by Christopher Catherwood (Lloyd-Jones' grandson). A shorter treatment of his life if you don't have the gumption to tackle the 2-volume work.
56. *Martyn Lloyd-Jones: Chosen by God* [Crossway], ed. by Christopher Catherwood. Essays on Lloyd-Jones' life and ministry by men such as J. I. Packer, Carl Henry, John Stott, and others that knew him.
57. *Daws* [NavPress], by Betty Lee Skinner. The story of Dawson Trotman, founder of the Navigators.
58. *That Man Barnhouse* [Tyndale], by Margaret Barnhouse. The life of Donald Grey Barnhouse, an influential Presbyterian pastor, radio speaker, and author. He was quite a character!
59. *The Tapestry* [Word], by Edith Schaeffer. The interesting life of Francis and Edith Schaeffer, founders of L'Abri in Switzerland. He was a Christian philosopher and writer. She wrote this before his death from cancer in 1984.

60. *The Letters of Francis Schaeffer* [Crossway], ed. by Lane Dennis. Reading these letters gives you insight into the pastoral heart of this Christian thinker.
61. *What is a Family?* [Revell], by Edith Schaeffer. Not strictly a biography, but she weaves their family into this helpful book on the Christian family. Read after you've read *The Tapestry*.
62. *A Severe Mercy* [Harper & Row], by Sheldon Vanauken. Moving love story of a couple who met Christ through C. S. Lewis. You will need Kleenex nearby!
63. *Billy Graham* [McGraw Hill], by John Pollock. This is a 1966 biography of Graham. A more recent one is now available. Graham is an influential and interesting man, who has done much good and some bad.
64. *J. I. Packer* [Baker], by Alister McGrath. The life of the popular theologian, author of *Knowing God*.
65. *Joni* [Zondervan], by Joni Eareckson Tada. A powerful story of God's grace triumphing over tragedy.

MISSIONS BIOGRAPHIES/HISTORIES:

1. *From Jerusalem to Irian Jaya* [Zondervan], by Ruth Tucker. A history of missions, giving short biographies of many missionary heroes. This is a powerful, life-changing book. Read it!
2. *Guardians of the Great Commission* [Zondervan], by Ruth Tucker. A biographical history of women in missions. It is similar to the above, except that the author is grinding an axe for feminism, which I strongly disagree with. But the stories are still inspiring and informative.
3. *A Heart for Mission: Five Pioneer Thinkers* [Christian Focus], by Ron Davies. He covers the mission thinking of Jonathan Edwards, Cotton Mather, Richard Baxter, Jan Amos Comenius, & Count Zinzendorf.
4. *William Carey* [Zondervan], by Mary Drewery. The "Father of Modern Missions." Quite a story. His reluctant missionary wife went insane. He translated the Bible into over 35 languages!
5. *To the Golden Shore* [Little, Brown], by Courtney Anderson. The moving story of Adoniram Judson, pioneer missionary to Burma, who endured incredible trials and setbacks. Read it!
6. *The Life and Letters of Henry Martyn* [Banner of Truth], by John Sargent. Martyn went to Iran in the early 1800's, and died of tuberculosis in his early 30's.
7. *David Livingstone: the Truth Behind the Legend* [Christian Focus], by Rob Mackenzie. Livingstone had amazing perseverance in spite of overwhelming difficulties.
8. *David Livingstone: His Life and Letters* [Harper], by George Seaver. A thorough treatment, but the author is a theological liberal who did not understand the need for conversion.
9. *Hudson Taylor* [OMF], by Roger Steer. The most recent and readable treatment of the great pioneer missionary to China. Read it and be changed!
10. *Hudson Taylor & Maria* [Zondervan], by John Pollock. Honest treatment of Taylor's life up to Maria's death. Moving!
11. *J. Hudson Taylor: God's Man in China* [OMF], by Dr. and Mrs. Howard Taylor. An out of print earlier version is in two volumes. This is a sympathetic "eulogy" type biography written by his son and daughter-in-law. Very challenging.
12. *John Paton Autobiography* [Banner of Truth]. An amazing story of commitment and courage. He left Scotland to go to the New Hebrides Islands, where cannibals had killed and eaten missionaries. There is also a recent biography on Paton by Jim Cromarty, but I haven't read it yet.
13. *Anthony Norris Groves* [??], by G. H. Lang. Out of print, hard to find. Groves was George Muller's brother-in-law. He went overland to Baghdad in the 19th century.
14. *Borden of Yale* [Moody Press], by Mrs. Howard Taylor. Borden gave up his fortune to go to Cairo, where he got sick and died at 25.
15. *A Chance to Die: The Life and Legacy of Amy Carmichael* [Revell], by Elisabeth Elliot. A strong woman missionary and devotional writer who suffered greatly, but took in needy children and built a caring community in India.
16. *The Small Woman* [Dutton], by Alan Burgess. The story of Gladys Aylward, featured in the film "Inn of the Sixth Happiness," starring Ingrid Bergman. She went to China, lived by faith, and led a group of orphans on a long survival journey during the Japanese invasion. Quite a story!
17. *Fire on the Mountains* [SIM], by R. J. Davis. Story of an amazing revival in Ethiopia during WWII.

18. *Against the Tide, the Story of Watchman Nee* [Christian Literature Crusade], by Angus Kinnear. Nee was a powerful preacher and church planter, imprisoned by the Communists.
19. *Three of China's Mighty Men* [OMF], by Leslie Lyall. The story of David Yang, Watchman Nee, and Wang Ming-dao, three men of great faith in the face of persecution.
20. *Bakht Singh of India* [International Students], by Daniel Smith. Hard to find, and my copy is missing! Story of a powerful evangelist and man of God. I heard him speak once at Biola.
21. *The Flying Scotsman* [??], by Sally Magnuson. The story of Eric Liddell, of "Chariots of Fire" fame.
22. *A Boy's War* [??], by David Michaelson. Story of a missionary boy separated from his parents, interned in a Japanese POW camp in China, where Eric Liddell was also a prisoner.
23. *Gold Fears No Fire* [OMF], by Ralph Toliver. Not strictly a biography, but a novel based on a composite of true stories in China. Shows what the saints there are going through. Gripping!
24. *Foreign Devil in China* [WorldWide Publications], by John Pollock. The story of Dr. Nelson Bell, father-in-law of Billy Graham, missionary doctor to China.
25. *Mission to the Headhunters* [Christian Focus], by Frank & Marie Drown. Missionaries to the tribes in Ecuador. (The parents of Ruth Mortenson from our church worked with them.)
26. *Through Gates of Splendor* [Spire], by Elisabeth Elliot. The story of the five missionaries to the Aucas who were martyred, including Jim Elliot, the author's husband.
27. *Shadow of the Almighty* [Zondervan], by Elisabeth Elliot. The story of her husband Jim, martyred at 28. This story will challenge you spiritually.
28. *The Savage My Kinsman* [Harper], by Elisabeth Elliot. The story of how she and her young daughter lived among the tribe that murdered her husband.
29. *Uncle Cam* [Wycliffe], by James & Marti Hefley. The story of Cameron Townsend, founder of Wycliffe Bible Translators.
30. *Days of Glory, Seasons of Night* [Zondervan], by Marilee Dunker. The story of Bob Pierce, founder of World Vision, told by his daughter. An agonizing story of a man who badly wounded his family, but accomplished much for the cause of missions.
31. *Bruchko* [Creation House], by Bruce Olson. Story of a 19-year-old boy who went to South America and reached a murderous tribe. He is still living there, in his early 60's now. Gripping!
32. *Peace Child* [Revell], by Don Richardson. Story of how he and his young family reached a headhunting, cannibalistic tribe in Irian Jaya. (Also in video.) Amazing story!
33. *Lords of the Earth* [Revell], by Don Richardson. Another amazing story of missionary courage in reaching a savage tribe in Irian Jaya. This should be a movie! The turn of events at the end is one of the most amazing stories in missions history!
34. *And the Word Came With Power* [Multnomah], by Joanne Shetler with Patricia Purvis. How God used one woman to transform the Balangao people of the Philippines.
35. *Revolution in World Missions* [gfa books], by K. P. Yohanan. The author's testimony and appeal to support native missionaries in India.