

History of the Reformation

No. 1 Medieval Europe – Medieval Church

On 31 October 1517 a medieval Augustinian monk and professor of theology called Martin Luther nailed a sheet of paper to the door of the university church in Wittenberg. The paper set out 95 theses concerning “the power of indulgences”, and called for a public disputation (an academic debate) on the same. Although the disputation never took place, the reaction to the theses was

The purpose of these studies is to describe what the Reformation was, why it took place, and the reformed legacy with which we live.

Since we tend to historical myopia, it's worth remembering that:

- Christianity did not begin in the 16th century;
- There was no thousand year hiatus between AD 500 and AD 1500 during which Christianity was dormant;
- Christianity is not a western European movement – but the eastern (Orthodox) and western (Catholic) churches parted company in 1054.

I am not going to attempt to trace 1500 years of history; but before we consider the Reformation, we need to learn a little about the late medieval period.

1. Late Medieval Europe

(a) Social conditions

Carter Lindberg (*The European Reformations*) characterizes late medieval Europe as an “age of crisis”.

- **Social structures** Tightly knit society in which everyone knew their place, but traditional feudal social structures were breaking down; there was a remarkable growth of urbanization; those who left the land for the larger towns found themselves excluded from the trade guilds and became dependent on jobs that provided little more than a hand-to-mouth existence.
- **Economy** Due to urbanization, the economy shifted from a “natural” economy (based on farm labour and food production) to a money economy (based on commercial production and technological development).
- **Health** Famine and plague (typhoid and bubonic plague) devastated western Europe in the 14th century; famine was caused by depopulation of farm land, population growth, and crop failure due to poor weather; densely populated cities were an ideal habitat for the rats which carried the fleas which carried the “Black Death”; it is estimated that perhaps 30% of the population succumbed to the plague (first appeared 1347-48).
- **Literacy** Monasteries were traditionally centres of learning; universities were established in major cities; literacy was below 10%; the church services were

conducted in Latin; religious “instruction” of the laity was by means of pictures (e.g. the “stations of the cross”) and statues.

- **Religion** Everyone was a Christian; Jews were regarded with suspicion not for racial reasons but because, as non-Christians, they were not members of the state; religious fervour enhanced by the proximity of death; elevation of the status of the virgin Mary, and her (putative) mother St. Anne, and other saints; bustling trade in relics.
- **Politics** Europe was ruled by kings; nations and states approximate the nations we know today; there was a handful of city states ruled by councils, but these were not democratic (democracy was considered a poor form of government); the central European power was the Holy Roman Empire and the emperor was crowned by the pope.
- **War** The Hundred Years' War (1337-1453) between French and English monarchies; the vast majority of people were peasants, and their lives involved hard labour in generally poor conditions; rebellions broke out in France (1358), England (1381), and the Holy Roman Empire (1493, 1502, 1513, 1517).

(b) Humanism and the Renaissance

Despite the sense of crisis, the late medieval period was also characterized by newness: new discoveries (the “New World”, i.e. N and S America), new ideas (the Renaissance and humanism), and new inventions (the printing press).

- **Petrarch (1304-1374)** Scholar of classical literature; credited with being the first of the humanists and beginning the renaissance.
- **Renaissance** The “rebirth” of classical culture; influenced art, architecture, music, literature, philosophy, science; facilitated by the rise of “new money”.
- **Humanism** This term refers to scholars of the “humanities”, i.e. the literature of the “classical” period; criticized and rejected the “pedantry” of medieval scholasticism (i.e. the philosophical methodology of the medieval scholars); most of the leading reformers were humanists, although Luther was a medieval scholar.
- **Printing press** Around 1450 Johannes Gutenberg developed the first printing press with metal movable type in Europe; the first “mass produced” book he printed was the “Gutenberg Bible”, 1455, with a print run of about 180 copies; within a generation printing shops were found all over Europe; the consequent availability of relatively cheap books was a huge boost to the renaissance.

(c) The Ottoman Empire

Constantinople fell to the Ottoman Empire in 1453. Belgrade was captured in 1521, and the Ottoman Empire twice attacked Vienna (1529 and 1532). This Muslim threat to Christendom on its eastern border was a factor in the politics of western Europe, and therefore also had an influence on the Reformation.

2. The Late Medieval Church

The late medieval church is not to be confused with the Church of Rome as we know it today. For one thing, it regarded itself as the Catholic (universal) church. For another, the Church of Rome is really the product of the Council of Trent (1545-63) at which many important counter-reformation doctrines were formally defined. The Reformation was a defining moment for everyone, not just the reformers.

(a) The papacy

▪ The Growth of Papal Power

“The Middle Ages may be defined as the period in western European history when the church could reasonably claim to be the one true state, and when men...acted on the assumption that the church had an overriding political authority... During the whole medieval period there was in Rome a single spiritual and temporal authority exercising powers which in the end exceeded those that had ever lain within the grasp of a Roman Emperor” (R.W. Southern, *Western Society and the Church in the Middle Ages*).

▪ The “Babylonian Captivity of the Church”

1305 Archbishop of Bordeaux elected pope – unwilling to relocate to Rome, and establishes Avignon as his residence and the seat of papal power – delighted the French, but no one else because it resulted in a series of seven French popes. Period called the “Babylonian Captivity of the Church”.

After 70 years the people of Rome got fed up with being sidelined and demanded in 1378 that the college of cardinals elect an Italian pope (Urban VI). However, the man they elected was so domineering that they elected a second, French pope (Clement VII). Urban, however, refused to resign, with the result that the church was split – the “Great Schism” which lasted 1378-1417 – each European kingdom had to decide which pope to support.

▪ The Council of Constance (1414-18)

A resolution was eventually reached at the Council of Constance (by which stage there were three concurrent popes) – persuaded two of the popes to resign, deposed the third, and appointed pope Martin V.

Constance is important because it demonstrated in practice that the claim of the pope to be the ultimate source of the church’s authority was just that – a claim. In reality, a council of the church had deposed and appointed popes, thereby demonstrating a superior authority.

▪ Rebuilding Rome

With papal power absent from Rome for more than 100 years, the city fell into decay. For the next 100 years a series of Renaissance popes threw themselves into rebuilding the city, making it more glorious than ever.

Rebuilding is expensive. Papacy at start of 16th century was in financial crisis. The sale of indulgences provided an income stream.

(b) Indulgences

An indulgence is a certificate which waives an amount of punishment for sin.

It was commonly thought that after death Christians had to undergo a period of punishment for their sins – this punishment was experienced in purgatory.

Purgatory “If ye pity any man in pain, never knew ye pain comparable to ours; whose fire as far passeth in heat all the fires that ever burned upon earth... If ever ye lay sick and thought the night long and longed sore for day, while every hour seemed longer than five, bethink you then what a long night we silly souls endure, that lie sleepless, restless, burning and broiling in the dark fire one long night...of may years together” (Thomas More, *Supplication of Souls*).

A small number of Christians, however, died without sin – indeed with a surfeit of merit. Such a surfeit could be stored and used for the benefit of the less righteous. Clement VI published the papal bull *Unigenitus* (1343), establishing the doctrine of the treasury of merits.

The question then was how to control the flow of merit from the treasury of merits to those in purgatory. This was defined by Sixtus IV in papal bull *Salvator Noster* (1476). This ability to transfer merit provided the constitutional basis for indulgences. The papacy issued slips of paper which purported to be certificates guaranteeing the holder so many years out of purgatory. The exchange of these certificates for cash funded the rebuilding of Rome.

(c) The sacraments

The church taught that there were seven sacraments: baptism, confirmation, the mass, penance, marriage, ordination, last rites.

The sacraments were turned into a means of obtaining grace for those in purgatory – sacramentalism. “Catholicism at the end of the Middle Ages was in large part a cult of the living in the service of the dead.”

The mass lay at the heart of medieval Catholicism. It involved the transubstantiation of bread and wine into the very flesh and blood of Christ. Since Christ’s divinity was present in the elements, they were worthy of veneration. As a sacrifice offered daily to God, the mass was essential for the spiritual well-being of the whole church. However, “the mass became the essential preparation for the journey through death to heaven, ritually establishing powerful bonds between this world and the next that would be exploited by the doctrines of purgatory and indulgences” (Lindberg).

(d) The religious orders

The religious orders were “the main centres of religious life in medieval Europe... communities...set apart for the full, lifelong, and irrevocable practice of the Christian life at a level of excellence judged to be impossible outside such a community” (R.W. Southern). The oldest and most prestigious was the Benedictines. About 1200 the Augustinian canons appeared (to which Luther would belong). The Dominican and Franciscan friars were a response to urbanization – they moved from house to house rather than living in a monastery.

History of the Reformation

No. 2 Significant Pre-Reformation Reformers

The medieval church was in need of reform – and men knew it – the desire for reformation of the church didn't start with Martin Luther. We want to remember five men who in different ways contributed to the Reformation but who are not usually thought of as being among the so-called magisterial Reformers.

1. John Wycliffe (1320-1384)

Wycliffe was born in Yorkshire about 1320. Academically gifted, he went to Oxford about 1336 – eventually becoming a Doctor of Theology, and a fellow, and then Master of Balliol College (1361).

In 1366 Wycliffe published a pamphlet that set out persuasive arguments against the payment of an annual tribute to Rome. This brought him favourably to the attention of king Edward III.

Wycliffe was not friend of the pope – remember that this was the period of the “Babylonian captivity of the church” (1305-78) when the popes were French. Towards the end of this period, Wycliffe began sharply to criticize the religious quality of the monks, the worship of images, the sale of indulgences, and other religious abuses. Especially, he denounced the pope as “the proud, worldly priest of Rome, the most accursed of clippers and purse-curvers.” In 1381 he even attacked the doctrine of transubstantiation – remember that the Eucharist lay at the very heart of the medieval Europe – an attack on transubstantiation was therefore seen as an attack on the foundation and stability of society. Wycliffe's life was probably only spared because there were two popes by this stage. He was forced to leave Oxford and retire to work as a parish priest in Lutterworth, Leicester.

Probably Wycliffe's great contribution was his translation of the Vulgate (Latin Bible) into English. Although he was hampered by two disadvantages – he did not know Hebrew or Greek, and all the copies of his translation had to be written out by hand – nevertheless, his work stands as the first translation of the whole Bible into the English language.

Wycliffe organized an Order of Poor Priests (popularly known as Lollards) who took portions of the English Bible out into the towns of England, reading them to people who had never heard the Bible read in anything other than Latin.

The Council of Constance (the council which was assembled to try and sort out the problem of having two concurrent popes) posthumously condemned Wycliffe as a heretic in 1415. In 1428 the bishop of Lincoln had Wycliffe's remains exhumed and burned, and his ashes were scattered on the River Swift which runs through Lutterworth.



2. Jan Hus (1369-1415)

Richard II of England married Anne of Bohemia (now the Czech Republic). The exchange of academics between the universities of Oxford and Prague brought the writings of Wycliffe to Bohemia and to the attention of Jan Hus.

Hus was of peasant stock, but being academically gifted, and having a wealthy sponsor, he was afforded an excellent education which allowed his gifts to shine. Aged just 34 he was appointed Rector of the University of Prague.

Hus was a student of the Bible and engaged in preaching in the Czech language in the Bethlehem Chapel in Prague. Influenced by the writings of Wycliffe, he became deeply concerned that the popes (remember, there were two popes throughout his adult life) contradicted Christ in both lifestyle and teaching. This led to open conflict with the papacy – but rather than just excommunicate Hus, the Roman pope placed the whole of Prague under an interdict, i.e. forbidding the celebration of the sacraments and supposedly cutting the whole population of the city off from the source of spiritual life.

Hus was summoned to the Council of Constance. Under pressure from the interdict, and having received an assurance of safe conduct from the emperor, he went to the council in 1415. But it was a trap. He was arrested, tried, condemned, and burned at the stake as a heretic.

This perfidious act by the council led to an armed rebellion in Bohemia which the empire was unable to quell and for a period at least there existed an independent Hussite church in the heart of Catholic Europe.

Interestingly, the name “Hus” means “goose” in the Czech language. Before his execution, Hus said, “You may roast this goose, but a hundred years from now a swan will arise whose singing you will not be able to silence.” Martin Luther believed that he was that swan, and was often portrayed in pro-Lutheran depictions with a swan.



3. Girolamo Savonarola (1452-1498)

Savonarola was born in Ferrara to a prosperous and educated family. He may have trained to be a physician, but in 1475 left home to enter the Dominican Order in Bologna.

In 1490 he was assigned to San Marco and came to the attention of Giovanni Pico who himself was living under the protection of Lorenzo (*the Magnificent*) Medici of Florence. Pico persuaded Lorenzo that Savonarola would enhance the reputation of Florence, and Lorenzo brought Savonarola to the city in May 1490.



Influenced by writings of Augustine, Savonarola's preaching was declamatory – he called earnestly for men to repent of immorality. There was a transformation of morals and some conversions in the city.

He “prophesied” the “sword of the Lord” against the city, and the rise of a new Cyrus in the north who would reform the church. When Charles VII of France crossed the Alps and threw Italy into political chaos in 1494, this was seen as a fulfilment of these prophecies. Savonarola engaged in person diplomacy on behalf of Florence, delivering it from the French, and sealing his own position as the leading citizen of the city (Lorenzo had died in 1492). As a friar he was barred from holding civil office, but a political group formed under him and for three years he was effectively city governor. He aimed at making Florence into a Christian commonwealth in which the gospel ruled. Places of vice were closed down and modesty encouraged. The burning of the gambling equipment of the city, its lewd books etc. has been called *the Bonfire of the Vanities*.

The reform public morals pursued by Savonarola will only ever go so far before people begin to tire of it. Savonarola also annoyed the pope (Alexander VI, a Borgia and one of the most corrupt popes) by refusing to lend Florence's support to the *Holy League* against the French. Alexander VI forbade Savonarola to continue preaching. Savonarola complied for a while, but when he returned to the practice, the pope excommunicated him and threatened Florence with an interdict if the city harboured him. Ten months later he was arrested and under torture confessed to inventing his prophecies. He and two supporting monks were hanged and burned in the main square of Florence in May 1498.

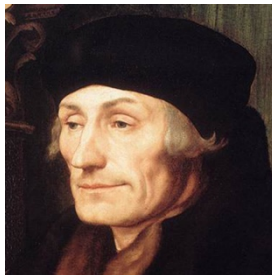
Early Protestant reformers, including Luther, read some of Savonarola's writings and praised him as a forerunner whose ideas anticipated their own. In France he was regarded as a precursor of Huguenot reform.

4. Erasmus of Rotterdam (1466-1536)

Dutchman Desiderius Erasmus is regarded as the leading Christian scholar of the Renaissance.

Through the Augustinians, Erasmus was ordained a priest. He moved in 1499 he moved to Cambridge and was appointed Lady Margaret's Professor of Divinity. Under the influence of John Colet he threw himself into the study of Greek with a view to understanding the New Testament better. Despite many other offers of appointments, Erasmus preferred the life of independent scholarship.

Erasmus believed that the church needed to be reformed. He published in 1511 a satirical attack on the superstitions of the church, and in 1513, after the death of pope Julius II, another satire called *Julius Excluded from Heaven*. However, he was no friend of Martin Luther with whom he strongly disagreed over the nature of sin and salvation. However, such was Erasmus' stature that the reformers were keen to claim him as one of them, and since men like Calvin shared his humanist perspective, they felt a deal of sympathy with him.



Erasmus' great contribution to the Reformation is undoubtedly his preparation of a critical Greek text of the New Testament, five different editions published in 1516, 1519, 1522, 1527 and 1535, and dedicated to pope Leo X.

He died in Basel in 1536 and was buried in Basel Minster.

5. William Tyndale (1494-1536)

Tyndale's translation of the Bible was the first English translation from the original languages, and the first to make use of the printing press.

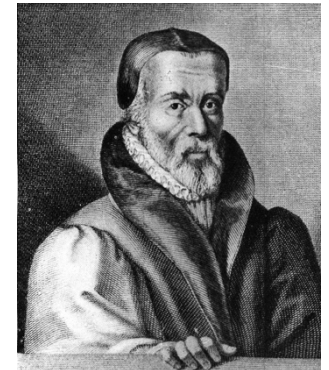
William Tyndale was a linguistic genius. In addition to his native English and scholarship in Latin, Hebrew and Greek, he also spoke French, German, Italian and Spanish perfectly. In 1505 Tyndale went to Oxford. He was not impressed by the darkening effect of the education given there. He graduated MA in 1515, and moved to Cambridge where he studied theology 1517-21.

1521 he returned home to Gloucestershire and was appointed tutor to the Walsh family in Little Sodbury for who he worked of a couple of years. Towards the end of this appointment it is said that he had an altercation with a local clergyman who said, “We had better be without God's laws than the Pope's”; to which Tyndale replied, “I defy the Pope, and all his laws; and if God spares my life, ere many years, I will cause the boy that driveth the plough to know more of the Scriptures than thou dost!”

Tyndale left for London in 1523 to seek permission to translate the Bible into English. But Cuthbert Tunstall, the bishop of London, refused to help. Tyndale realised that he would have to leave England to achieve his goal. He left in 1524 (with financial support from godly wool merchants). The remaining 12 years of his life were spent as a fugitive in Europe with one goal – to bring the Bible in English to the English. He went to Cologne and Worms. He completed his translation of the NT in 1526, and by the end of the year copies were finding their way into England, often in consignments of wool. The work was condemned by bishop Tunstall who warned booksellers that that they should not handle them, and had copies burned in public. Amazing as it may seem to us today, possession of a NT in English was a capital offence.

By 1529 a translation of the first 5 books of the OT had been completed.

Tyndale was a wanted man. He was betrayed by Henry Phillips in Antwerp in 1535, and taken to Vilvoorde near Brussels. He was tried on a charge of heresy in 1536 and was condemned to death, being strangled to death while tied at the stake, and then his dead body burned. His final words were reported as “Lord! Open the King of England's eyes.” Remarkably, a year after this the *Great Bible*, Tyndale's own translation (with final work done by Myles Coverdale), was made available throughout England by royal charter.



History of the Reformation

No. 3 Martin Luther

The following notes are from a series of lectures by Carl Trueman.

1. Luther's early life

Luther is a medieval figure – trained as a monk in a medieval university.

Born in Eisleben, 10 November 1483; died, also in Eisleben, 18 February 1546.

1484 Family moves to Mansfeld. German law forbade oldest son from inheriting family land. Father (Hans Luther) was a miner and worked his way up to become mine manager. Father was ambitious – and had ambition for his son, that he would not work with his hands.

1501 Luther matriculates at University of Erfurt where the curriculum has not be influenced by the Renaissance. Trains in law – prestige and money.

1505 On journey from home to Erfurt, lightning strikes close to Luther – he calls on St Anne to save him from the storm; promises to become a monk – for Luther, lightning is an act of God, and hence an act of judgement, a warning. Within 10 days Luther presents himself at Augustinian monastery in Erfurt. His father is furious, because (a) his son is giving up a good career; and (b) he has joined an un-prestigious order (Dominicans and Franciscans were the great orders).

1507 Ordained, *i.e.* becomes a parish priest in a pastoral position dealing with real people. It is the needs of his congregation that will drive him into the open because of the sale of indulgences. First celebration of mass is traumatic for Luther – due to doctrine of transubstantiation – genuinely believes that he is touching and handling Christ in the bread and wine.

1508 Temporarily transferred to University of Wittenberg – a new foundation which was recruiting talent and would not be anxious about a maverick professor.

1510 Takes part in a small delegation sent to Rome to try and settle a dispute within the Augustinian order. He's overwhelmed by Rome: (a) piety (relics, etc.); (b) corruption of the Roman court.

2. Developing as a Biblical exegete

Luther's theology was undergoing a transformation at this time – he was struggling with *Anfechtungen*, “angst”, a feeling of dread. Luther's burning question was, “Where can I find a gracious God?” The answer given by his medieval masters was that if he did what was in him, then God would be found by him, *i.e.* do you best and God will not deny you the first infusion of grace which will enable you to do works that will truly merit grace.

Behind this is the question of whether things are as they are because God wills them to be so. What makes something good? Is it good because God wills it, or does God will it because it is good? What is the basis for justification – does someone have to be righteous in order to be declared just, or are they righteous because God declares them justified?

Thomas Aquinas (the great medieval theologian) said a person must be in a state of grace for a person to be justified.

Luther disagreed – he came to see that a person is righteous because God declares him to be so, not vice versa.

The medieval position of Luther's teachers is self-defeating for the introspective person like Luther – he was insanely committed to confessing all his sins – part of his trying to do his best – hence his fear that he was not sufficiently diligent. Far from assuring him of God's grace, his fear that he was not in a state of grace was exacerbated.

Meanwhile Luther was working through *Romans* 1:16-17 – Biblical exegesis was essential for teachers of theology.

Sin and baptism – Luther had been taught that sin is a weakness, a wound, dirt, that makes humans less than they should be. The solution is strengthening, healing, cleansing. But Romans taught Luther to see sin as death – if you are dead there is nothing you can do – you need resurrection. Moreover, because death is a state, it cannot be addressed by a process (sanctification).

Luther began to develop a “theology of humility”. The sinner must despair of himself – he can't do anything. Faith is, in part, a despairing of oneself, as well as trusting in God.

3. Towards reformation, 1517

Papacy at start of 16th century in financial crisis. Indulgences provide an income stream. Albrecht of Mainz wants third bishopric (bishoprics come with tax-raising powers). Pope sells him the necessary licence. To pay back the loan he took out to pay for the licence, Albrecht splits income from indulgences 50:50 with pope.

Tetzel – Dominican preacher – commissioned to sell indulgence through the German speaking regions of Holy Roman Empire. Excluded from electoral Saxony because Fredrick the Wise (prince of Saxony) is afraid Tetzel damage his income from his collection of relics.

Easter 1517, Wittenbergers go to neighbouring parishes of Zerbst and Juteborg to get indulgences. Luther has pastoral reason for critiquing indulgences. Tetzel's way of selling indulgences clashes with Luther's theology of humility because it does away with need for repentance.

31 October 1517 – Luther nails his “95 Theses” to church door in Wittenberg. He is genuinely trying to start a debate to find out what indulgences are – a reformation was not in his purpose.

“Out of love for the truth and from desire to elucidate it, the Reverend Father Martin Luther, Master of Arts and Sacred Theology, and ordinary lecturer therein at Wittenberg, intends to defend the following statements and to dispute on them in that place. Therefore he asks that those who cannot be present and dispute with him orally shall do so in their absence by letter. In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.

“1. Our Lord and Master Jesus Christ, in saying, ‘Repent ye, etc.,’ intended that the whole life of his believers on earth should be a constant penance.

“2. And the word ‘penance’ neither can, nor may, be understood as referring to the Sacrament of Penance, that is, to confession and atonement as exercised under the priest’s ministry.

“3. Nevertheless He does not think of inward penance only: rather is inward penance worthless unless it produces various outward mortifications of the flesh.

“4. Therefore mortification continues as long as hatred of oneself continues, that is to say, true inward penance lasts until entrance into the Kingdom of Heaven.”

4. Diet of Augsburg, 1518

Summer 1518 – controversy over indulgences is spreading beyond Electoral Saxony into Ducal Saxony and Brandenburg.

Albrecht of Mainz had lodged a complaint with Rome in December 1517 – as a result Luther is summonsed to Rome August 1518 – charged with suspected heresy, lack of respect for the keys, and contempt for the authority of the pope.

The summons distresses Luther – a summons to Rome was a very serious thing – prior to Luther, very few reformers died peacefully in their own bed. So he writes to George Spalatin, the secretary to Frederick the Wise, telling him that the honour of Wittenberg was a stake and if he was to be tried, he must be tried on German soil. The letter indicates how vulnerable Luther was – he depended on the favour of the civil magistrate. Frederick agrees.

Diet of Augsburg, 12-14 October 1518.

Papal legate, Thomas de Vio (Cajetan) – recognized significant issues in Catholic Church needing reformation, but against Luther’s theological reforms.

Frederick is in strong position because:

- Problems in eastern Europe – Ottoman empire; HRE must make military response and therefore requires money from the electors. Emperor doesn’t want civil war.
- Emperor Maximilian wants his son Charles appointed King of the Romans – typically King of the Romans is in pole position for becoming emperor.

Therefore emperor must keep Frederick sweet.

The debate focuses on bull *Unigenitus*, and Luther says he cannot square bull against Scriptures.

Luther returns to Wittenburg and Frederick informs Cajetan that he won’t hand him over because “the Saxons do not consider him to be a heretic”. Frederick is motivated by concern for justice, and knows that Luther is good for the stature of his university. Two new chairs – in Hebrew and Greek (Philip Melancthon). Theology is moving in direction of study of Scriptures in original languages.

Luther undertakes to lecture through Galatians again, revising work he did in 1515-16. He engages in a new lecture series on the Psalms.

5. The Leipzig debate, 1519

22 June 1519 Luther arrives in Leipzig in company with armed students!

Citizens of Leipzig treat him as though he was their bitterest enemy.

29 June Luther preaches in lecture hall in university. His text Matthew 16:13-19, Peter’s confession, and Christ giving keys to Peter. Argues that Peter represents church as a whole, and the keys of the church are given to the church as a whole, and absolution therefore belongs to church as a whole.

Luther’s debating opponent (John Eck of Leipzig) tries to prove Roman primacy from the church fathers. Luther pushes back to the Scriptures. *It becomes clear that the real issue in the reformation is the issue of authority.* This is what gets Luther condemned.

Medieval church sees the authority of the church as sacramental – Luther’s theology of humility undermines this, because you do not need sacraments to receive grace.

Luther doesn’t just say that the pope is not the final authority, but also that church councils are not final either – the ecclesiological implications of what Luther is saying is now obvious – he is tearing everything down, and is going to have build everything up again.

Leipzig is a watershed for Luther – the real issue (church authority) comes to the fore – hence the doctrine of the perspicuity of Scripture is the main issue in *The Bondage of the Will*.

6. The Diet of Worms, 1521

10 December 1520: Luther, Melancthon and others burn papal bull (summoning him to Rome) and books of canon law in the town square of Wittenberg.

What was the Church to do about Luther? Although he was excommunicated (i.e. he had ceased to have official existence), the Church summonsed him to an official imperial diet at Worms, April 1521. Very risky for Luther to go – he could be seized and burned at the stake because of his excommunication. Would the empire dare? Luther



Frederick the Wise

was hugely popular – people who could not read were buying pictures of Luther to hang in their homes!

The emperor asks Fredrick the Wise to present the summons to Luther – Fredrick says, “Noting to do with me.” Summons delivered by Caspar Sturm on 29 March. Luther sets out in April. Visits major cities on the way and preaches to packed churches. Arrives 16 April and is courted by the great and the good for his advice.

The meeting at Worms is attended by the top brass of Europe, with Charles V at the head, and Luther’s writings on a table before him. Luther is brought into meeting hall, shown his writings, and required to acknowledge the books as his and recant their content. Luther asks for a delay in proceedings. Why? Meeting adjourned to next day, Thursday 18 April 1521. Question repeated. Luther replies, first in German then in Latin – his point, “I am a German problem. The resolution must be German. The emperor is German, and I am addressing him in our common tongue.”

Luther divides his works into three: (a) those that deal with piety and morals (even his opponents like these); (b) those against a papacy which has destroyed so many souls he cannot retract them (moreover, the diet at Worm confirms that everyone knew that the papacy needs reform); (c) those against individuals who have exercised Rome’s tyrannical rule.

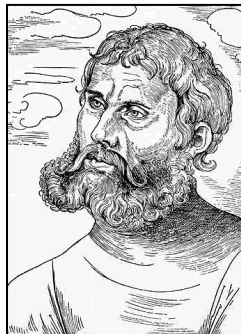
Eck demands Luther recant. Luther: “Unless I am convinced by the testimony of the Scriptures or by clear reason – for I do not trust either in the pope or in counsels alone, since it is well known that they have often erred and contradicted themselves – I am bound by the Scriptures I have quoted and my conscience is captive to the Word of God. I cannot and I will not retract anything since it is neither safe nor right to go against conscience. May God help me. Amen.”

The diet erupts and Luther is taken out by a guard – the Spaniards demand his immediate execution. The emperor expresses the wish he had moved against Luther earlier. Joachim of Brandenburg presses for the electors to comply with the imperial ban – making Luther an outlaw. The edict of Worms published on 25 May, but Fredrick the Wise is given permission not to enact it in electoral Saxony, i.e. the emperor attempts a policy of containment.

The diet peters out. Posters appear around Worms depicting a leather boot – the symbol of the Bund Schuh, a peasant paramilitary group founded by Joss Fritz in Alsace in 14th century.

7. At the Wartburg, and crisis of 1522

Luther heads back to Wittenberg but is kidnapped on the way and vanishes – airlifted out of the public eye by electoral Saxony, to Wartburg castle over Eisenach, where he is called Junker Georg (knight George). He grows a beard and dresses as a knight. He starts work on German translation of New Testament – and starts to suffer from insomnia and bowel problems.



Junker Georg

Meanwhile back at Wittenberg... leadership passes to Melanchthon, Karlstadt, and Zwilling.

Marriage of clergy is introduced. The mass is reformed; private mass is abolished; liturgy is revised to remove references to mass as a sacrifice.

1 November 1521, Justas Jonas declares that the relics in Wittenberg are rubbish. The students go on a rampage, smashing stuff up – a problem because it makes the reformation look like social chaos – if Fredrick the Wise appears to lose control, the imperial policy of containment will be deemed a failure and the empire will tip towards civil war.

Luther returns anonymously in December 1521 to see what is going on. He likes the fact the reformation is moving forward – but he is very disturbed by the violence associated with it.

Christmas day: Karlstadt officiates at mass in a plain robe and starts to dress as a peasant. Zwilling becomes Karlstadt’s “hit man”, orchestrating iconoclasm.

Turn of the year: the “Zwickau prophets” appear – three lay men who claim to have a direct leading from the Holy Spirit. Melanchthon writes to Luther to advise him about them. For Luther, all their talk about the Holy Spirit shows that this is not Christianity – for Luther, God is known only in Christ, and the Spirit’s role is to shine his light on Christ through the Word. Luther has to return to Wittenberg.

He arrives late January 1522. This is the most dangerous moment in his career. If he cannot bring the reformation under control, then Fredrick the Wise will have to hand him over to the imperial authorities. Luther preaches the *Invocavit* (first Sunday of Lent) sermons in February. Zwilling and Karlstadt are expelled from Wittenberg. From now on the Wittenberg reformation is shaped by Luther.

8. The Peasants’ War

Urbanization was very disruptive of settled patterns of life in the late medieval period. The pressure is felt in the country as well as in the city.

Anti-clericalism is on the rise. As rural wealth declines, resentment of church taxes rises. The Lutheran idea of the priesthood of all believers seizes the imagination of the people. Luther’s theological message meshes with the popular mood – but the vast majority do not understand his theology refracted through the Cross: they simply hear the language of justice and liberty.

Karlstadt and Zwilling had a socially more radical view of the reformation than Luther – even Erasmus was socially and politically more radical.

It all explodes with a series of dramatic peasant uprisings in 1524-25.

The peasants are crushed at battle of Frankenhausen 1525 by a combined army of Catholic and Lutheran provinces.

This is significant for Luther. He understands that the peasants had genuine grievances, but when the violence breaks out he knows that he has to side with the legitimate authorities. Luther publishes *Against the Murdering Hordes of Peasants*.

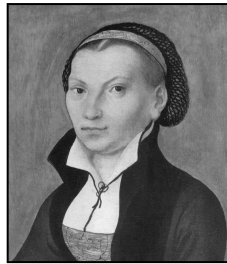
In which he advocates the harsh crushing of the peasants. Melanchthon reckoned that he went too far in his language.

Luther also drops the language of the priesthood of all believers because he understands that the language has been misunderstood. It seems that from this point onwards Luther understands that the reformation is going to be a long drawn out affair, and he begins to prepare for the future:

- He re-wrote the liturgy to make it a Bible teacher;
- He introduced congregational singing, for which he composed hymns;
- He prepared catechisms (and claimed that through memorizing these, the youths of Wittenberg knew more about the word of God “than all the universities and doctors before”);
- He provided preachers for towns throughout Saxony.

Luther got married at the height of the Peasants’ War – seen as very insensitive timing. Married Katherine von Bora. Not a marriage born out of love, but they do come to love one another.

Must be borne in mind that ordinary life went on – being a reformer did not earn much. Katie was a competent home brewer. Luther tried his hand at carpentry. They did gardening together – all to earn money. Luther was first man to write a question and answer catechism who was a parent – it has the concrete form of a man who knew how to talk to small children.



Katherine von Bora

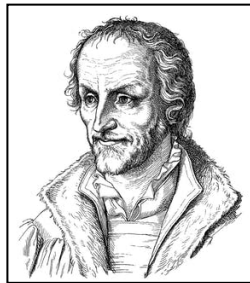
9. The Diet of Augsburg, 1530, and beyond

Emperor Charles V called an imperial diet at Augsburg, 1530, motivated by the army of the Ottoman empire at the gates of Vienna. Charles needed a united Christian force, and so had to deal with religious differences in the empire.

Luther was still under the imperial ban, but he was represented by Melanchthon, who composed and presented a Lutheran confession of faith to the emperor. Nine princes of the empire signed the Augsburg confession – Lutheranism was now an institutional force to be reckoned with.

Much of Luther’s best writing was published in the mid-1520s. However, in 1534 he completed his translation of the Old Testament into German, and published it with notes and illustrations.

In the same year Luther suffered his first heart attack. He also suffered from a painful abscess on his leg, excruciating kidney stones, severe headaches, dizziness and tinnitus.



Phillip Melanchthon

The Reformation seemed to lose some traction during the decade 1531-41. Zwingli (of who more later) died in 1531. Divisions were appearing between some of the leading reformers, and the radical reformation (again, more later) was bringing the reformation generally into disrepute. The story of the Reformation is more easily told in terms of the lives of others from this point onwards.

In January 1546 Luther travelled through wintry conditions to Eisleben to settle a dispute. He sensed on arrival that the journey had taken too much out of him. He went to bed with chest pains. He prayed Psalm 31:5 (“Into your hands I commit my spirit”). When asked “are you ready to die trusting in your Lord Jesus Christ and to confess the doctrine which you have taught in his name?” he answered clearly “yes”. He died shortly after. He was 63 years old – an old man in that era.

Luther was buried beneath his pulpit.

1500



The Imperial Circles, c.1512



History of the Reformation

No. 4 Ulrich Zwingli (1484-1531)

1. Early life and conversion

Ulrich Zwingli was born in January 1484 in the Swiss village of Wildhaus. In 1506, aged 22, he was appointed parish priest to the town of Glarus. In Glarus he became a chaplain to the Swiss army which was paid to fight for the pope.

In 1515 he was present when the papal armies were slaughtered by the army of Francis I of France at Marignano – 10,000 Swiss soldiers died.

Back in Glarus, Zwingli purchased a copy of Erasmus' Greek New Testament – this was in 1516, one year before Luther's call for a public disputation on the nature of indulgences. He had only ever studied the Bible in a second-hand fashion through commentaries – now, for the first time, he was going to read it for himself. Enthralled by what he read, he copied out most of the Pauline epistles and memorised much of the New Testament in Greek. He also learned Hebrew so that he could read the Old Testament in its original language.



2. Towards reformation in Zurich

Zwingli's gained a reputation for his oratory and in 1518 was appointed a preacher in the Great Minister in Zurich. 1 January 1519 – Zwingli announced his intention to preach his way through the New Testament, beginning with Matthew 1:1.

Zwingli almost died in 1519 when the plague visited Zurich – where Luther had called on Saint Anne back in 1505, Zwingli found that he could rely on the mercy of God alone. He survived the plague and was a changed man.

Zwingli was temperamentally cautious and gentle. The reformation in Zurich was not going to be like that of Luther in Wittenberg. Instead of campaigning for change, Zwingli dedicated himself to preaching the Word. As a result, when change came, it came from deep within the people and in response to the Word.

A huge step forward for the Zurich reformation occurred on 29 January 1523. The City Hall was packed for a public debate in which Zwingli was to speak. Zwingli carried the day comprehensively – largely because of his mastery of the Scriptures in Hebrew, Greek and Latin. The city council was so impressed that it ruled that from now on the only legal preaching in the city would be Biblical preaching. This led to a reformation of the system of education in the city and eventually the publication of the Zurich Bible in 1531.

On Easter Day, 1525, the people gathered for the sacrament of communion in the Great Minster. Instead of the Catholic Mass, plain white rolls and a jug of wine were placed on ordinary wooden plates on a table in the middle of the church. The service was in Swiss German, not Latin; and the people, remaining in their pews received both bread and wine. The break with Rome was complete.

3. Zwingli and Luther

Although Zwingli was accused of being a follower of Luther, he came to his views independently, and had different emphases, e.g. he laid less stress on justification by faith. When at last the two reformers met in 1529 at Marburg, they found that they agreed on most things, but disagreed profoundly on the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Luther held that Christ's body and blood were actually present in the elements (his view is called *consubstantiation*) and that the Supper was a gift of God's grace. Zwingli held that the bread and wine only represent the body and blood of the Lord and that the Supper was merely a commemoration of Christ's death. Luther opposed this view vociferously – he considered it to be a rejection of the gospel – and refused to have fellowship with Zwingli. Subsequently, the reformations at Wittenberg and Zurich went in different directions.

4. Death at the battle of Kappel

The reformation in Zurich did not go unchallenged by the Catholic cantons which were anxious about the unity of the Swiss confederation. In on 11 October 1531 a Swiss Catholic army attacked Zurich in the battle of Kappel.

Zwingli put on armour and joined the soldiers of Zurich in defence of the city and the reformation in the city. Zurich was defeated, and Zwingli himself was badly wounded. While the Catholic forces were looting the bodies of the dead and dying, they found Zwingli still alive, lying on his back, with his hands together as if he was praying. They asked whether a priest should be fetched to hear his confession. At this, Zwingli shook his head... They encouraged him to call upon Mary, the Mother of God and upon the Saints." When Zwingli again shook his head, the Catholics cursed him, and said that he was one of the obstinate, cantankerous heretics and should get what he deserved. One of the Catholic captains then drew his sword and thrust Zwingli through. When his body was identified it was quartered and burned with the entrails of some pigs.

The Zurich reformation passed into the capable hands of Heinrich Bullinger.

5. Legacy of the Zurich reformation

Zwingli succeeded in establishing a thoroughly Reformed Church in Zurich, which served as a model for the Swiss National Protestant Church. Zwingli's model of Reform was adopted in Berne, Basel, Shaffhausen, Zurich and later Geneva.

It is claimed that the English Prayer Book, the 39 Articles, and the Puritan emphasis on "head and heart, doctrine and devotion", as well as the Reformed Episcopacy, adopted by the Church of England, were all built upon the teachings of Zwingli and Bullinger, which English exiles learned during their time in Zurich.

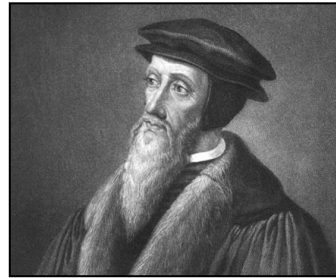
History of the Reformation

No. 5 John Calvin and the Genevan Reformation

The reformation at Geneva was undoubtedly one of the great movements in 16th century Europe. It influenced more than the shape of Protestant theology and worship – it provided a comprehensive (and Biblically based) view of life (cultural, commercial, and corporate). It exercised considerable influence in the politics and national identity of England and Scotland, and therefore also in the colonies that would become the USA. Without the Genevan reformation, the world would be a very different place. John Calvin was at the centre of this reformation.

1. Calvin's Early Life

10 July 1509 Calvin was born in Noyon, Picardy (about 60 miles north of Paris). His father held a position in the local cathedral. In the early 1520s his father enrolled him in the university of Paris with a view to the priesthood. The university of Paris was the centre for theological study in Europe. Interestingly, at the same time that Calvin studied there, so did Erasmus (who championed the moral reformation of the church) and Ignatius Loyola (who championed the Catholic counter-reformation).



John Calvin

However, after about 5 years, Calvin's father gave up the idea of John becoming a priest (this may have something to do with a quarrel between Calvin senior and his bishop). Calvin was withdrawn from Paris and sent Orleans to study law. (Notice, for what it's worth, that this is the opposite of Luther's career.)

At Orleans Calvin entered the world of Renaissance humanism, in which he excelled. His humanist outlook made him much like Erasmus, and quite unlike Luther who was a medieval monk.

It was about this time that Calvin was converted. Later in life Calvin wrote, "God by a sudden conversion subdued and brought my mind to a teachable frame."

2. Paris, 1531-34

Soon after graduation, Calvin returned home due to his father's illness. His father died in 1531, and Calvin returned to Paris and his studies.

Anti-Lutheran sentiment was growing in France – stoked by acts of iconoclasm in Paris. When Nicholas Cop, rector of the university of Paris, used his inaugural lecture to support Luther's views on justification by faith, Cop was forced to flee to Basel. Calvin was suspected of having had a hand in the preparation of Cop's lecture and was forced to lie low for a period (he barely escaped arrest at one point, lowering himself from his rooms by a rope of bed sheets!).

Anti-catholic placards were posted around Paris in October 1534. This was too much for Francis I. He led a procession of atonement through the city, past the pyres of 36 people who were suspected of posting the placards. Calvin was sympathetic to the contents of the placards, but against the hot-headed temperament of the posters – his first published theological work was not against Rome, but against the Anabaptists whose radical behaviour was bringing the reformation into disrepute.

It was time to leave Paris. Calvin went into exile in Basel at the start of 1535.

3. Detained in Geneva, 1536-38

In Basel Calvin prepared the first edition of his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. He dedicated the book to Francis I, writing in the letter of dedication a defence of Lutherans. The first edition was a small book, deigned to be easily carried – especially, to be carried into France, for whose reformation Calvin longed.

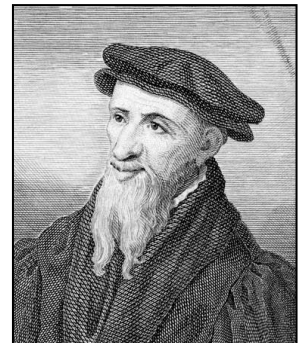
In 1536 Calvin had to return to Paris on business. When he left the city he aimed at Strasbourg, which was home to many "reformation refugees". However, war between Francis I and Charles V (the Holy Roman Emperor) required Calvin to take a detour via Geneva.

Geneva was theoretically Protestant. The city had recently declared itself aligned with the reformation, and had driven out its bishops, ceased the mass, and required the conversion of the priests. The motto of the city had been *Post tenebras spero lucem* (After darkness I hope for light). To commemorate the change in religion, coins had been struck with the motto altered to *Post tenebras lux* (After darkness, light).

There is, however, a difference between an official declaration for the reformation, and actual reformation of the population. Neither the city council nor the population was clear about what it meant to live by the gospel. In fact, the city was probably going from bad to worse – it was notorious for immorality, prostitution, gambling, drunkenness and "ungodly and dangerous practices".

The man behind the Genevan reformation was William Farel – a robust, red-haired man with no time for "detestable neutrality".

Calvin was recognised in an inn, and Farel was informed of his presence. Farel came at once to confront Calvin, and strained every nerve to detain him. When Calvin expressed his intention to retire to private study, Farel (in Calvin's words) "proceeded to utter an imprecation that God would curse my retirement, and the tranquillity of the studies which I sought, if I should withdraw and refuse to give assistance, when the necessity was so urgent. By this imprecation I was so stricken with terror, that I desisted from the journey which I had undertaken."



William Farel

Despite this unpromising beginning, Farel (21 years Calvin's senior) and Calvin became fast friends and co-workers in the Genevan reformation.

Farel and Calvin approached the city council to request that the reformation be put on the sure footing of the faithful preaching of the Word and the exercise of Church discipline. They brought three proposals: (i) the Lord's Supper to be observed once each month (rather than once a quarter); (ii) a creed of 21 articles on the meaning of the gospel and Scripture to be accepted and sworn by the citizens; (iii) a catechism for children to be prepared for their instruction in the truth.

The reformers were opposed by a group called the *libertines*. The Council also interfered in petty ways: in the administration of the Lord's Supper, saying that only the old-style wafer could be used; in baptism, requiring the use of a stone font; in the requirement that Christian festivals be observed. Calvin was flexible about the latter, but this was really a matter of authority – who controls the Church? Farel and Calvin were banned from preaching – and when they refused to stop, they were given three days to remove themselves from Geneva. Calvin went to Strasbourg and Farel to Neuchâtel.

4. Strasbourg (at last!), 1538-41

The period Calvin spent in Strasbourg was refreshing. He became acquainted with Melancthon and Martin Bucer and became pastor to the French speaking congregation (of about 400-500 members). He also worked on a revision of the *Institutes*.

Calvin began to put in place some of the reforms he had proposed in Geneva. The Lord's Supper was celebrated monthly and anyone desiring to participate for the first time was to speak first to Calvin (for pastoral reasons). Calvin applied for citizenship and thought that Strasbourg was to be his home. He helped to prepare a collection of the Psalms for singing – congregational singing of the Psalms in French was something in which he took particular pleasure.

Calvin married during his stay in Strasbourg. He had been urged to find a wife, but he was not particularly keen on the idea. Eventually he married Idelette de Bure, a widow with two children. They had one child together, Jacques, who lived for only two weeks. The marriage itself was a great blessing to Calvin, and when his wife died in 1549, he wrote, "I have lost the best companion of my life."

5. Back to Geneva, 1541-65

The council of Geneva recognised that the expulsion of the reformers was a disaster – in their absence, things went from bad to worse in the city. A change in the council led to the issue of an invitation to Farel and Calvin to return. Farel was too busy to do so, but he urged Calvin to comply. Calvin replied that he would prefer "a hundred deaths to this cross."

However, Farel and Bucer together persuaded Calvin to return to the city that had thrown him out three years earlier. But on the first Lord's Day back in his old pulpit,

rather than scold, Calvin simply took up his consecutive expository preaching where he had left off. The Word of God was central.

6. The Spreading Genevan Reformation

There was a change of mood in the city – having rid itself of its filth and froth it was ready for thorough-going reform. The *Libertines* were still a force to be reckoned with, but Calvin was in a strong position and he used it wisely so that Geneva became "the most perfect school of Christ since the days of the apostles" (John Knox).

Calvin wasted no time in presenting the city council a list of proposals for the reformation of the city. These included: the pastoral visitation of all the families in the city; all citizens to learn a Protestant catechism; the barring from Communion of those who did not learn the catechism; and the establishment of a disciplinary committee to ensure an orderly society. The latter was set up, and was the cause of resentment among those who were not committed to the faith.

Resentment was also stoked by the influx of French refugees. Things became hot in 1553 when Calvin refused to admit a known libertine to the Lord's Supper. He lacked authority to do this, but refused to back down. Then in 1555 supporters of Calvin won the election to the city council. The libertines rioted – it looked like a coup d'état was on the cards – but the ring leaders were ousted, and left the city before they were arrested and executed. Calvin found he had new liberty to pursue reformation – and he used this to push the reformation out beyond the city of Geneva and into Europe.

(a) The Academy

Calvin opened an academy in 1559. This offered a general education, but it also moved on to theology and the exegesis of Scripture. Calvin himself lectured three times a week (as well as preaching twice each Lord's Day, and on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays). This college became a magnet for young men from other parts of Europe. Equipped as pastors, they were sent back to their home countries to spread the influence of the gospel. Thus, Geneva became the intellectual centre of the European Reformation

(b) The mission to France

Many of the graduates of the Academy returned to France as missionaries – "give us the wood and we will send you the arrows." Calvin did not view this lightly – many of these young men were sent back to France to die for Christ. But through their sacrifice a tremendous work was being done – it is estimated that about 10% of France (about 2 million people) became Protestant, and one third of the nobility. The influence of Geneva in France was strengthening. Sadly it was brought to a bloody end on 24 August 1572 (St. Bartholomew's Day) when leading Protestant aristocrats were assassinated in Paris, and in the ensuing riots, many thousands of ordinary Protestants murdered.

History of the Reformation

No. 6 The Anabaptists and the Radical Reformation

Anabaptism was not a unified movement, but is conveniently grouped under a single title. The movement was “revolutionary” and is sometimes called the Radical Reformation – Anabaptists reckoned that the Reformation itself needed to be reformed.

“Anabaptism” means “baptism again”. It was originally a term of abuse and was rejected by the Anabaptists. It included a baffling variety of beliefs.

1. Swiss

The Swiss gathered under Conrad Grebel and Felix Manz, who were originally friends of Zwingli. But they came to consider Zwingli as insufficiently radical – too close to the city officials and too tied to medieval traditions.

Every baby born in reformed Zurich was considered a member of the Church and was baptized as such. Grebel and Manz came to the conviction that the Church should be free of the State and composed only of those who are believers – a *gathered Church*. They considered the most obvious mark of the Church was *believer's baptism*. To stand aside from infant baptism was truly radical.

In 1524 Grebel's wife gave birth to a child and Grebel refused to have the child baptised. A public debate was held on the matter in 1525. The city fathers followed the position of Zwingli. They decreed that all parents who had neglected to have their children baptized be given a time limit within which to rectify their omission – the penalty for failure was banishment from the city.

Grebel and Manz withdrew to Zollikon where they met George Blaurock, an Anabaptist ex-priest. Blaurock asked Grebel to baptize him and then Blaurock baptized 15 other adults present at the meeting. This re-baptism marked their separation from *magisterial Protestantism*, the Protestantism of the Reformation.

1526 Zurich city council decreed that those found guilty of re-baptizing be put to death by drowning. 25 January 1527, Felix Manz was drowned in the River Limat, the first martyr of the Anabaptist movement. Blaurock moved away to Moravia, where he was burned for heresy.

Grebel was influenced by Thomas Muntzer (of whom more later). Grebel called infant baptism “a senseless abomination contrary to all Scripture.”

2. Hutterites

Named after their founder, Jacob Hutter, these were based in Moravia and were left largely unmolested by the authorities. They used their liberty to build communities.

They laid great stress on communal living, *Bruderhof*. They practised a community of goods: “private property is the greatest enemy of love and the Christian must render up his will and private property if he is to live as a disciple.”

Anabaptists generally emphasised morality rather than theology. So the *Account of Our Religion* contains no theological insight, but a description of how they thought the Christian life should look.

The largest building of the *Bruderhof* housed the places for communal living on its ground floor. There was stress on obedience to the leadership. Hutterites did not believe in trading (buying and selling for profit in a community where goods are held in common is not possible). They generated income through craftsmanship – this they developed to a high degree, trading it outside the *Bruderhof*. Their work was eventually hindered by the *Thirty Years War* and they were expelled from Moravia, some fleeing to America.

3. Mennonites

Named after Menno Simons, the Mennonites were found mainly in the Netherlands and north Germany. Simons was much more theological than most other Anabaptists – he had a high view of Scripture.

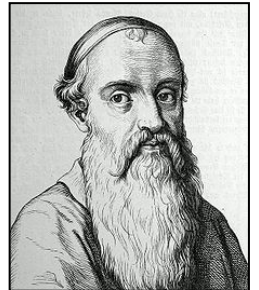
He did not accept the doctrine of original sin. He did not believe that sin was possible in a child until days of discretion came – therefore the baptism of infants was unnecessary since there was no corrupted nature to wash. He did not believe in justification by faith or predestination.

Many Anabaptists were radical in behaviour as well as teaching. But Simons was much more gentle and gracious in his manner. It is possible that he saved the Anabaptist movement from destruction by the radicals.

Simons demonstrates that one of the core concerns of Anabaptism was the concept of *the pure congregation*. They emphasised the corporate nature of the Church, separate and distinct from the world.

The establishment of the Church meant that citizens of the State were also necessarily members of the Church, and therefore subject to infant baptism. Simons' objection to infant baptism was bound up with his objection to the establishment of the Church.

Simons is largely responsible for the Anabaptist emphasis on pacifism and the refusal to pay taxes that support militias. Some taught that believers must divorce unbelieving spouses, behaving as though the marriage had never been. The Amish people continue to emphasize separation from the world.



Menno Simons

4. The Schleithem Confession

This confession is the nearest thing to an Anabaptist statement of faith. It was produced in February 1527 at a synod of Anabaptists from south Germany and Switzerland. The document was called the *Brotherly Union* – written by Michael Sattler, an ex-priest. The purpose of the confession was to make clear what Anabaptist believed. There are seven chapters in the Confession:

- Baptism – infant baptism was “the highest and chief abomination of the pope”
- The Ban – excommunication
- The breaking of bread – the Lord’s Supper
- Separation from the Abomination, from the world
- Pastors – the dignified office of pastor
- The Sword – the use of violence by the State – no Anabaptist should ever join the army or become a civil magistrate
- The Oath – the non-legitimacy of the taking of oaths

For the Reformers, the essential question was “How can I be saved?” For the Anabaptists, the essential question was, “How can I live the Christian life?”

The Anabaptists were critical of the *Magisterial Reformation* and the whole idea of Christendom. Some Anabaptist thought that Reformed Protestantism was little different from medieval Catholicism: they desired “a free Church within a free state.” The Church was seen as a voluntary association of believers, who professed faith and had received the sign of adult baptism.

5. Excesses of Anabaptism

The Anabaptist movement was characterised by radicalism and excess. In Wittenburg, the radical reformation took off during Luther’s imprisonment in the Wartburg. The radicals generated a wave of iconoclasm. The Zwickau prophets were at the heart of this movement. The prophets were mystical in their thinking, claiming to be guided by dreams. Some believed that the millennium had dawned and called them to throw down the old order.

Thomas Muntzer, a former follower of Luther, became a leading radical, writing against Luther.

1535 John of Gelleen and 300 men and women stormed an old monastery in Friesland, fortifying it. They were all killed in battle.

John of Battenberg – believed that violence was justifiable, that polygamy was allowable, that he was Elijah returned.

Munster (1534) – Jan Matthies and Jan of Leyden – one claimed to be Enoch and the other king David. They were going to establish the kingdom of heaven with its centre in Munster, the new Jerusalem. The city was besieged for a year and the



Thomas Muntzer

Anabaptists eventually routed violently. This events in Munster gave Anabaptism a bad name for years to come. No one would trust Anabaptists again.

6. Reaction Against Anabaptism

John Knox (*A Warning Against the Anabaptist*): “The craft and malice of the devil fighting against Christ is more covert and more to be feared. The general consent of all that sect is that God has no election or any certain reprobation.”

John Calvin: “When the light shining from on high in a measure shatter Satan’s darkness he began to take up arms, then when violence [i.e. persecution] profited him nothing he turned to strategies. He aroused disagreements and dogmatic contention through his Anabaptists and other monstrous rascals to obscure and extinguish the truth.”

The Belgic Confession: “Therefore we detest the confession of the Anabaptists...We condemn those who introduce a community of goods and confound the decency that God has established among men.”

7. Evaluation of Anabaptism

Why this very harsh evaluation of Anabaptism?

(a) The Excesses of the Movement

- Excesses which came to a head in Munster
- The rejection of creeds which had been drawn up by the Church.
- The danger of rejecting the authority of the Word – personal prophecy was placed on a par with Scripture with regard to authority.

(b) It Endangered the Work of Reform

The Reformers saw that Anabaptist movement as endangering the work of reform. The relationship between Church and State was endangered by the way that the Anabaptists rejected the State and withdrew from society.

(c) Their View of the Church

The Reformers had a high view of the Church. A separatist movement was disruptive and promoted schism.

Are there any benefits accruing from the Anabaptist movement?

- We are forced to consider the nature of the Church.
- The movement highlighted the separation of Church and State.
- There is something helpful in the Anabaptism emphasis on the community of believers.
- The Anabaptists exposed the danger of formality in the membership of the Church. We baptise infants because they are born within the covenant, not because they are born within a geographic area under the control of the State.

History of the Reformation

No. 7 The Reformation in England

1. Background

Church leaders were more regarded for their position in the state than in the Church – the leading clerics had little Church work to do – they presided over affairs of state and courts of justice. Many in England would have been content with a Reformed Church that looked like the medieval Church provided it was ruled from Canterbury rather than Rome.

1509 Henry VIII came to the throne. Henry was a committed Catholic, truly medieval. He wrote *The Assertion of the Seven Sacrament*, 1521, for which he was awarded the title *Defender of the Faith*.

The Lollard movement continued into the days of Henry. Did not go unnoticed – between 1506 and 1535 at least 60 people were burned for Lollard “heresies”.

Humanism was becoming influential, especially in the University of Cambridge. John Colet, Dean of St. Paul's 1505, was a leading humanist. Erasmus taught in Cambridge. John Fisher and others were deeply influenced by humanist scholarship and sought a reform of morals. A group of students in Cambridge (including Miles Coverdale, John Frith, Thomas Cranmer, Thomas Bilney, William Tyndale) met at the White Horse Inn to discuss the teaching of Martin Luther.



Henry VIII

2. Marriage and Constitutional Crisis

Henry wanted a male heir, but his wife (Catherine of Aragon) had not produced one from 20 years of marriage. Henry was also infatuated with Anne Boleyn.

Catherine had been married to Henry's older brother Alfred. Marriage to Henry (after Alfred death) was forbidden by canon law and a special dispensation had been required from the Pope to make the marriage possible in the first place.

The task of obtaining a disannulment was given to Cardinal Wolsey. Wolsey failed and was charged with treason (he died before he could be tried). Wolsey was succeeded by Thomas More, a staunch Romanist. Rome was never going to grant the disannulment: Catherine was aunt to Emperor Charles V!

Henry concluded that the only way to proceed was by separating the jurisdiction of the Church in England from that of Rome. In his favour, the English were generally annoyed by the interference of the “Italian Prince” (the Pope) in the affairs of England.

3. Separation from Rome

Into this picture stepped Thomas Cranmer (1489-1556). Cranmer was a Catholic priest, humanist scholar, and English ambassador. Henry regarded him with

affection and respect, considering him a genuine friend. Cranmer suggested that the universities of Europe should be asked to tease out the legitimacy of Henry's marriage to Catherine. The argument brewed for seven years.

In the meantime, Henry began to dismantle the power of Rome in England – the king's divorce became an opportunity for the reformation of the Church.

Henry decided that English clergy could be charged with treason under an old statute that forbade the receiving of orders from a foreign power. Large fines were imposed on dioceses and cathedrals.

An act of convocation was passed that said the Church in England could pass no laws without the ratification of the King.

The 1533 *Act of Restraint of Appeals* removed the privilege of appeal to the pope.

In 1533 Cranmer declared that the King's marriage to Catherine was invalid and the king's marriage to Anne (whom he had married some months earlier) lawful.



Thomas Cranmer

4. Consolidation of Power

The Act of Succession declared that the daughter of Henry's marriage to Catherine (Mary Tudor) was illegitimate. Any male issue to the second marriage would be heir to the throne.

The Act of Supremacy (1534) declared Henry the supreme head of the Church of England. This did not sit well with all the ministers of state. Thomas More and John Fisher did not accept the act of succession – they were still committed to the authority of the Pope. Both men were executed 1535.

The *dissolution of the monasteries* was the work of Thomas Cromwell, chief minister to Henry. The monasteries were extremely wealthy and their lands sold to noblemen, greatly altering the social structure of the time.

Cranmer was appointed archbishop of Canterbury in 1532.

William Tyndale was executed in Europe 1536 because of his illegal Bible translation work. However, under the influence of Cranmer, in 1537 Henry allowed the Bible in English into the hands of the people. The *Great Bible*, the work of Tyndale and revised by Coverdale, was placed in parishes throughout the realm.

Henry was alarmed by the effects of the Bible being available in English. He introduced *the Six Articles*, 1539, to be subscribed by all men in the Church, for “the abolishing of the diversity of opinion.” The *Six Articles* were: transubstantiation, communion bread only, the celibacy of the clergy, the practice of private masses, auricular confession, the binding nature of monastic vows. These provoked an outburst of persecution (the *terror of the six strings*, 1540) in which Cromwell was executed.

5. Edward VI, 1547-1553

Edward (son of Henry with Jane Seymour) came to the throne as minor of 10. He was a youth of genuine piety and an avowed friend of the reformation, due in no small measure to the influence of Cranmer.

Edward's piety greatly facilitated the reform movement in England. Yet at the time of his accession the situation was quite poor. This can be seen in an instruction for the guidance of the clergy and a book of homilies composed by Cranmer – a splendid evangelical work. The guidelines forbade the extolling of miracles, images and relics; to preach at least four times a year; to recite the Lord's prayer, the creed and the Ten Commandments in English at each congregation; not to frequent taverns or spend their time idly at gaming.

Many refugees came from continental Europe: Martin Bucer, Peter Martyr, John Alasco and others who took up positions of leadership.

Acts of Parliament formalised the vision of the Church leaders. Laws against heresy were repealed so that the threat of execution was withdrawn. The Six Articles were abolished. Clergy were released from the vow of celibacy. A new communion service was devised.

There was reaction, led by Bishop Gardner of Winchester and Bishop Bonner of London. These were staunch papists and were imprisoned. Their imprisonment and the resignation of others opened up opportunities for new appointments: Nicholas Ridley (London), Miles Coverdale (Exeter) and John Hooper (Gloucester). Hooper declined his appointment on two grounds: the form of oath he was to take appeared to be very Roman Catholic; and the compulsory wearing of vestments. For this reason, Hooper is seen as a forerunner of the Puritans. Eventually a compromise was reached: the oath was modified and he agreed to wear his vestments for the service of ordination. It was a strange affair that for a period both Hooper and Bonner/Gardner were in prison for religious reasons.

The first Prayer Book appeared in 1549 – for the first time the whole liturgy was in English, and imposed by Act of Parliament – the Act of Uniformity. There were sharp punishments for those who criticised or refused to use the Prayer Book. The book was the result of a policy to compromise between the Catholics and the Reformed (e.g. it taught the real presence of Christ in the elements). In 1551 it was the first book to be printed in Ireland.

The second Prayer Book 1552 showed the development of the leaders of the Church in England: their convictions were coming into line with the continental reformation. The book was the work of Cranmer, assisted by Ridley and Bucer. The book was much more reformed. In its doctrine of the Lord's Supper, the presence of the Lord is said to be in the hearts of the people rather than in the element of bread, i.e. it is more Zwinglian and less Lutheran: "the sacrament is about the gospel rather than the gospel being about the sacrament."



Edward VI

Cranmer proposed that there should be a Reformed Synod for the reformed Churches of Europe at which difference of opinion could be ironed out and a single confession be produced.

1553 Cranmer issued *the 42 Articles*. These drew on the *Augsburg Confession* and would form the basis for the later *39 Articles*.

Why did full reform not materialise? Two reasons:

- (a) Reform was being imposed from the top down. It was popular among some intellectuals and merchants, but there was insufficient support at the ground roots level.
- (b) The death of Edward in July 1553 brought the reformation into turmoil. The Earl of Warwick, the regent, tried to arrange succession to the throne – one of his sons had married Lady Jane Grey. But the popular desire was to see Mary Tudor come to the throne.

6. Mary Tudor, 1553-1558

Edward arranged for his own succession by his evangelical cousin, Lady Jane Grey. However, most English people, including many Protestants, preferred a legitimate monarch to a Protestant one. On the back of this support, Mary Tudor (daughter of Henry by his first wife, Catherine of Aragon) took the throne from Grey, whom she had executed on 12 February 1554, aged 16 or 17 years of age.

Mary was 37. She had lived for 20 years under the stigma of being declared illegitimate by her father and an act of parliament. Raised a catholic, her accession began the process of a vigorous counter-reformation:

- The repeal of the acts of parliament passed during the reign of Edward. Religion was returned to its condition at the end of Henry's reign.
- The repeal of all the laws enacted by Henry against Roman domination. The medieval laws against heresy were restored.
- The Church of England was restored to the Roman fold. Thomas Cranmer was removed from office and the papal legate, Cardinal Pole (who came to England in 24 November 1554) was made Archbishop of Canterbury. Bibles were removed from churches. Married clergy were separated from their wives. Mary and Parliament petitioned him to receive England back into the Roman communion.
- Bonner and Gardner were released and reappointed as bishops. They became prime movers in the intense persecution of the Church.

However, just as genuine reformation could not be imposed from above, so also the restoration of medieval Catholicism could not be genuinely effected by royal decree. The people could not un-hear the Bible read or evangelical sermons



Mary Tudor

preached in English; they would not sheepishly return to the practice of pilgrimages and other Roman superstitions.

To secure her restoration of Catholicism, Mary needed an heir, and therefore she needed a husband. In 1554, now 38 years old, she married Philip II of Spain. This was an unpopular marriage – the English were suspicious of the Spanish and did not like interference from abroad. The marriage itself was unpleasant for Mary – she was abandoned by Philip who lived in Spain. The much hoped for child, which would have secured succession of a catholic on the throne, was not conceived.

Mary did not tolerate religious dissent and between 1555 and 1558 many ministers of religion were deposed and about 800 went into exile. Moreover, about 288 people were burned because of their Protestant faith. Among the more famous martyrs were bishops Ridley, Latimer, Hooper, and Cranmer.

The story of Cranmer's burning is particularly moving. He was a gentle, scholarly man. His examination lasted for two and a half years. Shortly before he was to be executed he watched Ridley and Hooper being led out to be burned. He crumbled under this pressure and signed papers that renounced the reformation and acknowledged the supremacy of the pope. This was a trump card for the counter-reformation in England. Nonetheless Cranmer was brought out for execution and a public confession of his allegiance to Rome. But to the surprise of his persecutors, Cranmer publicly renounced his recantation of the reformed faith. Declaring "for as much as my hand offended in writing contrary to my heart, my hand shall be punished first", he thrust his right hand into the flames and held it there while it withered. He died on 21 March 1556, in Oxford, aged 66 years.

The burnings of the "Marian martyrs" were very unpopular – they were seen as Spanish interference in English life.

By the time Mary died in 1558 (of stomach cancer), she had deprived England of some of its wisest and most capable men. The English had had enough of counter-reformation, and were ready for genuine change. Across the English Channel, the ministers-in-exile (the European Reformation now burning brightly in their hearts) were champing at the bit to come home and make England Protestant once more.



The burning of Thomas Cranmer

7. The Reign of Elizabeth I, 1558-1603

Elizabeth (daughter of Henry by Anne Boleyn, and Mary's half-sister) greeted the news of Mary's death with the words, "This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes" (Psalm 118:23).

Elizabeth was proclaimed queen without opposition, but she faced a number of dangers:

- The struggles in continental Europe; poor economy at home; the plague was raging.
- The change of mood within Roman Catholicism. The Counter Reformation was transforming Catholicism. The Council of Trent was in its closing stages. The Jesuits were on the rise, with the destruction of Protestantism as their goal.
- The hostility of foreign states: 1570 Pius V issued a papal bull releasing English men from allegiance to Elizabeth.
- Her title to the throne was questioned. She was the daughter of Anne Boleyn whom Henry had married before his divorce from Catherine. Mary Queen of Scots had a claim to the throne.
- The return of Protestant refugees brought home many thorough-going Calvinists. This introduced tension into the life of England.

The first Parliament under Elizabeth was very Protestant. It passed two acts:

- The Act of Supremacy – rejected the jurisdiction of the pope, repealed Mary's laws, gave the crown the right to visit and examine the Church and gave the queen the title of Supreme Governor of the Church of England.
- The Act of Uniformity – placed the Prayer Book of 1552 in all the churches.

The Acts were decidedly anti-Catholic. Initially this was not pursued – no pressure was put on Catholics to abide by them. But this changed when the Pope issued a bull in 1570 excommunicating Elizabeth, declaring the throne of England vacant, and calling on English Catholics to resist her. It must be remembered that England was the only united Protestant nation in Europe at this time. If England's reformation could be crushed, the Reformation would be severely wounded. But the papal bull had the effect of making English Catholics into a "fifth column" and identifying Catholicism with treason.

In this atmosphere there assassination plots were hatched against Elizabeth. The idea was that with her dead, the throne would pass to her Catholic cousin, Mary Queen of Scots. However, Mary was so unpopular in Scotland that she had taken refuge with Elizabeth in England! Elizabeth placed her under house arrest. Meanwhile, Mary's son and heir, James was being raised a Calvinist. If Elizabeth outlived Mary, the throne would pass to him. In the end, Mary was implicated in a plot to murder Elizabeth, and was executed in 1587. But her son, James VI of Scotland, did indeed succeed to the English throne as James I – an exceptionally



Elizabeth I

intelligent man, but no friend of Presbyterianism, he was called “the wisest fool in all England.”

“As much as anything, Elizabeth’s long reign (1558-1603) turned out to be a war of attrition against Catholicism. When she first came to the throne, nobody expected it. But as the years passed, Catholic practices simply fell into disuse, and Catholic priests trained in the old ways died out. In their place, Cranmer’s liturgy and homilies were heard by all, week after week; soon the only theology pastors could access was Protestant; soon the only Bible people knew was English, and ownership and knowledge of it slowly filtered into even the most rural areas. Elizabeth’s long reign ensure that the nation was Protestant. What it could never ensure was that the people were themselves evangelical” (Michael Reeves, *The Unquenchable Flame*, p. 138).

History of the Reformation

No. 8 The Reformation in Scotland

Scotland was a separate nation from England until the Act of Union, 1707. Scotland had its own king, parliament and church. The history of the Reformation in Scotland is distinct from that of England.

1. Patrick Hamilton (1504-28)

Protestantism came to Scotland through Patrick Hamilton.

Hamilton was of noble birth, a nephew of the Duke of Arran. He was sent to University of Paris in 1515, to be trained for the priesthood – graduated in 1520. While in Paris he became acquainted with Reformed doctrine. He visited Luther and other reformers, and was deeply persuaded by them.

He returned to Scotland at the start of 1528. The ignorance and superstition he saw there filled him with distress, and everywhere he went he denounced the corruption of the Church. His mild manner, rank, piety and speech produced a great effect. The Catholic establishment became alarmed. Archbishop Beaton summoned Hamilton to Saint Andrews, under the guise of a debate on Reformed principles. Beaton had Hamilton arrested, tried by an ecclesiastical court, and condemned to death. He was burned at the stake. Beaton expected to intimidate others and suppress the reformation in Scotland. However, it produced the opposite effect – it was said that the “reek of Patrick Hamilton...infected as many as it did blow upon.”

Beaton continued the persecution of reformed Christians in Scotland. There was a rash of burnings between 1528 and 1538.



2. George Wishart (1513-46)

Wishart was born into an aristocratic family. He graduated from the University of Aberdeen where he learned Greek. He set about teaching the language to pupils in Montrose. This led to a charge of heresy – he fled to Europe where he became familiar with the First Helvetic Confession (1538), which he translated into English.

Wishart returned to England in 1542 and spent a year teaching in Cambridge. He returned to Scotland and preached the gospel in Angus. During a plague in Dundee, he ministered to the sick and the dying.

He was seized in Ormeston, East Lothian, on 16 January 1546 and taken to Saint Andrews, charged with denying the seven sacraments, the mass, the veneration of



saints, and the power of the pope. He was condemned to be burned. At the stake he said, “I suffer this day with a glad heart for the true gospel that was given me by the grace of God. I fear not the fire and I pray that you may not fear them that kill the body.”

Beaton watched the burning from an easy chair in his palace. Regarding him, Wishart said, “He who from yonder place beholds us with such pride shall within a few days lie ignominiously in that place.” Beaton was stabbed to death within his palace within three months. This was condemned by the reformers.

John Knox was present at Wishart’s death. Knox regarded Wishart as his spiritual father and intimate friend. Wishart’s death broke the hold of Catholicism on Knox, who from this point threw in his lot with the Reformation movement.

About this time, merchants, especially of Dundee, Leith and Montrose who traded with England and the Continent imported Tyndale’s Bible and Protestant pamphlets and books to Scotland.

3. John Knox (1514-1572)

(a) Towards Reformed convictions

Knox was born about 1514 in East Lothian. He was given a good grammar education at Haddington and sent to Saint Andrew’s University in 1524.

At St. Andrews, Knox was taught philosophy by John Mair. Mair had been taught in France and was a humanist.

Knox was an excellent student, graduated MA and went on to teach at the university. He was considered as having excelled his master.

About this time, at the age of about 25 he was ordained a priest. However, his studies also took a new direction – the current textbooks he used referred to ancient authors such as Jerome and Augustine – the quotations whetted his appetite and he sought out the sources (a truly humanist endeavour). In the late 1530s Knox’s thinking was being shifted.

Knox recognised that his new sentiments placed him in danger. He moved south and openly announced himself a Protestant in 1542. The Catholic hierarchy condemned him as a heretic, and Beaton employed assassins to murder him. He found shelter with the Laird of Languiddrie. This brought him into the company of Wishart. Knox waited constantly on Wishart, and Wishart perceived Knox’s potential.

When Cardinal Beaton died in 1546, his successor, John Hamilton continued the persecution with zeal. Knox proposed to flee to Europe and continue his studies. But the Lairds of Languiddrie and Ormeston persuaded him to take refuge in St Andrews – St Andrews was at this time in the hands of the men who had assassinated Beaton. Knox entered the castle in St. Andrews in 1547.



(b) Preacher, galley slave, refugee, pastor

Knox was called to be the pastor of the garrison in St Andrews castle – he accepted only after considerable persuasion. His first sermon (on Daniel 7:24-25) struck the keynote: some sought to reform the existing Church by lopping off a few branches of the papacy; he came rather to chop down the tree.

St. Andrews castle was besieged for 18 months by a Scottish army under the command of the Regent Arran – but it was bombardment by a fleet of French warships which eventually broke the power of the Protestant garrison. For the next 18 months Knox served the French as a galley slave.

Knox was released in 1549 through the intervention of Edward VI. He was sent to Northumberland to preach the gospel. He began in Berwick. In the early 1550s he removed to London and often preached in the royal court.

Edward VI died in 1553. Knox wrote: “After the death of this virtuous prince...Satan intended nothing less than the light of Jesus Christ be extinguished. For after him was raised up in God’s hot displeasure...that cruel persecutrix of God’s people.”

Knox left England in the middle of January 1554 and made his way to Geneva where he formed an enduring friendship with Calvin.

In the Autumn of 1554 Knox received a call from the English congregation in Frankfurt. Calvin persuaded him to accept the call, and he went to Frankfurt in November. Sadly this congregation was divided over the prayer book – Knox resigned his pastorate and returned to Geneva in March 1555.

In the Autumn of 1555 Knox returned to Scotland. He saw what he had not seen before in Scotland – a general thirst for the gospel. At this time some converts among the nobility in the region of Dun entered into a solemn bond in which they promised to renounce the mass and promote the preaching of the gospel. This was the first instance of covenanting in Scotland – it was called the Dun Band.

However, having received a call to pastor an English congregation in Geneva, Knox returned there in August 1556 and remained for two years. During this period he and some others prepared the famous Geneva Bible, the English Bible until well into the 17th century.

(c) Back to Scotland

In November 1558 Knox was summoned by some of the nobility to return to Scotland. These noblemen had entered into the Godly Band, resolving to exert themselves for the reformation of the Church of Scotland.

Knox arrived in Scotland on 2 May 1559.

The Regent, Mary de Guise (from Lorraine, and mother of Mary, Queen of Scots), was determined to suppress the Reformation. Her efforts at intimidation moved the Protestants back to St Andrews – Knox arrived on 9 June 1559. The archbishop warned Knox that if he appeared in the cathedral pulpit, he would give his soldiers orders to shoot. Knox disregarded the threat and for four days he preached the

doctrines of the reformed faith and denounced the errors of Rome so persuasively that the magistrates and people of St Andrews determined to set up Protestant worship in the town.

The example of St. Andrews was quickly followed elsewhere. In a matter of a few weeks an number of important towns and cities saw the work of reformation go on apace. Mary sought military assistance from France – the Protestants appealed to England (Elizabeth I was now queen). England was Protestant and vulnerable to the Catholic powers of France and Spain – Elizabeth’s claim to the throne depended on the country remaining Protestant – if the reformation failed in Scotland, the consequences for England would be bad. An English army was sent north – Mary de Guise died in June 1560 – the French took refuge in Edinburgh castle, and surrendered in August 1560. This marked a formal victory for the Scottish reformation.

The Lords of the Privy Council appointed Knox and five other ministers to prepare the First Book of Discipline, also known as the Book of Common Order.

The first meeting of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland was held in Magdalene Chapel in December 1560. At that meeting, the First Book of Discipline was approved.

(d) The inherent authority of the General Assembly

The reformers’ view of the Church’s independence of the State was revolutionary. The Assembly met by the authority of Scripture and without any warrant or permission by the civil magistrate. At the second GA, there was some debate raised by Leighton about the propriety of meeting without the Queen’s authority. The response was given, “If the liberty of the Kirk should depend on the Queen’s allowance...we are sure we shall be deprived not only of assemblies but of the public preaching of the gospel.” This debate has continued!

The ongoing conflict between the monarchy, the nobility and the Church defined the character of the Scottish reformation. Knox took a leading role in this debate. Knox: “Take from us the freedom of assemblies and take from us the evangel; for without assemblies, how shall good order and unity in doctrine be kept.”

(e) Approaching death – reputation

As his death approached Knox had someone read to him every day John 17 and Isaiah 53 and a portion of Ephesians. To his colleagues he said, “The day approaches for which I have longed and vehemently thirsted and I shall be released and be with Christ. I know they have complained of my too great severity, but God knows my mind was always void of hatred to the persons of those against whom I thundered the severest judgments.”

Knox died on 24 November 1572. His funeral was attended by the regent Morton, all the nobility in Edinburgh and a vast crowd of people. When his body was laid in the grave, Morton said, “There lies he who never feared the face of man.”

History of the Reformation

No. 9 The Counter-Reformation

The following notes are of a lecture delivered by Rev. Knox Hyndman.

The Catholic Church was initially either unaware of widespread unrest or dismissive of it – the pope spoke of Luther's 95 *Theses* as “a monk's quarrel”. However, a counter-reformation movement arose from among the devout in the Roman Church, partly as a reaction and partly as an attempt at purification of the Church and partly as a definition of doctrinal norms.

1. Roman Catholic Reformers

The need for reformation of the church did not escape the attention of Clement VII (1523-34). However, he was hampered by the political situation in Europe (he has been called “the most unfortunate of popes”): tension between Francis I and Charles V; the divorce of Henry VIII. Clement's energies were consumed.

Paul III (1534-49) appointed three cardinals to spearhead a reform movement which he understood to be absolutely necessary. Contarini, Sadoletto, and Caraffa were members of *the Oratory of Divine Love* – a society of men concerned for reform, founded in 1517. Cardinal Pole was a member. They sought a middle way between the current state and the protestant reformers. Paul III appointed these men to a papal commission to prepare a report on the need for reform and how to go about it – *The Advice on Reforming the Church*.

They did not hold back on their conclusions. They said that the papacy had become far too secular. Their conclusion was that pope and cardinals should give more attention to spiritual matters. They also urged that institutionalised abuses be eliminated – for example, the use of bribery to secure positions of power; the laxity in adherence to monastic vows; the abuse of indulgences; priests before being put in office should be thoroughly examined and investigated. Not many of the recommendations were accepted and put into practice. Indulgences continued to be abused and papal power remained strong. But Paul III did summon the *Council of Trent*. The council was meant to be a council of the whole Church, including reformers.

The council sat for the first time in Trent, northern Italy, on 15 March 1545. (The council opened in the year of Luther's death, and concluded in 1563, the year of Calvin's death.) Its purpose was the definition of the Christian faith and religion, the extirpation of heresies, and the reformation of Christian clergy and people. These were high-sounding goals – it claimed that it was representing the Church in all the earth.

The French were annoyed because of the location – Trent was in the jurisdiction of the emperor Charles V. Also, the make-up of the first gathering was weighted towards the Italians, supported by Spaniards. The principle sessions were 1545-47, 1551-52 and 1562-63.

Trent defined the official teaching of Rome. Rome no longer saw Protestantism as a schism, but defined it as a heresy. Trent saw the medieval Church as the great model to be followed.

(a) The Decree on the Canonical Scriptures

The truth and discipline of the Church are contained in the written books of Scripture and the unwritten traditions. Tradition was given an equal footing to Scripture. The Apocrypha were officially recognized as canonical.

(b) Transubstantiation

The seven sacraments were reaffirmed. The mass was defined as a propitiatory sacrifice.

(c) Purgatory

Purgatory was defined and affirmed – with implications for the sale of indulgences.

In effect, written form was given to the nature of the medieval Church.

Papal legates represented the pope at the council and ensured that the power of the pope was increased – all clergy required to swear total allegiance to the pope.

The education of priests was dealt with – a better education was provided for.

“The time and care taken at Trent to remove all kinds of abused shows that the complaints of thousand had not gone unheeded.”

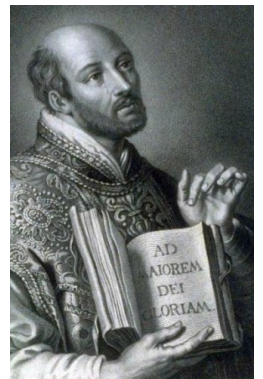
2. The Jesuits

If Trent made the definitive doctrinal statement about Catholicism, the Jesuits made the practical statement.

The *Society of Jesus* was founded by Ignatius Loyola. Loyola was a soldier. In 1521, while defending Pamplona he had his leg shattered by a cannon ball. During his convalescence he began to read and think – he read a lot of devotional literature, especially *the Life of Christ* by Ludolph of Saxony. He engaged in fasting and self-flagellation. He decided that he would be no longer a soldier, but a soldier of Christ. He emerged from his convalescence a curious mixture, soldier, mystic and monk.

Loyola wrote *The Spiritual Exercise* to record his own thoughts and experiences. A group of six men gathered about him – he valued quality rather than quantity – the six were an elite to be absolutely at the disposal of the pope to do whatever he wished – they offered this service in person in 1531. Luther broke his self-will by bowing to God – Ignatius broke his by bending beneath the pope.

The pope recognised the Jesuits in 1540 – “the most noble rowers upon Peter's ship”. Their motto is “Ad maiorem dei gloriam”, to the greater glory of God.



By the year of Loyola's death in 1556 there were about 1,000 Jesuits. He was called *The General*.

The Jesuits' three main tasks: education, defence and mission. They wanted to see the Roman Church restored to the glory and power of the days of Innocent III.

Education is still a main plank among the Jesuits – they control 28 universities in the USA. "Give me child until he is seven and I will give you the man."

Their "defence" was an attack against Protestantism – they are the "storm troopers" of the counter-reformation. As a result, some popes were afraid of the Jesuits – they were even abolished by Clement XIV in 1773 (and restored by Pius VII in 1815).

It is remarkable that the Jesuits spread rapidly to Africa, Asia and Brazil. The most notable of Jesuit missionaries was Francis Xavier, one of the original six; he went to India, then Japan, and died on his way to China – he is reckoned to have performed thousands of baptisms.

3. The Inquisition

The *Inquisition* was restored in Italy, Spain and France. The resurgence of the Inquisition was the work of Cardinal Caraffa. Originally moderate, he became militant. He believed that the way to purify Catholicism was through removing heresy – conciliation encouraged heresy. He gave men wide ranging powers to imprison on suspicion of heresy and to execute the guilty.

The ultimate authority for the inquisition lay with the pope. When all is said to correct exaggerations, the Inquisition remains one of the most sinister institutions ever devised.

4. Prohibited Books

Trent drew up a list of books that the faithful were not to read – it extended to nearly three quarters of the books then in print. The list was only abolished in 1966. It included works by Roman Catholic writers, especially some of the mystics.

5. Restoration of Piety

An attempt was made to bring back some sort of spirituality to members of the Church. There were mystics in the Church, e.g. Thomas More (1478-1535), John of the Cross (1542-91), Theresa of Avila (1550-82). Mysticism in this context is the (supposed) direct apprehension of the divine by the imaginative faculty of the soul.

Theresa became a nun at the age of 16 and wrote her own autobiography – full of ecstasy and hysteria – she founded 17 monasteries. She was associated with John of the Cross. As late as 1926 he was declared a doctor of the Church – he was poet. The personal aspect of religion was emphasised.

The Spiritual Exercises, by Ignatius Loyola, prescribed a method for coming to a liberating experience like that of Loyola – four weeks of meditation on sin, death,

judgement and hell, Christ's life, death and resurrection. By *meditation* Loyola meant, not the consideration of Scripture but the engagement of the imagination. His book contains a series of exercises in prayer that resulted in mastery of the will – silence for four weeks except for the liturgy and the communication of the Director with the subject. "Send no one away dejected," wrote Loyola. "God asks nothing impossible."

However, the Church did not look kindly on the mystics – they were regarded as a dangerous element.

New religious orders appeared at this time as monasteries attempted reform. The simplicity of Francis of Assisi was restored – creating the Capuchins, recognised by the pope in 1528 – they wore a brown cowl with a peaked hood ("cappuccino" means cowl or hood). They became the second largest order.

6. The Consequences of the Counter Reformation

If we see a single theme in the Counter Reformation, it is the quest for a more adequate clergy, who would stay in their districts and concentrate on the pastoral care of the people.

- There was a much clearer definition of what Roman Catholicism actually believed. Even ordinary Church people could now know what their Church taught.
- There was a much tighter discipline within the Roman Church. The laxity of the pre-reformation period was no longer possible. The priests were better educated and forced by bishops to work in their areas.
- The missionary expansion of Catholicism – the boundaries of Catholicism were partially restored – about one third of territory that had been protestant was returned to the Roman Church. The mission spread worldwide.

However, the counter-reformation did not extinguish the light of the gospel in Europe.

History of the Reformation

No. 10 Reformation Today

Is the Reformation over?

In a survey carried out in North America in 1996, a significant percentage of Roman Catholics identified themselves as evangelical. They (a) consider the Bible to be the inspired word of God, (b) have committed their life to Christ, (c) consider evangelism to be important, and (d) believe that forgiveness has been provided through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. Though not covered by the survey, they would also believe in the Trinity and the deity of Christ.

Are they really very different from Reformed Christians?

On 31 October 2017 Archbishop Justin Welby said to representatives of the Lutheran Church and the Roman Catholic Church present at a service held in Westminster Abbey, "When the Lutheran World Federation and the Catholic Church signed the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification in 1999, you resolved the underlying theological question of 1517, in a decisive moment for all churches in the search for unity and reconciliation."

Is this true? Was the division between the Reformed Church and the Roman Church just the result of a misunderstanding?

The Reformation asked two big questions: what is the source of authority in the church, and what is the nature of justification?

1. Authority – Scripture, Tradition and the Church

(a) The Reformed Church and the Bible

The Reformed Church holds that the Bible (comprising the 39 canonical books of the OT and the 27 canonical books of the NT) is its final authority.

"The Old Testament in Hebrew (which was the native language of the people of God of old), and the New Testament in Greek (which, at the time of the writing of it, was most generally known to the nations), being immediately inspired by God, and, by his singular care and providence, kept pure in all ages, are therefore authentic; so as, in all controversies of religion, the church is finally to appeal unto them" (WCoF, 1.8).

Notice that the Reformed Church understands that it is under the authority of the Bible, not vice versa.

(b) The Roman Church and Tradition

In contrast, the Roman Church continues to appeal to tradition as well as Scripture (which it defines as including the Apocryphal writings). This appeal places the final authority in the hands of the Magisterium (the pope in council with his cardinals). Thus in the view of Rome the Church stands over the Bible.

The "Catechism of the Catholic Church" teaches that "in keeping with the Lord's command, the Gospel was handed on in two ways: orally... [and] in writing" (76).

This handing on of the gospel was perpetuated through the apostolic succession (i.e. the power of the priesthood) – "In order that the full and living Gospel might always be preserved in the Church the apostles left bishops as their successors. They gave them their own position of teaching authority" (77). "This living transmission, accomplished in the Holy Spirit, is called Tradition, since it is distinct from Sacred Scripture, though closely connected to it. Through Tradition, 'the Church, in her doctrine, life and worship, perpetuates and transmits to every generation all that she herself is, all that she believes'" (78).

There are thus two sources of authority: unwritten tradition and Scripture. "Sacred Scripture is the speech of God as it is put down in writing under the breath of the Holy Spirit, and [Holy] Tradition transmits in its entirety the Word of God which has been entrusted to the apostles by Christ the Lord and the Holy Spirit. It transmits it to the successors of the apostles so that, enlightened by the Spirit of truth, they may faithfully preserve, expound and spread it abroad by their preaching" (81).

The catechism teaches that Scripture and Tradition are on a par: "...the Church, to whom the transmission and interpretation of Revelation is entrusted, 'does not derive her certainty about all revealed truths from the holy Scriptures alone. Both Scripture and Tradition must be accepted and honoured with equal sentiments of devotion and reverence'" (82).

The catechism appeals to the fact that the NT mentions the existence of apostolic tradition as proof that (a) the unwritten apostolic tradition was passed on unaltered from generation to generation, (b) this was God's intention, and (c) thus Roman Tradition stands on a par with Scripture. "The Tradition here in question comes from the apostles and hands on what they received from Jesus' teaching and example and what they learned from the Holy Spirit. The first generation of Christians did not yet have a written New Testament, and the New Testament itself demonstrates the process of living Tradition" (83).

The catechism distinguishes between the "great Tradition" and the expression of this in local traditions which vary with time and place. But the final authority lies with the Magisterium (the pope in counsel with his cardinals). "In the light of Tradition, these traditions can be retained, modified or even abandoned under the guidance of the Church's Magisterium" (83).

(c) Conclusion

The Reformed and Roman views of the Bible and authority are radically different. If you were to ask, "How can I know?" the Reformed Church would say, "Read the Word of God", and the Roman Church would say, "Let us tell you."

The Reformed view is consistent with the priesthood of all believers, i.e. every Christian is privileged and obligated to read, study and submit to Scripture – his conscience is "captive to the Word of God." The Roman view is consistent with its practice of prelacy, i.e. the rule of priest-cast over the laity – to be in communion with the church is to be in submission to the authority of the pope speaking from "Peter's throne".

So if we would be true to the Reformation we must build our thinking, our speaking, and our doing on the Bible.

2. Salvation – Justification by Faith

(a) The Reformed Church and Justification by Faith

The doctrine of justification by faith is regarded as the doctrine by which the Church stands or falls. If the Church were to give up this doctrine, she would cease to be the Church (cf. Galatians 1:6-9).

The Westminster Confession of Faith, 11:1-2 represents accurately the Reformed understanding of this doctrine:

Those whom God effectually calleth, he also freely justifieth: not by infusing righteousness into them, but by pardoning their sins, and by accounting and accepting their persons as righteous; not for anything wrought in them, or done by them, but for Christ's sake alone; nor by imputing faith itself, the act of believing, or any other evangelical obedience to them, as their righteousness; but by imputing the obedience and satisfaction of Christ unto them, they receiving and resting on him and his righteousness, by faith; which faith they have not of themselves, it is the gift of God.

Faith, thus receiving and resting on Christ and his righteousness, is the alone instrument of justification: yet is it not alone in the person justified, but is ever accompanied with all other saving graces, and is no dead faith, but worketh by love.

Notice that:

- (a) The negative statements in this definition are as important as the positive, since they contrast the Reformed understanding with the Roman.
- (b) Justification is defined as comprising the forgiveness of our sins and the imputation of Christ's righteousness.
- (c) Faith is only the instrument of justification – the ground of justification is the righteousness of Christ.
- (d) Faith itself is the gift of God.
- (e) We are justified by faith apart from works – but the faith by which we are justified is never apart from works.

(b) The Roman Church and Justification by Faith

The definition of justification in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* confuses justification and sanctification: "Justification is not only the remission of sins, but also the sanctification and renewal of the interior man" (1989).

- The first thing the Catechism says is the justification is the work of the Holy Spirit: "The grace of the Holy Spirit has the power to justify us, that is, to cleanse us from our sins and to communicate to us 'the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ' and through Baptism" (1987). Indeed, "The Holy Spirit is the master of the interior life. By giving birth to the 'inner man,' justification entails the sanctification of his whole being" (1995).

- This grace of the Holy Spirit to justify is in his effecting our union with Christ in his death and resurrection: "Through the power of the Holy Spirit we take part in Christ's Passion by dying to sin, and in his Resurrection by being born to a new life" (1988).

The *Catechism* also confuses the righteousness of God (God's attribute of righteousness and his act of saving righteousness) and the righteousness of Christ (the righteousness which God imputes to sinners) and the personal righteousness of justified persons:

- "Justification is at the same time the acceptance of God's righteousness through faith in Jesus Christ. Righteousness (or 'justice') here means the rectitude of divine love" (1991).
- Faith is defined as the consequence of justification, not its instrument. "With justification, faith, hope, and charity are poured into our hearts, and obedience to the divine will is granted us" (1991).
- Although "justification has been merited for us by the Passion of Christ", this does not mean that it is based on Christ's righteousness. Rather, it "conforms us to the righteousness of God, who makes us inwardly just by the power of his mercy" (1992), i.e. the grounds for justification is our righteousness, not Christ's.

According to the *Catechism*, justification is synergistic rather than monergistic (the Reformed view): "Justification establishes cooperation between God's grace and man's freedom. On man's part it is expressed by the assent of faith to the Word of God, which invites him to conversion, and in the cooperation of charity with the prompting of the Holy Spirit who precedes and preserves his assent" (1993).

(c) The Reformed and Roman views of the intermediate state

Consistent with their diverse views of justification, the Reformed and Roman churches hold radically different view of the intermediate state:

Westminster Confession of Faith, 32:1, states, "The bodies of men, after death, return to dust, and see corruption: but their souls, which neither die nor sleep, having an immortal subsistence, immediately return to God who gave them: the souls of the righteous, being then made perfect in holiness, are received into the highest heavens, where they behold the face of God, in light and glory, waiting for the full redemption of their bodies. And the souls of the wicked are cast into hell, where they remain in torments and utter darkness, reserved to the judgment of the great day. Beside these two places, for souls separated from their bodies, the Scripture acknowledgeth none."

The Catechism of the Catholic Church states, "(1030) All who die in God's grace and friendship, but still imperfectly purified, are indeed assured of their eternal salvation; but after death they undergo purification, so as to achieve the holiness necessary to enter the joy of heaven. (1031) The Church gives the name Purgatory to this final purification of the elect, which is entirely different from the punishment of the damned."

3. The Reformed Faith and the Lordship of Christ

We want to draw these studies in the history of the Reformation to a close by asking, *what has this got to do with me?* Is the Reformed faith just a badge to be worn, and a banner to display inside our churches?

(a) Christianity come into its own

Sometime “Calvinism” is reduced to the acronym TULIP, i.e.

- Total depravity
- Unconditional election
- Limited atonement (“definite atonement” is better, but disturbs the acronym!)
- Irresistible call
- Perseverance of the saints

These “five points” are true, but they weren’t formulated by Calvin, and they outline only a very truncated form of the Reformed faith. Properly speak, the Reformed faith is vastly larger – a whole worldview – the Lordship of Christ. Abraham Kuyper put it like this: “There is not a square inch in the whole domain of human existence over which Christ, who is Sovereign over all, does not cry, ‘Mine!’”

The Lordship of Christ invites a consistent and comprehensive view of everything, a view that we can hold with confidence. B.B. Warfield expressed that confidence when he claimed (provocatively) that the Reformed faith is “Christianity come into its own.” Treated as a sound-bite, that sounds like an arrogant “land-grab”. So we need to allow it some “riders”:

- The Reformed faith was not monolithic at the time of the Reformation – we’ve seen that it took Lutheran, Zwinglian, Genevan, and even Anabaptist forms. We have to allow for differences of opinion.
- The Reformed faith is not (or at least, ought not to be) sectarian – the claim that it represents “Christianity come into its own” ought to make the Reformed churches more tolerant of those who disagree with it; an intolerant attitude that would un-church non-reformed churches is ungracious and historically myopic.
- The Reformed faith is both conservative and progressive – many of the reformers were progressive in that they adopted the outlook and methods of humanism, but they were also conservative in that, like true Renaissance men, they looked back beyond the medieval Church to the apostles and sub-apostolic fathers. So there is always room for the re-expression of Reformed thought, and the exploration of its application to issues that have either moved or emerged since the Reformation.

(b) The Cultural Mandate

Because the Reformed faith takes the *Lordship of Christ* seriously, it also takes the *Cultural Mandate* (Genesis 1:28) seriously. That is, the Reformed faith understands the extent of the effects of sin (to adapt the words of Kuyper, “There is not a square inch in the whole domain of human existence over which sin does not cry, ‘Mine!’”) and the extent of Christ’s redemptive mission. God has reconciled all things to himself by the blood of the cross (Colossians 1:20), and our calling is to proclaim this to every creature (Mark 16:15).

For this reason, the Reformed faith encourages us to engage in every legitimate cultural activity as Christ’s people.

This means that the Reformed faith should deliver us from two errors:

- The Reformed faith does not mandate a pietistic retreat from the world. We don’t live in closed communities, dress in 16th century garb, and speak 16th century English. We don’t reduce witness-bearing to occasional “snatch-and-grab” operations in which we go out into the world to tell people “how to be saved”.
- Neither does the Reformed faith mandate a triumphalist conquest of the world. “Baptising” the State or society or science, etc., will no more make them Christian than the forced baptism of pagans saves them.

Rather, the Reformed faith reminds us that we are called to be salt and light in the world (Matthew 5:13-16). We “proclaim the gospel to every creature” by, among other things, doing good work in our vocations. Luther wrote, “If he is a Christian tailor, he will say: I make these clothes because God has bidden me do so, so that I can earn a living, so that I can help and serve my neighbour. When a Christian does not serve the other, God is not present; that is not Christian living.”

But at the same time, the Reformed faith reminds us that we live as strangers and exiles in the world (Hebrews 11:13; 1 Peter 1:1). We are to “seek the welfare of the city...and pray to the LORD on its behalf” (Jer. 29:7) – even though the city is, in a sense, Babylon, and we are, in a sense, in captivity. But all the while, we are to remember that a day is coming when we will be released and the city will be judged. The purpose of our engagement with every legitimate cultural activity is to witness to the Lordship of Christ – and so to honour God, whatever level of success (as measured by the world) we may enjoy. Thus we avoid two pitfalls:

- Our ego is not inflated when culture seems to enjoy the benefits of the gospel;
- Our ego is not deflated when we see culture rejecting the gospel.

(c) The Lordship of Christ

At the end of the day, the Reformed faith is about Lordship of Christ, or it is about nothing. Anyone who confesses the Reformed faith must submit to Christ’s Lordship in every department of life, and must think, speak and behave as a disciple of Christ at all times.