

LutherFacts #10



The burning of books is an act that always captivates us. This was particularly the case on November 27, 1519 when students at the University of Cologne, an institution loyal to the Pope, threw the writings of Martin Luther into a fire and then called on him to recant. On campus at that time was Heinrich Bullinger, a newly enrolled student from Zurich. The book-burning piqued his interest. Who was Martin Luther? What had he done to merit such a response? To find out, Bullinger began a sustained study of Luther's lectures, focusing on those that dealt with Paul's Letter to the Romans. In a short time, writes church historian Steven Lawson, "Seeds of reform were being sown in his mind. At age seventeen, he embraced the pivotal truth that justification is by faith alone in Christ alone." This realization would lead Bullinger to eventually become the leading Swiss Protestant reformer of his generation. Once again, Luther's words had an impact far beyond the confines of Wittenberg and that even defied the flames of a burning fire.