The courts had assigned three homeless orphans to Father Flanagan's care. Ed Flanagan, having recently come to the conclusion that looking after juveniles was a full time job, had asked permission of Archbishop Jeremiah Harty to open a home. Harty gave him permission, but warned him he'd be on his own financially. The parish just couldn't afford any more for poor relief. How was Ed, a poor priest, to care for them? Full of faith, he found an old house in Omaha, Nebraska which might shelter them for the winter. He borrowed $90 from an unnamed friend to pay the first month's rent for December, 1917. On this day, December 12, 1917, he opened the first house in the work that became known as Boy's Town.

That same day, the court placed two juvenile delinquents in his care. Someone donated a barrel of sauerkraut. That was Christmas dinner for the boys.

Father Flanagan often said, "There is no such thing as a bad boy." Motivated by Christ's command to love our neighbor as ourselves, he strove to turn troubled youth into godly men. He summed up his thinking in these words: "It is not enough to see that an underprivileged child is given good food, warm clothing and a clean bed. An army commissary can do as much. No! More than food, clothes, and shelter, what these lads have been deprived of is mother's tenderness and father's wisdom, and the love of a family. We will never get anywhere in our reform schools and orphan asylums until we compensate for that great loss in young lives."

Only about 20% of the boys he originally took had been in trouble with the law. He soon moved them from the old house in Omaha to acres outside town called Overlook Farm.

In 1936 the community was renamed Boys Town and incorporated as a village. Welfare agencies and juvenile court judges recommended kids to Boys Town, which was supported entirely by voluntary contributions. From the start, religion and moral instruction was based on the prior religious affiliation of the children.

Boys town is still going and now accepts girls, too. The problems of today's children differ from those first five boys Father Flanagan took in. Today's children have often suffered sexual abuse or gang violence or used drugs. Many have learning disabilities. Some are simply sent away by frustrated parents. Boys Town has established satellite homes in Florida, California, and Texas.
is a consultant to other homes in 10 states. Boys Town has cared for many since that cold 
December in 1917 when Father Flanagan borrowed $90 from a friend.

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1. Adapted from an earlier Christian History Institute story.


BY DIANA SEVERANCE, PH.D. EDITED BY DAN GRAVES, MSL

ORIGINAL MAYFLOWER COMPACT.

CHURCH HISTORY TIMELINE
There are more than 160 independent nations in the world. Whether dictatorships or democracies, nearly all have written constitutions, but that of the United States is by far the oldest. This is something we can too easily take for granted, but it really marked a pivot turning point in history and the way nations came to govern themselves.

How do you suppose the founding fathers ever thought of having a written Constitution? The idea of a written contract between the people and their government came from a tiny band of 50 Christians called Pilgrims that sailed to America in the Mayflower in 1620. The Pilgrims believed many of the Church of England’s traditions were not Biblical. Since both King James and the state church persecuted many critics as criminals, the Pilgrims became Separatists and fled first to Holland, then to America. They planned to land in Virginia, where they had a charter from the English crown to govern them, but Atlantic storms carried them far north to Cape Cod. Since their charter was invalid in that region, they needed a new government.

And so on this day, November 21, 1620, the Pilgrims drew up and signed the Mayflower Compact (which is actually dated the 11th of November because Britain was still using the Julian calendar). It said: “For the glory of God and advancement of the Christian faith, we do… ...covenant and combine ourselves together into a civil body politic...to enact,... and frame... just and equal laws... for the general good of the Colonie, unto which we promise all due submission and obedience.

Several of the men aboard did not sign. Did they believe the document was illegal?

The compact was modeled after the church covenant that the Pilgrims had drafted and signed in 1607 when they had first separated from the English Church and fled to Holland. For the next 100 years, the Mayflower compact served the Pilgrims well, and it became an important precedent for the idea of a written American Constitution at the Convention of 1787.

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March 25, 1740
Jesus told his followers that true disciples would be known by their fruits. The life of a genuine Christian’s life will produce an abundance of good works. Such works were clearly evident following the spiritual revivals of the eighteenth century. All of society was improved by the activity and work of those who had been transformed by God’s grace. Children fared better afterwards, too, for the evangelicals showed an increased concern for child welfare.

When evangelist George Whitefield was only 25, he led the way with the establishment of an orphanage in the newly-founded colony of Georgia. Whitefield called the orphanage Bethesda, which means “House of Mercy,” for he hoped many acts of mercy would be shown there. Set on 500 acres of land, the orphanage was built about 10 miles north of Savannah. On this day, March 25, 1740, construction began on the orphanage buildings. The main house was to be two stories high with twenty rooms. Two smaller buildings behind the orphanage were designed to be an infirmary and a workhouse.

Whitefield wanted the orphanage to be a place of strong Gospel influence, with a wholesome atmosphere and strong discipline. The youngsters were to be taught trades so that on becoming adults they could earn their own living. Younger children learned spinning and carding and all of the boys were taught mechanics and agriculture. Whitefield hoped that the orphanage would eventually become the foundation of a university.

Although the children grew most of their own food, the orphanage proved to be more expensive than anticipated. It became a burden to Whitefield, wearing him down with debt. Benjamin Franklin said that because of the scarcity of workmen and materials in Georgia, it would have been better to have built the orphanage in Philadelphia and moved the children there! However, Whitefield remained faithful to his contributors, who had given money specifically for the Georgia project.

At his death, Whitefield bequeathed the orphanage to Lady Huntingdon, a charitable sponsor in England. He asked that she continue the orphanage’s principles and establish a college. However, from 3,000 miles away without modern communications, she was not able to provide the oversight the work needed and it almost folded.

In 1773, fire destroyed the home. Three years later, the American Revolution stymied plans to add a college. After several administrative changes, a new building and society, the Bethesda Home for Boys, was established on the same site. It continues to this day.

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1. Adapted from an earlier Christian History Institute story by Diane Severance, Ph.D.

Last updated June, 2007.

By Diane Severance, Ph.D. and Dan Graves, MSL.
March 17, 1737
When, on this day, March 17, 1737, the Charitable Irish Society of Boston held a St. Patrick’s Day celebration, it seems to have been the first in America.

Since then, St. Patrick’s Day celebrations across the United States have been full of leprechauns, the wearing of the green, and the celebration of all things Irish. In all the fun and frolic, the true Patrick (who probably died between 455 and 493) can easily be forgotten.

Dates and details in Patrick’s life are not known with certainty. He was most likely born between 372 and 390, possibly near present day Glasgow, Scotland.

His parents, Calpurniun and Conchessa, were leaders of the Christian community in the still unidentified village of Bannavem Taburniae. Patrick did not take the Christianity of his parents seriously and enjoyed having fun with his friends.

One day, when he was sixteen, he was amusing himself near the sea when Irish pirates captured him.

They sold Patrick as a slave to an Irish chieftain named Milchu. His job? To care for the chief’s sheep.

Alone in the fields with the sheep, Patrick remembered the Christianity of his parents, and he accepted it as his own. He later wrote,

I was sixteen years old and knew not the true God; but in that strange land the Lord opened my unbelieving eyes, and although late I called my sins to mind, and was converted with my whole heart to the Lord my God, who regarded my estate, had pity on my youth and ignorance, and consoled me as a father consoles his children…

The love of God increased more and more in me with faith and the fear of His name. The Spirit urged me to such a degree that I poured forth as many as a hundred prayers in one day. And even during the night, in the forests and on the mountains where I kept my flock, the rain, and snow, and suffering which I endured, excited me to seek after God…

Six years later, Patrick managed to escape and returned to his family. In a dream, he saw Irish children pleading with him to bring the Gospel to them. “O holy youth, come back to Erin, and walk once more amongst us.”

His heart longed to return to his former captors and share with them the gospel of Jesus Christ.

He trained for the ministry and returned to Ireland where, despite fierce opposition, he spread the story of Jesus among the pagan tribes in the Irish language he had learned while a slave.

From the seventh through the ninth century, legends and myths gathered around
Patrick's name.

The best-known is that he drove the snakes from Ireland. From the start, he was regarded as a saint and has long been venerated as the patron saint of Ireland. His feast is held on this day, March 17.

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Last updated June, 2007.

By Diane Severance, Ph. D. and Dan Graves, MSL.

FRANCES HAVERGAL WROTE “TAKE MY LIFE AND LET IT BE”.

February 4, 1874

“I WENT FOR A LITTLE VISIT OF FIVE DAYS,” WROTE FRANCES HAVERGAL, EXPLAINING WHAT PROMPTED HER TO WRITE HER WELL-KNOWN HYMN, “TAKE MY LIFE AND LET IT BE.”

“There were ten persons in the house; some were unconverted and long prayed for, some converted but not rejoicing Christians. [God] gave me the prayer, ‘Lord, give me all in this house.’

And He just did. Before I left the house, everyone had got a blessing. The last night of my visit I was too happy to sleep and passed most of the night in renewal of my consecration, and those little couplets formed themselves and chimed in my heart one after another till they finished with ‘ever only, ALL FOR THEE!’

It was on this day, February 4, 1874, that Frances wrote the hymn that is still sung around the world.

One of the most dedicated Christian women of the nineteenth century, Frances was the youngest child of a Church of England minister. Though she was always in frail health, she led an active life, encouraging many people to turn to Jesus and others to seek a deeper spiritual walk.

Frances had begun reading and memorizing the Bible at the age of four
Several of her mature verses became hymns. In addition to "Take My Life," she wrote such favorites as "I Gave My Life for Thee," "Like a River Glorious," and "Who Is on the Lord's Side?"

Because her voice was lovely, Frances was in demand as a concert soloist. She also was a brilliant pianist and learned several modern languages as well as Greek and Hebrew.

With all her education, however, Frances Havergal maintained a simple faith and confidence in her Lord. She never wrote a line of poetry without praying over it.

One of the lines of Frances Havergal's hymn says, "Take my silver and my gold; not a mite would I withhold." In 1878, four years after writing the hymn, Miss Havergal wrote a friend, The Lord has shown me another little step, and, of course, I have taken it with extreme delight. 'Take my silver and my gold' now means shipping off all my ornaments to the Church Missionary House, including a jewel cabinet that is really fit for a countess, where all will be accepted and disposed of for me…

Nearly fifty articles are being packed up. I don’t think I ever packed a box with such pleasure."

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Last updated June, 2007.

JOHN WYCLIFFE ON HIS DEATH BED.

Word that John Wycliffe was dying whipped like storm winds across England.

Now on this day, December 30, 1384, clerics–many of them his enemies–crowded into his room at Lutterworth.
If they hoped to hear some last word or a recantation from him, they were disappointed.

John could not speak.

Two days earlier, he had grown numb and collapsed while saying mass.

When he came to from this, his second stroke, he was paralyzed and unable to speak.

John was the most famous priest of his day.

His learning was immense.

He had been a leading scholar at Oxford and a chaplain to the King of England.

More to the point, he spoke out boldly against the errors of the popes, the organizational hierarchy of the Roman Church, and the corruption of the clergy in his day.

He criticized not only the organization of the medieval church but its theology as well and argued for a return to the Scriptures.

Pastors should live lives of simplicity and holiness, he taught, shepherding their flocks (people)—not plundering them.

If the people in England were to know the truth, John reasoned that they must have the Word of God in their own language.

Under his direction, the Bible was translated into English for the first time, although the job was not completed by his associates until 1395, eleven years after his death.

Repeatedly condemned and burned by church authorities, copies of Wycliffe’s Bible continued in use for over a century, until printed Bibles took their place. This work greatly influenced William Tyndale who made the first printed translation of the New Testament in English.

We can still puzzle out the meaning of John Wycliffe’s words. Here is how he describes the transfiguration: “And aftir sixe dayes Jhesus took Petre, and James, and John and ledith [led] hem [them] by hem selve aloone in to an high hil ; and he is transfigurid before hem.

And his clothis ben maad [were made] schynynge [shining] and white ful moche [much] as snow, and which maner clothis a fullere [cloth worker], or walkere [worker] of cloth, may not make white on erthe.

And Helye [Elijah] with Myses apperide [appeared] to hem, and thei weren [were] spekynge [speaking] with Jhesu.”

John Wycliffe died of his stroke on the last day of the year.

The religious authorities had never excommunicated him because they feared public opinion—the people loved John and his fame was international.

So he was buried in consecrated soil.

But about thirty years later, the Council of Constance revenged itself on his criticism by condemning his teachings and ordering his bones to be dug up and burned.

But the burning of such a man’s bones could not end his influence.

As John Foxe said in his book of martyrs, “though they digged up his body, burnt his bones, and drowned his ashes, yet the Word of God and the truth of his doctrine, with the fruit and success thereof, they could not burn; which yet to this day…doth remain.”

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November 28, 1628

John Bunyan was born in Elstow, Bedfordshire, England on this day, November 28, 1628. His home was a small thatched cottage, and his father was a tinker, who spent his days pushing a cart along the roads, stopping at homes to fix metal pots and pans. Young John received a grammar-school education, but like most sons of his day, he learned his father’s trade.

During the English Civil War he served as a soldier—probably on the Puritan side.

At nineteen he married, and his Christian wife led him to try to reform his life. But John found himself constantly slipping back into old habits.

Though he lived well enough to impress his neighbors, he described himself as a ‘painted hypocrite.’

“In 1651, John began attending an independent meeting at Bedford and was moved by the pastor’s intense biblical preaching.

He began to pore over the Scriptures, until the conflict within him ended in the assurance of God’s grace in his life.

Salvation had come to John Bunyan.

He joined the Bedford congregation and began to preach there, amazing people at the abilities of a “mere” tinker.

Though King Charles II had at first promised freedom of religion, increasingly the
Anglican church became England’s only accepted church.

Dissent was not encouraged, and in 1661 the authorities sent John to Bedford jail for his preaching. His times in prison were hard on his family and his blind daughter.

He remained there until 1672, when Charles issued the Declaration of Indulgence, extending leniency to non-Anglicans.

Upon his release, the Independent meeting house called him as their pastor.

He received a license to preach and became known as Bishop Bunyan—perhaps becoming the organizing genius of Independents in the area, But the toleration was not to last.

In 1675 Bunyan again found himself in prison, and began his greatest work: The Pilgrim’s Progress.

This allegory of salvation and the Christian walk has given us such colorful phrases as “Vanity Fair,” the Slough of Despond,” “House Beautiful,” “Muckraking,” and, “Hanging is too good for him.”

Drawing only on his own experience and the Bible, this largely unlettered preacher created a captivating piece of literature that appeals to those who travel—or would travel—on the spiritual pilgrimage from the City of Destruction to the Celestial City.

Perhaps because so many readers experienced the same sort of pilgrimage in their lives, The Pilgrim’s Progress, became the world’s best-selling devotional book. Bunyan describes the most intimate states of the Christian soul.

His realization of the depth of God’s grace in his own life gave Bunyan an ability to speak to many people, even generations, of their own spiritual state.

Bunyan’s other works, Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners, The Life and Death of Mr. Badman, and The Holy War, never achieved the popularity of The Pilgrim’s Progress.

This one humbly written work touched thousands of live sand became a classic.

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BY CHURCH HISTORY TIMELINE.
it And show the whole damned world how to use it When I find it, when I prove it I know that some damned fool is gonna lose it. For it's the photo. For it's the river of hope From the pool of tears It's the river of hope And it's the river we lost for years. Past the chemical plant where the junk flows in By the

Rivers of Hope. Nonprofit Organization. Send Message. Rivers of Hope updated their cover

helping victims of family violence in Wright and Sherburne counties.  Did you know your purchases can make a difference? AmazonSmile donates to Rivers of Hope you may also like: Tides: Music for Meditation and Yoga by Kaitlyn Aurelia Smith. Rivers of Hope, Monticello, Minnesota. 351 likes. Rivers of Hope is dedicated to