

Religious



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Introduction Thomas Merton was born in January 31st 1915 in Prades, France, although he grew up in UK mainly because of the break out of the World War I. His mother, Ruth Jenkins, did much of the upbringing as the Father was a frequent traveler. Thomas Merton was initially baptized while still a toddler in the Church of England according to the wishes of Owen, his father.

Thomas Merton married Evelyn Scott, with whom they had a difficult marriage and eventually, Thomas Merton went back to Douglaston to spend time with relatives away from the wife. In his life, Thomas Merton traversed France and England on many occasions. Such trips were necessitated by the requests of the father as well as studies [Marquita, Breit, Patricia, Burton & Paul [2002]. In 1930, Thomas Merton joined Oakham Public School during which time, Owen his father, died. However although the death affected Thomas Merton who sought support and financial help from the uncle was co-operative and finances to Thomas Merton was never a problem. Thomas Merton often received help from Tom Bennett, Owen's former physician who was very supportive of Thomas as was the aunties and uncles. It was in 1932 during one of his visits to his grandparents in New York that Thomas Merton decided to venture into journalism by co-editing the school's journal.

In 1933, Thomas Merton visited Italy where he stayed in Rome where Merton acquired a Bible and become religious, severally praying asking God to 'deliver him from darkness'. Up to when Thomas Merton was still faced many challenges such as not being aware of what he really wanted to become even as a college student at Clare College, Cambridge. In 1938, Thomas Merton then a student in Columbia came into contact with a Hindu monk called Mahanambrata Brachmachari, who influenced him in that instead of

converting him into Hindu, Brachmachari encouraged the young Thomas to remain steadfast in Catholicism. Gandhi had an influence in shaping the future of the man in that, Merton was an admirer of Gandhi. Such events culminated in the Baptism of Thomas Merton in 1938. In 1941, Thomas Merton finally became committed to Catholicism and eventually graduated into a Catholic priest in 1949. Thomas Merton died in 1968 in Bangkok, Thailand. Thomas Merton continues to influence the lives of many as a writer, teacher, a priest and a family man.

Howard was born several years after the birth of Thomas Merton in 1939. Unlike Thomas Merton, Howard went on to join active politics and eventually became the Prime Minister of Australia. Howard was born and brought up in Earlwood, Sydney. Howard as a young was often sickly something which resulted into an hearing impairment and therefore exhibits speech impediments, which hampers his speeches although it is not a major problem.

Unlike Thomas Merton, Howard studied law at the University of Sydney after excelling in Earlwood Public School and Canterbury Boys High School [1992. 45-78]. Howard is also different from Thomas in that while Thomas Merton was a Catholic, Howard is an Anglican and is not as religious as Merton was. Howard like Merton has excelled in life in that he has served 4 terms as a Prime Minister of Australia, an indicator of his strong convincing and political skills. Thomas Merton on the other hand does not appear to have been as strong-willed considering that the man took so long before deciding to join Priesthood.

Both Howard and the late Merton are great men, who have had a positive impact on their society's thorough offering unmatched leadership. Despite

the few differences mentioned above, both men will continue to influence positively the lives of their followers having served as good leaders with dedication.

Reference

Bernett, D. and Goward, P. John Howard, Prime Minister. Viking. [1992. 45-78].

Marquita E. Breit, Patricia A. Burton and Paul M. Pearson, About Merton: Secondary Sources 1945-2000: A Bibliographic Workbook. 2002

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