

Fall History & Heritage -- #1 (September 17)

This first of 8 or 9 consecutive fall posts consists of entries in paragraph form (Q&A or summaries) with the sources upon which they are based indicated.

Election --- (Paul Helm; *Tabletalk*, June 2012)

This term in Christian soteriology affirms that God from eternity chose a people, out of a mass of perishing sinners, to be His own, saved by the blood of His Son? God's sovereign choice, classic Reformation theology teaches, is unconditional---that is, not tied to any good qualities or acts that may be attributed to the chosen ones. Thus salvation hinges upon God's will and works, not the sinner's; or as Rom. 9:16 puts it, "not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy."

"Preach the gospel; use words if necessary." - (Ed Stetzer; *Tabletalk*, June 2012)

Popular in Christian circles today, **this ironic saying** is often falsely attributed to the medieval monk Francis of Assisi (c. 1181--1226)? There's no record of Francis having said it, and it's unlikely he would have since he typically preached as many as five times a day. The sentiment, though it properly implies the necessity and importance of good deeds, actually devalues the verbal content of the gospel by which men, according to the Bible, believe and are thus saved (Rom. 10:17).

The Last Days --- (Keith Mathison; *Tabletalk*, July 2012)

Contrary to popular Christian opinion today, **this eschatological era**, according to the New Testament, was inaugurated when Christ *first* came to earth (Heb. 1:1-4)? It started, writes Keith Mathison, "when His heel was bruised through His death on the cross and the Serpent's head was crushed as Jesus walked out of the tomb." Moreover, the era anticipates chiefly not a futuristic assault on the political state of Israel, but the worldwide spread of the gospel.

"Panem et Circenses" --- (George McCartney; *Chronicles*, June 2012)

This Latin phrase, meaning "Bread and Circuses," captures the ambitious cynicism of the old Roman emperors who pacified the masses with cheap food and amusements? There's an allusion to the phrase in the contemporary young-adult novel (with its film adaptation) *The Hunger Games*, authored by Suzanne Collins. Ironically, Collins uses the Latin for "Bread" to name a future North American nation intent on alternately starving and feeding its subjects in order to suppress them in their districts.

Independence & Autonomy --- (Joseph Fallon; *Chronicles*, June 2012)

Since 1850, **this political aspiration** of several indigenous tribes of Central America has been successfully thwarted by Hispanic states with the backing of the U.S.? The native peoples include the Maya of Mexico's Yucatan peninsula and Guatemala, the Miskito kingdom of Honduras and Nicaragua, and the Kuna of Panama. Apparently, "the powers that be," Hispanic and American, doubted that the natives, left to themselves, were up to the task of Western-style economic development.

(In passing, we must note that the Kuna Indians in 1925 tried to secede from Panama, a nation created in 1903 by the U.S. for the sake of the canal. The U.S. prevented their independence and imposed a quasi-self-rule alternative within Panama's jurisdiction still in effect today.)

Gerhard Groote --- (*Christian Almanac*; Aug. 21)

This Dutch religious reformer (1340-1384) spearheaded the Brethren of the Common Life movement, a forerunner of the Protestant Reformation in northern Europe? The Brethren lived out what they called *Devotio Moderna*, with its emphasis on education, translating the Bible into the vernacular (a region's native tongue), and assisting the poor. Fellow Dutchman Thomas a Kempis (d. 1471), famous author of *Imitation of Christ*, was among the Brethren's many illustrious scholars.

Ralph Waldo Emerson --- (*Almanac*, Aug. 23)

"Readers of poetry see the factory-village and the railway, and fancy that the poetry of the landscape is broken up by these; for these works of art are not yet consecrated in their reading." Thus spoke **this New England transcendental poet and essayist (1803--1882)** in a famous 1842 lecture in New York City? He was calling for an authentic national literature, distinct from that of Europe, to celebrate the everyday setting and experiences of Americans.

"I Have A Dream" Speech --- (*Almanac*, Aug. 28)

This oration, delivered by Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., at the Lincoln Memorial, was the most memorable moment of the 1963 "March on Washington" for Negro civil rights? At the time, the march was the largest mass demonstration in America organized for any purpose, and it served as a prototype for later rallies on issues like war & peace, environmental pollution, and abortion. As many as a quarter-million gathered peaceably in Washington, D.C., that day (August 28, 1963).

John Eliot --- (*Almanac*, Aug. 30)

"I am old, ready to be gone, and desire to leave as many books as I can." Thus wrote **this New England Puritan clergyman and missionary (1604--1690)**, known to history as the "Apostle to the Indians," to his sponsors back in England? The gospel minister, a teacher of the church in Roxbury (Massachusetts Bay Colony) for nearly 60 years, may have had few converts among the natives, but he learned the Algonquin language, created its alphabet, and translated the entire Bible and other writings in that tongue.