



Issue 98: Christianity in China

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Chinese churches have been bursting with new life for decades despite numerous limitations. It's impossible to understand the dynamic growth—and unique challenges—of Chinese Christianity today without looking back at the events of the last century. And when we do, we find a remarkable story of endurance and innovation, courage and creativity, intense suffering and transformative action. The Chinese church has been like bamboo, that ubiquitous Chinese symbol of strength, flexibility, and perseverance—growing even in the midst of harsh conditions, bending but not breaking in the wind.

Feature Articles:

From Foreign Mission to Chinese Church

Missionaries in China were hampered by pressures from home, mistakes in leadership, and identification with the West, but they planted the seeds that would someday yield an astonishing harvest.

Daniel H. Bays

Also: A Gallery of Missionaries

The Billy Graham of China: John Sung

Everything for the Lord: Watchman Nee

Worshipping Under the Communist Eye

The birth of an "official" Chinese church helped Christianity thrive in public under political constraints.

Ryan Dunch

Also: An Evangelical Patriot and Critic: Marcus Cheng

Religious Freedom and Chinese Law

As for Me and My House

The house-church movement survived persecution and created a surge of Christian growth across China.

Tony Lambert

Also: No Compromise: Wang Mingdao

Caught Between Rome and Beijing

Chinese Catholics have endured devastating division in the past century.

Kim-Kwong Chan

To Every Tribe

Early missionaries laid the groundwork for mass movements to Christ among the minority peoples of China.

Ralph Covell

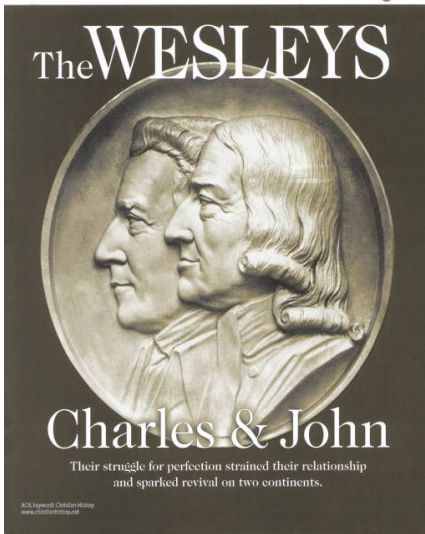
Christianity Fever

Through a century of political turmoil and disillusionment, waves of Chinese intellectuals have come to Christ.

Stacey Bieler and Carol Lee Hamrin

Prodigal Son

A third-generation Chinese Christian describes his journey from persecution to Communism to faith.



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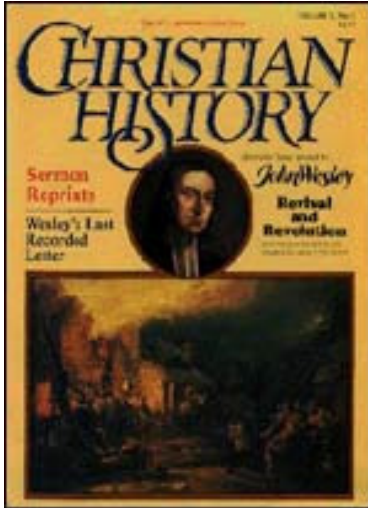
Summary

A friend from Oxford, John Gambold, said of the Wesleys, "could I describe one of them, I should describe both." Such is the story of John and Charles. They walked interweaving paths of ministry, calling, talents and passions which led them to found a denomination together. Their commitment to worship, piety and evangelism sparked revivals of religion on the British mainland and in the American colonies. But how were John and Charles prepared for this massive ministry undertaking? *Christian History & Biography* offers some answers. In this issue, you will learn about their family lives, parents, romantic pursuits, and schooling. They were ordinary men, but they were giants as well.

Their struggle for perfection strained their relationship and sparked revival on two continents.

Inside this issue you'll find:

- **A Tale of Two Brothers**
Like many siblings, John and Charles Wesley often clashed—and the Methodist movement profited.
- **Wesleys in America**
What went wrong?
- **Attack of the Bible-Moths**
From the way Oxford scorned the Holy Club, you would think the Wesleys had created a monster.
- **Like Mother, Like Son**
John Wesley's parents, especially his mother, profoundly influenced his character and career.
- **The Matchmaker**
When the Wesley brothers agreed to help each other find wives, they never guessed their deal would lead to disaster.
- **Spare the Rod and Spoil the Church**
Though Methodism thrived on big crowds, its survival depended on the discipline of small groups.
- **Be Ye Perfect?**
The evolution of John Wesley's most contentious doctrine.
- **Two Views on Perfection**
John and Charles disagreed on the measure of holiness a Christian might expect on earth, but both longed for it. From "Christian Perfection" (Sermon 40)
- **Start the Presses**
No Protestant leader in the eighteenth century made better use of print media than John Wesley.
- **The Gallery: The Leadership Team**
These early converts supported, strengthened, and spread the Methodist movement whether John Wesley agreed with them or not.
- **The Link: Weeds in the Garden**
The Methodist pursuit of holiness has, over 200 years, branched off in some startling directions. A conversation with Tom Odem.



Issue 2. John Wesley: Leader of the Methodist Movement

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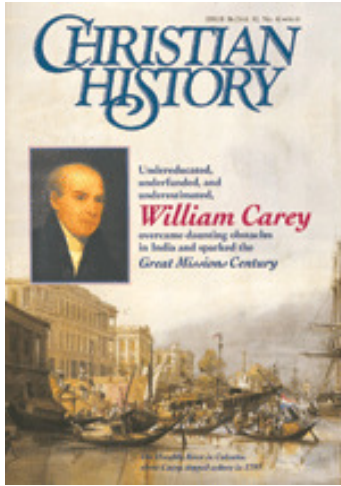
Summary

John Wesley did it all: He preached 40,000 sermons, rode 250,000 miles on horseback, lived on 28 pounds annually, founded (unintentionally) a new denomination, served the forgotten people of Britain, and had great respect for his mother. His love for historical Christianity was unmatched except by his love for the Gospel, and his desire for renewal in the Church of England had no parallel. Found here in this issue of *Christian History & Biography*, his story will surprise and inspire you.

Inside this issue you'll find:

- **Revival and Revolution**
The volatile context of John Wesley's ministry.
- **Tapping the Riches**
Wesley set out to renew the church he loved and he was prepared to employ any appropriate material from the whole history of Christianity to do it.
- **Also: Wesley's Gift for Organization**
- **Finding the Forgotten**
How Wesley and the early Methodists moved aggressively to change the plight of the poor and forgotten.
- **Wesley's Sermon Reprints**
 - "The Almost Christian"
 - "The Use of Money"
- **John Wesley and Women**
Disappointed in love and marriage, Wesley's relationships with women and attitudes toward women reveal an interesting and human side of an indomitable man.
- **Enthusiasm**
The word was used as a pejorative by opponents to describe the experience of early Methodism.
- **Wesley to Wilberforce**
John Wesley's last letter from his deathbed.
- **From the Journal**
In his own words, John Wesley's spiritual pilgrimage and discovery of saving faith.
- **Also: Fruits of Breaking Wesley's Code**
- **A Whimsical Epitaph**
- **A Joyful Sound**

- **Charles Wesley and Methodist music.**



Issue 36. William Carey: 19th c. Missionary to India

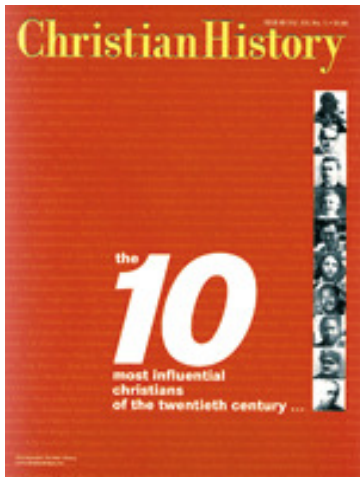
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Summary

"Expect great things from God! Attempt great things for God!" Undereducated, under-funded, and underestimated, William Carey overcame a plethora of tribulations and mastered dozens of languages to bring the gospel message to India. Disease plagued his family, poverty never left him, and it was nearly a decade before the Hindi population began to show signs of acceptance—yet his ability to plod ahead and boldly pursue his ministry vision make this issue of *Christian History & Biography* an informative and inspiring read.

Inside this issue you'll find:

- **The Man Who Wouldn't Give Up**
No matter how great the obstacles, William Carey expected great things and attempted great things.
- **Also: *William Carey Converts***
How a lukewarm Anglican became a fiery Baptist.
- **A Day in the Life of William Carey**
Sixteen hours of nonstop activity.
- **The Rest of the Serampore Trio**
Carey saw little success until he was joined by this team.
- **The Missions Manifesto**
An excerpt from "the Magna Carta of the Protestant mission movement."
- **Why Did the 1800s Explode with Missions?**
The modern missionary movement has radically changed Christianity. What caused it?
- **The Gallery: *Missionary Pioneers***
 - They boldly went where no Christian had gone before.
 - *Carey's Companions and Converts*
Key people in his life.
- **William Carey's India**
- **William Carey's Less-Than-Perfect Family Life**
The model missionary did not have a model home.
- **Dorothy's Devastating Delusions**
A psychologist examines the mental illness that afflicted William Carey's first wife.
- **The 11 Commandments of Missions**
Carey and his team set forth principles that still guide us today.
- **Ministry in the Killing Fields**
Infanticide, widow burning, assisted suicide—Carey and other missionaries battled these accepted religious practices.
- **Also: *Burning a Woman to Death***
William Carey's horrified narration of what people were calling a "great act of holiness."
- **The Lasting Contributions of a "Wretched Worm"**
Was Carey right when he said, "I have done little for God"?
- **The History behind Christian History**
The experts said a church-history magazine would never work. On our 10th anniversary, we look back with founder Ken Curtis.



Issue 65. Ten Influential Christians of the 20th Century

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Summary

Billy Graham, William Seymour, Mother Teresa, Karl Barth, C. S. Lewis, John XXIII, Alexandr Solzhenitsyn, John Paul II, John R. Mott and Martin Luther King, Jr. This list contains pastors, evangelists, social workers, Popes, revolutionaries, scholars, writers, theologians, professors and leaders. These ten individuals have offered much to the global Church, and we of the 21st century are grateful.

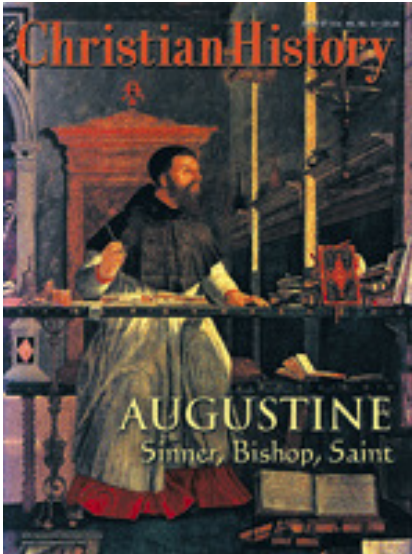
Christian History & Biography offers this issue in recognition of such devoted Christian leaders whose ministries have impacted millions in the West and around the world.

Inside this issue you'll find:

- **Billy Graham**
As an evangelist he has preached to millions; as an evangelical he put a movement on the map.
- **C. S. Lewis**
The atheist scholar who became an Anglican, an apologist, and a "patron saint" of Christians everywhere.
- **William Seymour**
What scoffers viewed as a "weird babble of tongues" became a world phenomenon after his Los Angeles revival.
- **Mother Teresa**
She stirred a generation by touching the untouchables.
- **Karl Barth**
He revived orthodoxy when mere moralism and humanism had seemingly won over the theological world.
- **John XXIII**
Elected to be a caretaker pope, he decided instead to revolutionize Catholicism.
- **Alexandr Solzhenitsyn**
The high school physics-teacher-turned-novelist whose writings shook an empire.
- **John Paul II**
In issuing more significant encyclicals and visiting more nations than any other pope in history, he's shown that Christianity remains a world force.
- **John Mott**
Evangelist and ecumenist.
- **Martin Luther King, Jr.**
No Christian played a more prominent role in the century's most significant social justice movement.
- **Rumblings to the South**
In Africa and elsewhere, third-world Christians are shaking society.
- **What Do You Think?**
How our scholars and general readers voted in the "Most Influential Christians of the Century" survey.

Issue 67. St. Augustine: Sinner, Bishop, Saint

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Summary

He was a brilliant theologian whose mind raged over a vast array of issues with incomparable depth and dexterity. He was a regal bishop, an ecclesiastical authority, who refined the teachings of the church. And he was a fallen human being who struggled with common weaknesses: sex, vanity, self-recriminations, anger and depression.

Christian History & Biography offers this issue as an informed look at the everyday life of St. Augustine. History has built him into an untouchable thinker and a legendary mind, but he was first and foremost a man—a human who was seeking the living God.

Sinner, Bishop, Saint

Inside this issue you'll find:

- **The Dark Heart Filled with Light**
Augustine's early years reveal an intense proud and sensual man who yearned to know truth.
- **The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly**
To show how greatly God has changed him, Augustine tells all. What a fifth-century critic might have said.
- **The Bishop at Work**
Augustine saw himself not as a saint, but as a pastor with a job to do.
- **A Tale of Two Cities**
It's a shame about Rome, but wait—there's more! What a fifth-century critic might have said.
- **Augustine & the Battle for Orthodoxy**
A Christian History Timeline
- **Fighting Words**
Forged in the heat of theological battle, Augustine's five most distinctive teachings remain controversial.
- **Semi-Augustinians**
A few monks—and eventually most of the church—found both Augustine and Pelagius a little too extreme.
- **The Gallery: Influential Antagonists**
Augustine's life and ministry were shaped by his encounters with these intellectual adversaries.
- **What Would Augustine Say?**
The fifth-century theologian answers five crucial twenty-first-century questions. A special section.
- **God's Blessing or Humanity's Curse?**
Augustine's views on sex.
- **How Good Christians can be Good Citizens**
Augustine's views on war.
- **The Right Way to Reach the Wrong-headed**
Augustine's views on religious tolerance.
- **Is Christianity the Only Path to God?**
Augustine's views on pluralism.
- **Miracles Ended Long Ago—Or Did They?**
Augustine's views on signs & wonders.

Issue 64. St. Antony & the Desert Fathers: Extreme Faith



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Summary

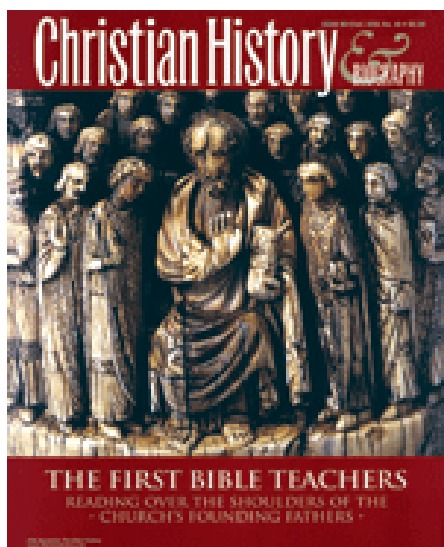
Rarely known for its monastic elements, the Nicene Age boasts the emergence of the prototypical Christian ascetic: St. Antony. Committed to Scripture and discipline, Antony established obedience and simplicity as primary Christian virtues. But was that enough? Could solitude stand on its own, or did it serve a greater purpose? Antony, and the "desert fathers" who would follow his brave example, lived the answer to these questions.

This issue of *Christian History & Biography* takes an in-depth look at the Egyptian desert beginnings of Christian monasticism and asceticism in the 4th century.

Extreme faith in the early church.

Inside this issue you'll find:

- **'The Best There Ever Was'**
Modern Christian hermits still look to him for inspiration, as did the entire Middle Ages. What did the illiterate recluse, known as Antony of the Desert, do to earn such adulation?
Also: The Life Changing "Life of Antony"
- **Exorcising the Desert**
The stories of desert fathers' skirmishes with demons pointed to a larger struggle—and victory.
- **Alone in the Desert?**
Why thousands of early Christians took up the monastic way, and what their life was really like.
- **Diet for a Large Soul**
- **Ascetic Agitators**
The early monks not only prayed in the desert but sometimes rioted in the cities.
Also: Worldly Monk
- **Holy Land**
Sabas just wanted to pray where Christ had lived and died but ended up establishing the most famous monastery in the Judean Desert.
- **The Gallery: Getting Their Act Together**
Monasticism was more or less a solitary affair until these four came along and taught monks how to live in community.
- **Spiritual Pragmatists**
For the desert fathers, theology was not the study of God but the study of how to become like God.
- **Discovering the Desert Paradox**
What so many in the early church found after they abandoned their loved ones and sought God in a seemingly God-forsaken landscape.
A conversation with Belden Lane



Issue 80. The First Bible Teachers

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Summary

Unfortunately, some of the least-known figures of Christian history are the early church fathers (and mothers!). In this issue we meet such larger-than-life Bible teachers as Irenaeus, Origen, Augustine, Jerome, and Gregory of Nyssa. Peering over their shoulders, we see the rich, quirky, inspiring ways they drew life from the Book that was the center of their lives. In some ways, this is the sequel to Issue #43, "How We Got our Bible."

Inside this issue you'll find:

- **The Habits of Highly Effective Bible Readers**
What we can learn from the church fathers that will enrich our own Bible study. Also: Why the Reformers Read the Fathers.
- **The First Battle for the Bible**
A literalist and a spiritualizer forced the church to choose how it would read the Scriptures it inherited from the Jews.
- **Midwife of the Christian Bible**
Irenaeus brought the New and Old Testaments together into a single Bible.
- **Origen: Friend or Foe?**
The father of Bible study has also been called a heretic for not taking it literally.
- **Too Racy for Bible Study**
Origen could not believe the Song of Songs was a hymn to erotic love. So what was it?
- **Opponents of Allegory**
Rejecting allegory in favor of history, some Antiochians moved on into heresy.
- **Scripture Saturation**
The early monks sought holiness by soaking in the "moral sense" of the Word.
- **Gallery: Three Wise Men from the East**
They brought the best gift of all: a Scriptural defense of the Trinity and Christ's divinity.
- **Classical Ear-Training**
What the church fathers heard in Homer tuned them to the harmonies of the Scripture.
- **Augustine's Key**
The single principle by which even the unlearned could unlock Scripture's meaning.