

A Protestant Heritage Tour – John Wesley & John Calvin

12 days / 10 nights

John Wesley (1703—1791), a Christian theologian and one of the founders of the Methodist movement, rode 250,000 miles, gave away 30,000 pounds... and preached more than 40,000 sermons (Stephen Tomkins, biographer). John Calvin (1509—1564) an important French pastor at the time of the Protestant Reformation, left the Catholic Church around 1530 and fled to Switzerland where he established a Christian theology that would become known as Calvinism. As we follow the awe-inspiring trail of these two great reformers, John Wesley and John Calvin, separated as they were by about 200 years, we will not only thrill at the grandeur of several European cities and the beauty of the English, German and Swiss countryside, we will also gain an understanding of and deep appreciation for their convictions and courage.

Day 1: Departure from the USA

I am only an honest heathen...and yet, to be so employed of God! (From a letter John Wesley wrote to his brother at age 63).

Our journey begins with an overnight flight with full meal/beverage service and in-flight entertainment to London, England.

Day 2: Salisbury & Stonehenge

[A]n inward impression on the soul of believers whereby the Spirit of God directly testifies to their spirit that they are the children of God (John Wesley's definition of the witness of the Spirit).

After meeting our tour manager, we'll travel by motor coach through the beautiful English countryside to Bristol. En route we'll stop to experience the mystery of Stonehenge, one of the most famous prehistoric monuments in the world. Some believe Stonehenge is an ancient burial ground, sacred sanctuary or astronomical observatory while others attribute the monument's construction to Merlin the Magician! Still others might espouse ancient folklore which has the Devil bringing the stones in from Ireland, wrapping them up, and putting them on the Salisbury plain. At the end of the tale the Devil cries out, "No-one will ever find out how these stones came here!" to which a friar replies, "That's what you think!" At our next stop, we'll visit Salisbury Cathedral, which, with the tallest church spire in the United Kingdom, is considered one of the leading examples of early English architecture. We'll have some free time to enjoy lunch before continuing on to Bristol for dinner and an overnight stay.

Day 3: Bristol & Bath

The grandfather clock in the Common Room (upper floor of the 'New Room' in Bristol) dating from 1670 was bought by John Wesley's father in 1710 to replace a clock destroyed by the fire at Epworth Rectory. Five-year-old John had to be rescued from that fire and later described himself as "a brand plucked out of the burning."

John Wesley came to Bristol, now the most populous city in South West England, every year from 1739 to 1790, and spent nearly 1,500 nights at the 'New Room.' Today we will enjoy seeing the 'New Room,' a simple chapel built when he started preaching outdoors to the poor people of Bristol. There is also a great landmark and symbol of the city which we will see: the Clifton Suspension Bridge. Spanning the Avon Gorge, it was first proposed in 1753 but not completed until 1864 (in 1885, a 22-year-old woman survived a fall from the bridge when her billowing skirts acted as a parachute; she subsequently lived into her eighties). The afternoon will find us in Bath, built around the United Kingdom's only naturally occurring hot springs. From ancient Roman times, Bath has been known as a spa resort with the Latin name, Aquae Sulis ("the waters of Sulis"), but the city also has a



variety of theatres, museums, and many other cultural sites. As we return to Bristol for dinner and another overnight stay, we'll visit Hanham Mount where in 1739 Wesley did his field preaching.

Day 4: Oxford

I saw the spires of Oxford as I was passing by; the gray spires of Oxford against a pearl-gray sky (Winifred Mary Letts).

We visit Oxford this morning, an ancient city along the Thames River made prominent by the oldest university in the English-speaking world. This beautiful "City of Dreaming Spires" (coined by Matthew Arnold to describe the harmonious architecture of Oxford University's buildings) is also rich in Christian history and religious figures such as John Wycliffe, John Wesley, C. S. Lewis and J. R. R. Tolkien. Our guided walking tour includes the Lincoln College rooms once occupied by Wesley, and Christ Church Cathedral (at one time the smallest in England) constructed between 1160 and 1200 by Augustinian monks and a popular site of pilgrimage throughout the Middle Ages. One such pilgrim was Catherine of Aragon, wife of King Henry VIII, who came to pray for her son in 1518. We will continue to London where we will enjoy dinner and an overnight stay.



Day 5: London

The best of all is: God is with us (John Wesley on his death bed).

We awaken in a city described as the flower of all cities. Our guided tour of London will begin with a visit to Wesley's Chapel, the first Methodist church in London built for the celebration of communion and preaching. Wesley's Chapel, site of former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's 1951 wedding, has remained in continuous use by Methodists except for a time during the 70s when structural problems forced its repair. It reopened in 1978 on its 200th anniversary in the presence of Queen Elizabeth II. We will also see John Wesley's House, built next door to his chapel in 1779 where Wesley spent the last 11 winters of his life and died in his bedroom on March 2, 1791. Because many of John Wesley's belongings are still inside the house, our visit will be like a step back into the 18th century. We will also visit Westminster Abbey, a Gothic monastery church that is the traditional place of coronation and burial for English monarchs. Westminster Abbey is neither a cathedral nor a parish church, but a place of worship owned by the royal family. Its interior is a veritable museum of English history where among other things are the medieval coronation throne, Poet's Corner with memorials to Shakespeare, Dickens, and other literary giants, and the tombs of Queen Elizabeth I, "Bloody" Queen Mary, explorer David Livingstone and naturalist Charles Darwin. We will have ample leisure time this afternoon to explore other wonders of the "flower of all cities" on our own before dinner and an overnight stay in London.



Day 6: Brussels & Luxembourg

God, by a sudden conversion, subdued and brought my mind to a teachable frame... (John Calvin from his Commentary on the Book of Psalms).

Today the EuroStar (high-speed train) will take us to the capital of Belgium: Brussels, known for its waffles, chocolate, French fries, and numerous types of beers. Did you know that the Brussels sprout was named for and first cultivated in Brussels? A brief sightseeing tour will captivate us for Brussels has its own Gothic town hall in the old centre, several cathedrals, parks, and palaces. One famous symbol is the Atomium, a 103-metre (338 ft) tall structure built for the 1958 World's Fair. Consisting of nine steel spheres connected by tubes, it forms a model of an iron crystal. We will transfer by coach to Luxembourg for dinner and an overnight stay.



Day 7: Luxembourg & Trier

For anyone to arrive at God the Creator he needs Scripture as his Guide and Teacher (John Calvin).

We'll find Luxembourg an interesting mix of culture and tradition acquired from its neighbors. Interestingly, Luxembourg is a trilingual country; German, French, and Luxembourgish are all official languages. This morning we will visit the grave of General George Patton, Jr. who died in a car accident on December 21, 1945 shortly after leading the U.S. 3rd Army to victory in World War II. The afternoon will find us in Trier, Germany's oldest city (founded in or before 16 BC) and a former Roman colony. Our guided tour will include highlights such as the Porta Nigra and the majestic cathedral. In 1802 Napoleon Bonaparte dissolved the church in the Porta Nigra and the monastery beside it. Local legend has it that Napoleon originally wanted to tear down the church until he was reminded of its Roman origins which convinced him to instead convert the gate back to its original form. Later, we transfer to Strasbourg where John Calvin sought refuge after being expelled from Geneva. We'll enjoy dinner and an overnight stay in Strasbourg.



Day 8: Strasbourg

We are deprived of a leader... whom the whole world would scarcely obtain a greater... whether in knowledge of true religion or in integrity and innocence of life, or in thirst for study of the most holy things... (From Peter Martry's eulogy of Martin Bucer).

The Anabaptists (from the Latin *anabaptista*, or "one who baptizes over again" because this group of early reformists rejected baptism to infants and required that baptismal candidates make their own confessions of faith) called Strasbourg, the "City of Hope," or "Refuge of the Righteous." Strasbourg is also home of the E.U.'s European Parliament, and site of some principal photography for 2011's blockbuster movie, *Sherlock Holmes: A Game of Shadows*. More to the point, Strasbourg is where John Calvin wrote his instantly popular and easy-to-read books on reformed doctrine and systematic theology (when he fled the persecution in Paris and desired to settle in a place where he could live the life of a quiet Christian scholar and author). Martin Bucer, another Reformation leader, was from Strasbourg and is buried in St. Thomas's Church where he served as pastor in 1524. Also related to Strasbourg was Peter Waldo, whose followers were known as "Waldensians", "Poor in Spirit" or "Poor Men of Lyons." Our tour of this beautiful city will include a visit to the Cathedral of Strasbourg (described by Victor Hugo as a "gigantic and delicate marvel", and by Goethe as a "sublimely towering, wide-spreading tree of God"), and St. Thomas's Church (the principle Protestant Church since 1549). We'll also see the Statue of the Reformers in the University, the Astronomical clock and the quaint, historic "La Petite Strasbourg" quarter. This afternoon, we'll have leisure time on our own to further explore Strasbourg, from its historic sites to its rich architecture and wonderful museums. Then this evening, we'll enjoy dinner and another night's stay in the "Refuge of the Righteous."



Day 9: Berne & Geneva

And now, O Lord, what remains to a wretch like me... earnestly to supplicate you not to judge that fearful abandonment of your Word... (John Calvin).

This morning we transfer to Berne, the capital of Switzerland and ranked among the world's top ten cities for the best quality of life (2010). With its historic sandstone buildings and towers, Berne is one of the most impressive examples of a medieval city in Europe. Glaciers from the most recent Ice Age formed the countryside of Berne, and the city, founded in 1191, is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and home of Toblerone chocolate and Swiss cheese. Our tour today will take us to see the *Zytglogge* (Bernese German for "Time Bell"), an elaborate medieval clock tower with moving puppets, as well

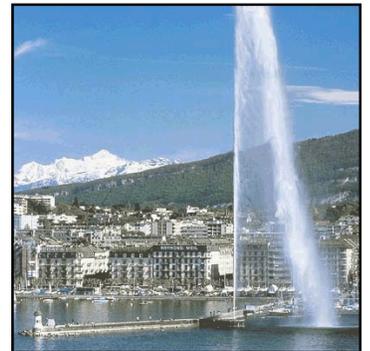
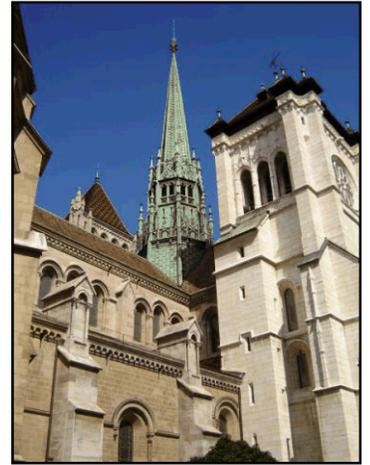


as the “Bear Pits” of Bern. According to local legend, Berchtold V, Duke of Zähringen, and founder of the city of Bern, vowed to name the city after the first animal he met on the hunt, and this turned out to be a bear. The figure of a bear occurs in the oldest-known city seal (1224) and living bears have been kept in Berne since 1513. We will also visit one of the largest Swiss Reformed churches in Switzerland, the Heiliggeistkirche (Church of the Holy Ghost), built in 1726; it appears likely that the church sits on the site of an old Roman temple. In the late afternoon, we’ll continue to Geneva for dinner and an overnight stay.

Day 11: Geneva

By His power, God cherishes and guards the world which he made, and, by his providence, rules its individual parts (John Calvin).

It might do well to remember that Geneva’s motto is *Post Tenebras Lux*, the Latin equivalent of “after the darkness, the light,” as we begin our day with a worship service at the World Council of Churches (if available). Afterwards we head out to see a city referred to as the “Peace Capital of the World”. We’ll first visit the Reformation Wall, a monument honoring many of the individuals, events, and documents of the Protestant Reformation as depicted in statues. During the Reformation, Geneva was the center of Calvinism, and its history and heritage since the 16th century has been closely linked to that of Protestantism. The individuals most prominently depicted on the Wall were Calvinists (Theodore Beza, John Calvin, William Farel and John Knox), but due to close connections in an age of great reform, figures in other theologies are also included (William the Silent, Gaspard de Coligny, Frederick William of Brandenburg, Roger Williams, Oliver Cromwell, and Stephen Bocskay): Next we are treated to a visit of the site where Calvin and de Beze gave sermons: the Calvin Auditory (also the birthplace of the “Academie”, Geneva’s first university), as well as a visit to the lodge of John Knox. In 1555, Knox, along with Bodley, future founder of the library of Oxford, and Coverdale, collaborated on the first English Bible for household use, the “Geneva Bible”. The Geneva Bible, used by the Puritans and the Pilgrims, was the first taken to America. After lunch on our own, we continue our tour of Geneva with a view of what has become a breathtaking emblem of the city, the Jet d’Eau Fountain, a 460 foot high water fountain in the center of the harbor. We’ll also tour the Saint Pierre or Saint Peter’s Cathedral, an architectural hybrid with its Romanesque, Gothic and Greco-Roman styles. Best known as the adopted home church of John Calvin, Saint Peter’s has a wooden chair used by Calvin. It is also worth noting that the Cathedral has recently been excavated extensively revealing a rich history of the site dating back to the time of the Roman Empire. We return to our hotel for dinner and another comfortable overnight stay.



Day 12: Zurich

Thy purpose fulfill: nothing can be too severe for me. I am thy vessel, for you to make whole or break to pieces (final verses of the first part of Zwingli’s “Pestlied”, a 3-part poem written in 1519 (after he caught the plague) wherein he described his preparation for death: the onset of the illness, the closeness to death, and the joy of recovery).

Today we transfer to Zurich where in 1519 Huldrych Zwingli became the people's priest at the Grossmünster (Great Minster Church whose twin towers are regarded as perhaps the most recognized landmark in Zurich), and in 1520, launched the Swiss Reformation, not by posting theses as Luther did, but by preaching biblical sermons from the pulpit. Deviating from prevalent practices, he first began to read through the Gospel of Matthew giving his interpretation during the sermon (known as the method of *lectio continua*), and on subsequent Sundays, proceeded in the same manner with the Acts, the New Testament epistles, and finally the Old Testament. Today we’ll begin our walking tour of Zurich, sometimes referred to as “Downtown Switzerland,” with a visit to the “Predigerkirche”. We’ll see the “Helferei,” where Ulrich Zwingli lived with his wife and



children, and the "Prophezei," where the reformation ideas were developed, and where the Theological Seminary is presently located. Our next stop is the "Großmünster," where Zwingli gave his famous sermons criticizing practices of the Church. Afterward, we see the Zwingli Statue near the "Wasserkirche" ("Water Church"), a church built on a small island situated between the two main churches of medieval Zürich, the Grossmünster and the Fraumünster. We will have much to remember as we meet together for a farewell dinner and last overnight stay in Zurich.



Day 12: Depart for Home

Do all the good you can/By all the means you can/In all the ways you can/In all the places you can/To all the people you can/As long as ever you can (John Wesley's Rule)

We leave our hotel and head for the airport to return to the US.

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