

John calvin



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

John Calvin was a French Theologist and reformer and developed the Christian theology known as “ Presbyterianism” or “ Calvinism”. He lived during the 16th century and developed several ideas which were later developed in the Western World. This can be viewed in that several features of the American culture are in fact similar to John Calvin’s ideas (Paul Brians 1998). Originally, John Calvin was a humanist lawyer working for the Roman Catholic Church, but later broke away from this group.

There was the Northern Renaissance going in Europe, and in the year 1536 William Farel requested him to build a new reform church in Geneva. Earlier, the people of Geneva had revolted against the Savoy rulers. However, the citizens of Geneva who were involved in this revolution were not exactly German-speaking, but were French-speaking, who later became Protestants. Geneva finally became a Protestant-dominant place in the year 1535, and it was Bern who had sent the reformists to convert Geneva in Protestantism (Richard Hooker, 1999).

Calvin’s major work was the Institutes of the Christian Religion which was based on Protestant theology and influenced the Western World at that time. He had published the work in the year 1536 in Latin and later in French in 1541. The book gave an idea of theology and an introduction to Protestantism. He had attacked several ideas that were unorthodox, followed by the Roman Catholics. One of Calvin’s major concepts mentioned in his book was regarding God’s sovereignty especially considering salvation and election.

Calvin incorporated all the ideas mentioned in the Old Testament and the New Testament in his book. He tried to translate these passages for

application by the Western World. In the Institutes of Christian Religion, Calvin deals with two areas namely the creator and his creations, and the relationship between God and Man. The relationship between God and Man is being established through Christian Instruction. The book also describes the relationship between God, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit.

It was the Holy Spirit which resurrected Jesus and was responsible to create the Church originating from the God and Christ (Richard Hooker, 1999). Calvin was not only a thinker of philosophy and religion, but also of social, political and reforms. His main intention was to interpret the Christian scriptures in a simple, literal and explicit manner such that the masses could follow them and make Christ as a part of their lives (CCEL, 2009). Calvin adopted the Zwingli's model and often went beyond this.

He used the Christian Scriptures literally to develop religious organization, but considered the same for political and social organization. He developed a hierarchical system of the Church which consisted of Pastors (having religious authority in Geneva), Teachers (teach the public about religious and social organization), elders (supervised what everything in the town), and deacons (those who cared for the sick, elders and widowers) (Richard Hooker, 1999). Calvin also developed the Doctrine of Predestination, a concept which meant that God knew what was predestined for each human being.

This was where he exerted very strong influence. This concept was different from that of the early Church which said that salvation was a part of human choice. However, Calvin said that God had salvation destined for each human being, and this was not a part of human choice. Even for being a part

of the reformed or Calvinist Church, God had an election from the population. From this concept, the Doctrine of Living Saints was developed which meant that certain human beings known as saints were destined for salvation, irrespective of their status on earth.

Further Calvin developed the Doctrine of Voluntary Associations, which meant that the Church which consisted of living saints could choose its members which included other living saints (Richard Hooker, 1999). Calvin has been recognized worldwide especially in the Western World for his Protestant Theological thinking. There were a few controversies associated with his writings especially his Doctrine of Predestination. However, Calvin was strong with his concepts which have been recognized even today.