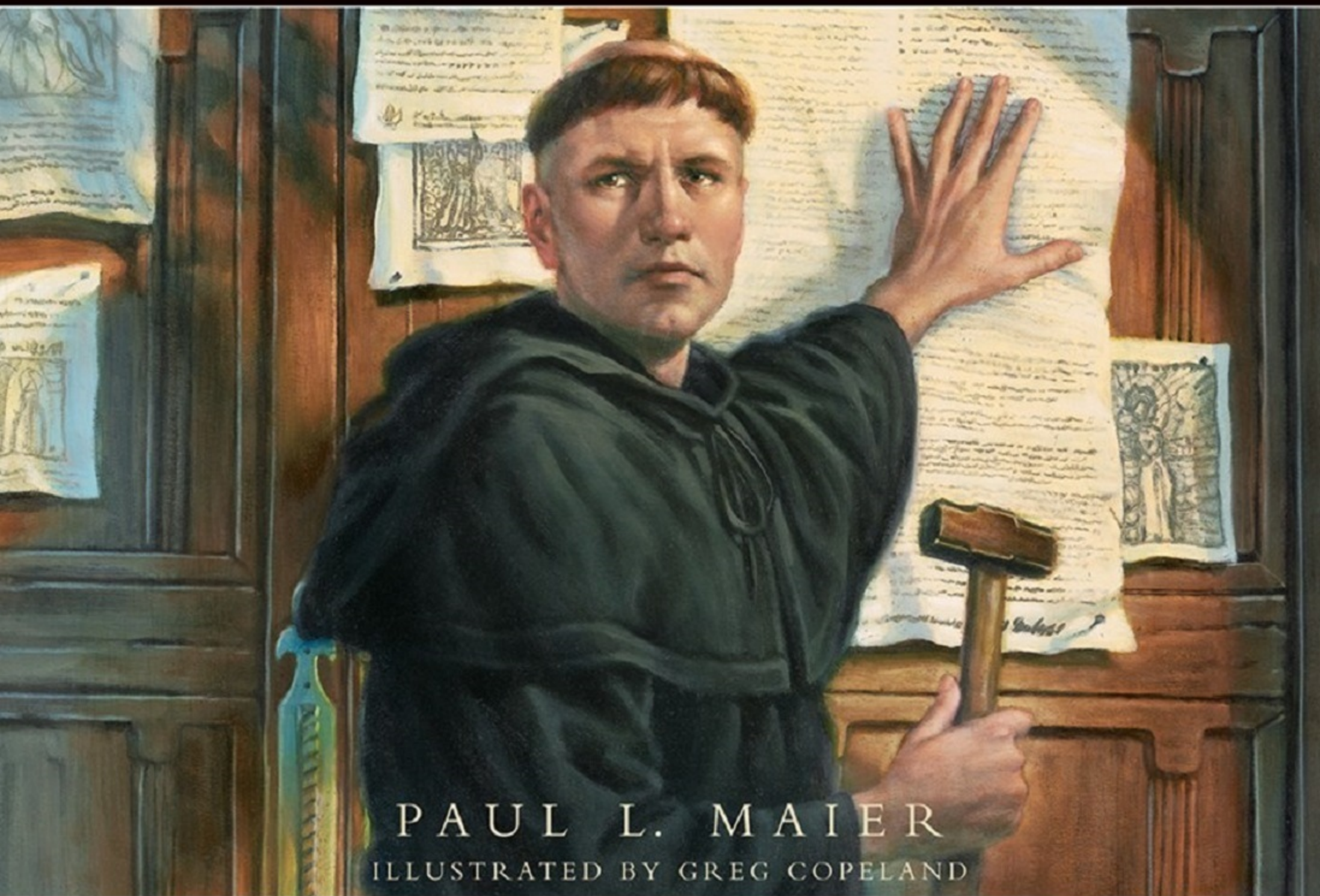


# MARTIN LUTHER

A MAN WHO CHANGED THE WORLD



PAUL L. MAIER  
ILLUSTRATED BY GREG COPELAND





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CONCORDIA PUBLISHING HOUSE • SAINT LOUIS



**Our loving God** helps His people turn from sin and error. In the Old Testament, He sent prophets to warn them. In the New Testament, He even sent His own Son, Jesus Christ, to reform and save the world. And in the centuries since then, God sent others to keep the church pure.


The greatest of these was Martin Luther, an extraordinary man who started the Reformation just when the church needed it most.

Martin was born at Eisleben in Germany in 1483—nine years before Columbus sailed to America! In those days, the Christian church no longer based its beliefs on the Bible alone. It had actually invented new doctrines and practices that Jesus and His apostles had never taught. Sadly, too, the church leaders of that time, far from setting a good example for their people, sinned worse than the people did!

 **Martin Luther would change all that.**







**H**ans Luther, Martin's father, was a rather prosperous miner, and his mother, Margareta, was strict when it came to discipline. The family soon moved to Mansfeld, where Martin went to school and learned his lessons in Latin.

When he was 14, Martin was sent to school in Magdeburg. There, students who did poorly in their studies were made to wear a donkey mask! After only a year, Hans sent Martin to school in Eisenach. Martin and other students there would go door to door and sing for their food, a custom of young scholars at the time that did not mean they were poor as beggars.

Because his son was so brilliant, Hans enrolled Martin at the University of Erfurt to study law. Martin might have become an important lawyer, but a sudden thunderstorm came along and changed his plans—and church history too! He was returning to the university after visiting his parents when a lightning bolt knocked him to the ground. “Save me, St. Anne!” he cried out. “I will become a monk!”

And he did. Thinking this was a sign from God, Luther sold his law books and entered the Augustinian monastery at Erfurt. Papa Luther was furious: he had hoped his son would be a wealthy lawyer and support him in his old age. Now what would he do?







**M**artin did not wish to displease his father. He only wanted to lead a holy life and know that his sins were forgiven so he would go to heaven. Brother Martin tried to be a good monk: he prayed long hours, ate little, worked hard, studied constantly, and endured great hardships.

Did all that help? It did not. Luther was surprised and saddened that the harder he tried to keep God's commandments perfectly, the more he felt like a failure.

Perhaps a visit to Rome, the headquarters of the Roman Catholic Church, would help. The monastery sent Brother Luther over the Alps to Italy. But when he saw how worldly and sinfully the pope and the cardinals behaved, his despair only deepened.

Then, once again, Luther's life changed. The ruler of Saxony, Frederick the Wise, had established a new university in Wittenberg, a hundred miles away from Erfurt. Luther was sent there to be a professor.

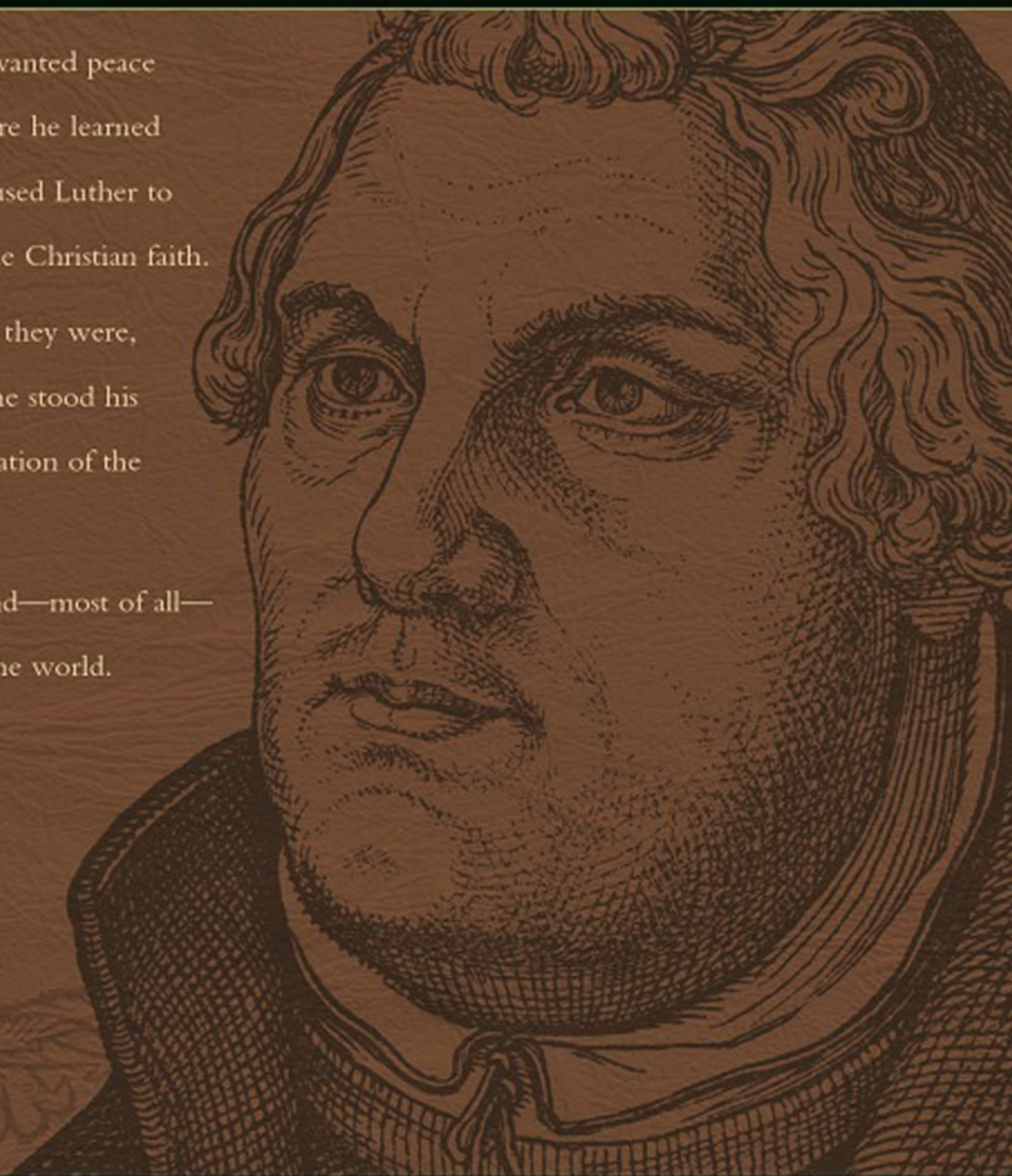




*More than anything, Martin Luther wanted peace with God. His search led him to the Bible, where he learned about salvation through faith. This discovery caused Luther to challenge the church to return to the roots of the Christian faith.*

The church leaders liked things the way they were, however, and tried to stop Martin Luther. But he stood his ground, and his tireless work led to the Reformation of the church and to far-reaching changes in society.

Here is a story of adventure, courage, and—most of all—faith. Here is the story of a man who changed the world.



ISBN 0-7586-0626-5



Children's / Children's Picture  
56-2274