

Historical and Theological Contours of the Reformation

CLASS 1 - INTRODUCTION

OCTOBER 1, 2017



Introduction to the Reformation

Historical background & contributing factors

Societal, political, cultural, and religious climate

Thumbnail sketches

Timelines & Key People

Key Doctrinal Issues

Course Outline

Date	Topic	Teacher
Oct. 1	Introduction	David Hwang
Oct. 8	Early/Pre-Reformers	David Hwang
Oct. 15	<i>Sola Scriptura</i>	Rev. Peters
Oct. 22	Magisterial Reformers: Luther	David Hwang
Oct. 29	<i>Sola Gratia & Sola Fide</i>	Paul Lee-Bentham
Nov. 5	Magisterial Reformers: Calvin & Zwingli	David Hwang
Nov. 12	The Radical Reformation	Stephen Tom
Nov. 19	Baptism & the Lord's Supper	Stephen Tom
Nov. 26	<i>Solus Christus & Soli Deo Gloria</i>	Sunny Wong
Dec. 3	Council of Trent & Counter-Reformation	Stephen Tom
Dec. 10	The English Reformation	David Hwang
Dec. 17	The Reformation & Rise of Denominations	Stephen Tom
Dec. 24/31	Ongoing Relevance of the Reformation Today/Q&A	Panel Discussion

The Protestant Reformation

Schism from Roman Catholicism in the 1500s

- Resulted in emergence of Protestant Christianity in (mostly Western & Northern) Europe
- A process, not a single event
 - Occurred over several decades
 - Admixture of religious, social, & political factors

The Protestant Reformation

Schism from Roman Catholicism in the 1500s

- A diverse movement
 - Multiple different leaders in multiple geographic locations
 - Emergence of national Churches
 - Diverse theological views
 - Common themes, encapsulated in the 5 Sola's
 - Eventual emergence of Protestant denominations

Historical Background

The Roman Catholic Church in the late Middle Ages (1000s-1500s)

- Roman Catholicism was the dominant form of Christianity in western Europe
- East-West schism in 1054 → Orthodox Church in Eastern Europe

Roman Catholic Church (1000s-1500s)

Led by the Pope, with the church hierarchy

- The Bishop of Rome
 - Held to be successor of the apostle Peter & the 'Vicar of Christ' (i.e. Christ's representative on earth)
- Power to appoint bishops, who could appoint priests (i.e. the clergy)
- The clergy mediate grace to the people through the Sacraments

Roman Catholic Church (1000s-1500s)

System of faith & works

- Many (or most) at the time were uneducated & illiterate
- Many were considered unable to have an 'explicit faith'
- Instead, an 'implicit faith' was considered acceptable
 - People going to church to attend Mass and receive the sacraments would receive saving grace
 - God's grace poured into a person's heart makes him more just/righteous/loving ('justifies' him)

Roman Catholic Church (1000s-1500s)

System of faith & works

- But... very few were considered able to be sufficiently righteous at death to merit direct entry to heaven
- Guilt of sins forgiven in Christ, but there were still 'temporal punishments' that had to be dealt with (e.g. through penance)
- Most would need to have these fully purged after death in Purgatory, before entering heaven
 - Could be for thousands (or millions?) of years...

Roman Catholic Church (1000s-1500s)

System of faith & works

- Development of various approaches for shortening the time in Purgatory for oneself or for loved ones
- Prayers or masses for the dead → grace from the Mass applied to souls in purgatory to decrease their time there
- Emergence of chantries – chapels where priests would say prayers or Mass for souls of their sponsors & loved ones

Roman Catholic Church (1000s-1500s)

System of faith & works

- Indulgences
 - The 'Saints' were believed to have had more merit than needed to enter heaven
 - This extra merit could be dispensed by the Pope to those he deemed worthy → shorten one's time in purgatory
 - e.g. through offering a service or a gift
- Veneration of Saints & relics → purported to impart grace
 - e.g. rendering devotion to Frederick of Saxony's large collection relics → reduction of almost 2 million years (1,902,202 years & 270 days) in purgatory

Roman Catholic Church (1000s-1500s)

Spiritual & secular power

- Closely interwoven relationships between church ('spiritual') rulers & secular political ('temporal') powers (i.e. kings, princes, lords, etc.)
- The RC Church owned substantial wealth & large tracts of land throughout western Europe
 - Significant secular power
- 'Donation of Constantine'
 - Purported 4th century document from Emperor Constantine giving the Pope lordship over Western Europe (later shown to be a forgery)

Roman Catholic Church (1000s-1500s)

Spiritual & secular power

- Secular powers often meddled in church affairs
 - Resented the pope's authority over people in their domains & flow of money into the church
 - Sometimes tried to appoint their own people to church offices
- Popes exerted power over secular rulers
 - By excommunication & interdicts → bans individuals, groups, or nations from the church
 - By allying with some secular rulers against others

Roman Catholic Church (1000s-1500s)

Spiritual & secular power

- Papal power peaked in early 1200s, then declined due to increasing corruption and schisms
 - Immorality – sexual & otherwise
 - Buying & selling of church offices (including the papacy)
 - Power struggles with secular rulers

Roman Catholic Church (1000s-1500s)

Decline of Papal Power (1300-1400s)

- “Babylonian Captivity” of the Church (1309-1377)
 - Pope Clement V (a French pope) moves the Papal Court from Rome to Avignon (France)
 - Increased influence of French kings on the papacy
- “The Great Schism” (1378-1417)
 - Attempts to move the Papal Court back to Rome result in 3 rival popes
 - Undermined confidence in the Roman Catholic church & its leadership

Roman Catholic Church (1000s-1500s)

Decline of Papal Power

- Shaken confidence in the RC Church & its leadership →
 - Growing desire to reform the Church & the Papacy
- At the same time, rise of secular leaders & states willing to back reform & reformers
 - Mixed motives
 - Personal/political gain
 - Spiritual convictions

Cultural/Societal Factors

The Renaissance (“rebirth”)

- Period of cultural shift in 1300s-1600s
- Towards modern secular & individualistic view of life
- In contrast to more religious & corporate understanding previously
- Growth of humanism
 - Movement aimed at developing the full potential of the individual e.g. through education, arts



Cultural/Societal Factors

The Renaissance (“rebirth”)

- Renewed interest in ancient Greek & Roman culture
- Crusades introduced many to a new world
- Interest in studying ancient texts, including Hebrew & Greek texts of the Bible
 - Led by scholars such as Petrarch (1304-74)
 - “*Ad fontes*” – ‘to the sources’



Cultural/Societal Factors

The Renaissance (“rebirth”)

- Renewed interest in studying Biblical documents/manuscripts in the original languages
- vs. Latin, the language of the RC Church & Bible
- Erasmus (c. 1466-1536)
 - Published Greek New Testament in 1516
- Questions raised regarding some RC Church doctrines as people went back to the original language Bible texts



Historical Background

The Renaissance

- Development of the printing press (in the west)
- Johannes Gutenberg (~1440s)
- Enabled rapid printing & dissemination of Bibles and literature



Early Reform Movements

Various reform movements emerged (1200s-1400s)

- Multiple movements scattered across Europe
- Most were poorly documented - existence known largely through RC documents condemning them for heresy
- Early Reformers include
 - Peter Waldo (France, late 1100s)
 - John Wycliffe (England, 1300s)
 - Jan Hus (Bohemia, late 1300s-early 1400s)
- Many similar beliefs to later Protestant Reformers

Early Reform Movements

The Reforming Councils (1400s)

- Multiple Church Councils in the 1400s aimed at internally reforming the Church
- Councils of Pisa, Constance, Basel, Ferrara/Florence
- Brought an end the Great Schism
- Condemned Wycliffe & Hus as heretics
- Failed to secure effective, lasting reform

The Protestant Reformation

On the eve of the Reformation...

- Coalescence of factors multiple factors enabling the Reformation (where previous reforming efforts may have failed)
- Internal religious factors within the RC Church
- Intellectual/societal/cultural factors stemming from the Renaissance
- Political & economic factors

The Protestant Reformation – A Brief Timeline

- 1517 Martin Luther's 95 Theses in Wittenberg
- 1519 Zwingli starts preaching in Zurich
- 1521 Luther condemned at the Diet of Worms
- 1526 William Tyndale's New Testament completed
- 1531 Zwingli killed in battle
- 1534 Henry VII declared supreme head of the church
in England
- 1536 John Calvin arrives in Geneva; Tyndale executed
- 1545-63 Council of Trent
- 1546 Luther dies
- 1564 Calvin dies

The Protestant Reformation

The Reformation was a diverse movement

- Many different leaders in different locations
- Diverse theological views
- Different views regarding the relationship between Church & State

The Reformers

“Magisterial” reformers

- Used (secular) governmental authority to reform doctrine & practices of the church
- Examples include
 - Martin Luther
 - Ulrich Zwingli
 - John Calvin
 - John Knox

The Reformers

“Radical” reformers

- Diverse group with a spectrum of theological views
 - including some considered heretical by both Roman Catholics and Protestants
 - Persecuted by both Catholics & Protestants
- Sometimes referred to “Anabaptists” (“re-baptizers”)
 - Many rejected infant baptism

The Reformers

“Radical” reformers

- Rejected the secular governmental authority over the doctrine & practices of the church
- Examples include
 - Menno Simons → Mennonites
 - Jacob Hutter → Hutterites
 - Felix Manz & Conrad Grebel → Swiss Brethren → Swiss Mennonites

The Counter-Reformation

Response of the Roman Catholic church to counteract the Protestant Reformation (~1540-1648)

- Sought to implement reforms within the RC church
- Council of Trent (1545-63)
 - Recommended various reforms of the RC clergy
 - Condemned Protestant doctrines & clarified Catholic doctrines on disputed points

The Counter-Reformation

Various religious wars (Catholics vs. Protestants) for almost 100 years

Peace of Westphalia (1648)

- Ends Thirty Years War
- Recognizes civil & religious rights of Lutherans, Calvinists, and Roman Catholics

Theological Issues

The 5 “Sola’s”

- Summary of the main theological issues underlying the Reformation
 - *Sola Scriptura* – Scripture alone
 - *Sola Fide* – Faith alone
 - *Sola Gratia* – Grace alone
 - *Solus Christus* – Christ alone
 - *Soli Deo Gloria* – Glory to God alone

Theological Issues

Sola scriptura

- “Scripture alone” is the supreme authority on all matters on which it speaks
 - All matters pertaining to salvation & godliness
 - Scripture interprets itself
- The “formal principle” of the Reformation
 - The source from which Reformation theology derives
- **Implications**
 - The authority of Scripture supersedes that of Church tradition, the Pope, etc.

Theological Issues

Sola fide

- “faith alone”
 - Justification is received through faith alone
 - Good works are not required for, nor a means of, salvation
- The “material principle” of the Reformation
 - The central doctrine of Reformation theology
 - “The doctrine by which the church stands or falls”

Theological Issues

Sola gratia

- “grace alone”
 - Justification is received by God’s grace alone
 - Our good works merit nothing towards salvation
- Implications
 - Participation in sacraments, pilgrimages, etc. are not meritorious towards salvation
 - We cannot purchase or earn salvation

Theological Issues

Solus Christus

- “Christ alone”
 - Salvation is in Christ alone
 - Christ alone is the mediator between God and Man
- Implications
 - We trust in Christ alone for salvation, not “Christ + ...”
 - Denies the effectiveness of penance, indulgences, for securing forgiveness
 - No need for another mediator (priests, saints, Mary) between us and God

Theological Issues

Soli Deo Gloria

- “Glory to God alone”
 - God alone deserves the glory in all things (including our salvation)
- Implications
 - Calls into question veneration of the saints, Mary, popes, etc.
 - Our lives to be lived to the glory of God

The Protestant Reformation

Relevance for today?