

LutherFacts #31

During the 1530s and 1540s, as Scandinavian Lutheran churches took root, a new leader emerged to further expand the Protestant Reformation. In Geneva, Switzerland, French-born John Calvin (1509-1564) assumed control of the Reformed branch of the movement and, through his writings and powerful preaching, energized those defying the Pope. In so doing, he became the inspiration for reformers in France, the Netherlands, England, and Scotland. Over time, Calvin would join Luther as the two most significant figures shaping the Reformation. While differing in their efforts to change many church practices—Luther retained the established liturgical forms of worship while Calvin rejected them—the two men mostly agreed on the major theological premises of the Reformation. They represented different generations—Luther was 26 years older—but that difference worked to extend their collective leadership over a longer period of time. What Luther had begun, Calvin hoped to complete.