

# PROCEEDINGS

## REFORMATION— *then and now*

### Ninth Triennial Convention of the Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference

June 29–July 2, 2017

Grimma, Germany



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**PROCEEDINGS**  
**of the**  
**CONFSSIONAL EVANGELICAL**  
**LUTHERAN CONFERENCE**

[www.celc.info](http://www.celc.info)



Convention Theme:

**REFORMATION—**  
*then and now*

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Northwestern Publishing House  
1250 N. 113th St., Milwaukee, WI 53226-3284  
© 2017 by Northwestern Publishing House.  
Published 2017  
Printed in the United States of America

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CELC Convention Group Photo in the Courtyard of the "Gymnasium St. Augustin" in Grimma, Germany



**CELC Officers (at their installation; l-r): Timothy Buelow, secretary; Gaylin Schmeling, President; Thomas Nass, Vice President; Larry Schlomer, member-at-large. ELFK Pres. Martin Wilde conducted the installation at the closing service.**



**President Daniel Koelpin led the proceedings, as Secretary Timothy Buelow recorded the minutes.**



Dr. Kebede Getachew Yigezu from new member church  
Lutheran Church of Ethiopia



Delegates tour the Castle Church in Wittenberg,  
where Luther nailed his 95 Theses.

**CONSTITUTION**  
**of the**  
**CONFESSIONAL EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CONFERENCE**

**ARTICLE I**

Name

The name of this federation of churches shall be The Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference.

**ARTICLE II**

Confession of Faith

Section 1. The Conference accepts the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments as the verbally inspired and inerrant Word of God and submits to this Word of God as the only infallible rule and authority in all matters of doctrine, faith, and life.

Section 2. The Conference also accepts the Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church contained in the Book of Concord of 1580, not in so far as, but because they are a correct exposition of the pure doctrine of the Word of God.

**ARTICLE III**

Purpose

The purpose of this conference of confessional Evangelical Lutheran churches is:

1. To give outward expression to the unity of spirit and oneness in faith and confession that binds the members of the Conference together;
2. To provide a forum for the members' mutual encouragement, spiritual growth, and strengthening in faith and confession;
3. To promote and strengthen the existing unity in scriptural doctrine and practice among the member churches and to seek to remove whatever might threaten to disturb or disrupt that unity;
4. To encourage the members of the Conference to be zealous in sharing their Lutheran heritage of the pure and unadulterated



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gospel of Jesus Christ with those who do not yet know and believe in Jesus as their Savior;

5. To give a clear, firm, and united testimony to the world concerning all that the Bible, the verbally inspired, inerrant, and authoritative Word of God, teaches;
6. To encourage and undertake the preparation and publication of clear Scripture-based confessional statements on issues that confront the church from time to time and which may or may not be addressed in the Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church contained in the Book of Concord of 1580.

### **ARTICLE IV**

#### **Membership**

Section 1. Membership in the Conference may be acquired and held only by such Lutheran churches which have accepted without reservation the doctrinal and confessional basis of the Conference described in Article II and which are not in fellowship with churches that in their doctrine or practice deviate from the confessional standard of the Conference.

Section 2. Churches applying for membership in the Conference may be received at any convention of the Conference by an affirmative vote of two thirds of the delegates present and voting, subject to ratification by all the member churches at their next meeting.

### **ARTICLE V**

#### **Authority**

Section 1. The Conference has only advisory authority in all things with respect to which the member churches have not specifically given it power to act.

Section 2. Any member church of the Conference which enters into fellowship with another church shall submit its action to the next meeting of the Conference for ratification.

### **ARTICLE VI**

#### **Representation**

Section 1. Each member church of the Conference shall be represented at the regular meetings of the Conference by two voting

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delegates: the president or leader of the church and another representative chosen by the church.

Section 2. Each member church may send up to four additional delegates who shall serve as advisory, non-voting representatives in meetings of the Conference.

### **ARTICLE VII** **Meetings**

Regular plenary meetings of the Conference shall be held triennially. Recommendations as to the place and time of the meetings are to be made by the Planning Committee (see Article X) to the voting assembly three years in advance. Changes that become necessary are to be made and announced by the Planning Committee.

### **ARTICLE VIII** **Officers**

Section 1. Officers of the Conference shall be a president, vice president, and secretary.

Section 2. The officers of the Conference shall be elected from a slate of candidates nominated by ballot. Voting shall be by ballot. A majority is necessary for election.

Section 3. The officers of the Conference shall serve for a term of three years. After two terms an individual will be ineligible for reelection to the same office for a period of three years. If a vacancy occurs in the office of president, the vice president shall become president. If a vacancy occurs in the office of vice president or secretary, the person who received the next highest number of votes for the office of vice president or secretary in the previous election shall succeed to the office for the remainder of the term.

### **ARTICLE IX** **Regional Meetings**

For various purposes the Conference shall be divided into five world regions: North America, South America, Asia, Europe, and Africa. In the interval between meetings of the plenary assembly member churches in these regions may meet to receive reports on

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the plenary meetings and to consider matters of common interest and concern.

### **ARTICLE X**

#### **Planning Committee**

Section 1. The Planning Committee shall consist of the president, vice president, secretary, and two representatives elected by the plenary assembly. The latter two representatives shall serve for a maximum of two three-year terms.

Section 2. The Planning Committee shall plan the program and make all necessary arrangements for the plenary meetings of the Conference. It shall disseminate information regarding the meetings and work of the Conference. It shall meet as often as necessary to carry out these and any other duties that may be assigned to it.

### **ARTICLE XI**

#### **Expenses**

Section 1. Each member church shall pay the expenses of its own delegates to meetings of the Conference.

Section 2. A special fund shall be established to which members of CELC churches are invited to contribute. Member churches which need help in paying the expenses of their delegates may apply to the Planning Committee for assistance from this CELC fund. The expenses of the Planning Committee shall also be paid from this fund. The fund shall be administered by the Planning Committee through a person it appoints for a renewable term of three years. The Planning Committee's administration of the CELC fund shall be ratified by the plenary assembly.

### **ARTICLE XII**

#### **Amendments**

Amendments to this Constitution may be made at any meeting of the Conference by the affirmative vote of two-thirds of the voting delegates, provided that notice of such amendments shall have been sent through the Planning Committee to all member churches one year prior to the meeting of the Conference.

BYLAWS

**BYLAWS**

- 1.1 There shall be a Commission on Theology consisting of five members. The members of the commission shall be appointed by the Planning Committee, subject to ratification by the convention. The term of the office shall be six years. Initially, three members shall be appointed for six years and two members for three years. Members will be eligible for appointment for a maximum of two terms. The president of the Conference shall be an *ex officio* member of the commission.
- 1.2 The commission shall prepare a position paper on the theological topic treated by the last convention. This statement shall be submitted for ratification by the CELC in convention.
- 2.1 There shall be Theological Education—Transfer and Augmentation (THETA) Commission consisting of five members. The members of the commission shall be appointed by the CELC president, subject to ratification by the convention. The term of the office shall be six years. Initially, three members shall be appointed for six years and two members for three years. Members will be eligible for appointment for a maximum of two terms. The president of the Conference shall be an *ex officio* member of the commission.
- 2.2 The THETA Commission shall investigate and coordinate global theological education in the CELC at the seminary and post-seminary levels, serve as a clearinghouse of information, identify needs and resources for seminaries, and help sister churches find ways to meet their professor-training needs through post-seminary study. The Commission shall report its activities to each convention.

*Adopted 1993; Revised 1996, 2002, 2008*

## APPENDIX #1:

# Guidelines for Churches Seeking Membership in the CELC

## A. Full Membership

### 1. Prerequisites

- a. The respective church body should:
  - have member congregations and trained national clergy to share the Gospel
  - show organization, such as officers, constitution, etc.
  - have an officially adopted doctrinal statement
  - have a doctrine commission/committee in operation
  - have a church budget and demonstrated support of it
- b. The respective church body seeking membership is expected to be in formal church fellowship with at least one of the churches of the CELC before making application for membership.

### 2. Procedure

In conjunction with its application for membership, the respective church seeking membership in the CELC should, prior to its formal application,

- be encouraged to attend at least one convention as an invited guest/observer
- obtain recommendation for membership from two existing member churches
- submit its constitution and doctrinal statement(s) to the CELC Planning Committee and the CELC Theological Commission for the church's membership recommendation at least one year before the triennial convention at which its membership will be considered

## B. Associate Membership

### 1. Prerequisites

The respective church body should:

- be in doctrinal and communion fellowship with the CELC
- be interested in developing a closer organizational relationship with the CELC

- be comprised of organized congregation(s) with regular worship, with lay leadership, and with members providing support for the work of the church
2. Procedure  
The church seeking Associate Membership status with the CELC should make its desire and request known through a letter sent to the CELC President

**C. Rights and Privileges**

1. Voting rights and holding offices are limited to full member churches.
2. Associates have rights of participation in all sessions and may serve as presenters.

**D. Responsibility**

Full member churches should assume some appropriate level of financial support for the ongoing operations of the CELC.

*Adopted 2002; Revised 2011*

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**APPENDIX #2:**

**Dispute Resolution Procedure for CELC Members**

Should a theological dispute between member churches of the CELC surface, remain unresolved, and threaten the bonds of fellowship between those churches,

1. The churches unable to resolve the difficulty by themselves may approach the CELC president and ask for help in resolving the issue. In doing so, the churches retain their autonomous, self-governing status, but are voluntarily seeking and submitting themselves to the judgment of the CELC leadership in their effort to resolve the problem.
2. If the CELC president is unable on his own to bring about a resolution of the dispute, he shall enlist the help of four other individuals drawn from the CELC Theological Commission or Planning Committee. This five-member ad hoc committee shall further investigate the matter, give counsel, and seek to resolve the dispute.

## APPENDICES

3. If the matter remains unresolved, the ad hoc committee shall recommend a course of action to the next triennial convention of the CELC. The ad hoc committee's recommendation to the CELC convention shall be reported to the member churches of the CELC at least three months prior to that convention. The decision of the convention in session will be the final resolution of the matter for CELC member churches.

*Adopted 2008*

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Ninth Triennial Convention

June 29–July 2, 2017—Grimma, Germany

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## MINUTES

### CONFESSIONAL EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CONFERENCE

#### Ninth Triennial Convention

June 29–July 2, 2017—Grimma, Germany

Delegates and guests began arriving in the Saxon city of Grimma on Wednesday afternoon, June 28. A well-organized staff of volunteers from the host church, the Evangelical Lutheran Free Church (ELFK), welcomed guests arriving at the “Gymnasium St. Augustin” boarding secondary school. Guests staying at the school were directed to their rooms while those guests staying outside Grethen in a dormitory belonging to the “Leipzig Friends of Nature” (Leipziger Naturfreundehaus Grimma) about 7 km and 14 minutes away were either directed or transported to their accommodations. The ELFK staff provided supper on site at each location.

#### DAY 1—THURSDAY, JUNE 29

Following breakfast at the school in Grimma, the convention officially began on Thursday, June 29 with the opening service in the aula (auditorium) of the St. Augustine school. On the back wall of the auditorium were paintings of both royals and teachers from the illustrious 467-year history of the school. St. Augustine school’s most famous alumnus was Paul Gerhardt, the great German hymnist, famous for “Come, Your Hearts and Voices Raising,” “Upon the Cross Extended,” “A Lamb Goes Uncomplaining Forth,” “O Sacred Head Now Wounded,” “Now Rest Beneath Night’s Shadow” and many others. Twenty-three of his hymns appear in the *Evangelical Lutheran Hymnary* in English translation.

At 8:35 a.m., ELFK Pastor Karsten Drechsler led us in the service of Morning Praise from *Christian Worship: A Lutheran Hymnal*. Pastor Jonas Schröter preached the sermon on “Grace Alone,” with Psalm 2 as his text. He told us of his own childhood, growing up in Grimma, where all the streets were named at the time after communist leaders except one: Paul-Gerhardt-Strasse, in front of the school. While Christianity was publicly suppressed in the days of his youth in the former German Democratic Republic where Grimma was situated, he found it interesting that one Christian was too important to eliminate from memory—a Christian whose

hymns he grew up singing. Psalm 2 advises the leaders of this world to wise up and acknowledge Jesus Christ as King while there is still time.

Following the opening service a 15-minute recess followed. Many of the delegates seemed grateful for the chance to get a cup of coffee to combat jet lag, as a good number had travelled to Grimma from great distances only the day before.

Following the break, we were brought official greetings by the *Oberbürgermeister* (mayor) of Grimma, who welcomed us to his city and gave us a brief overview of the town's history, including the recent major flooding in 2002 and 2013 which made international news. St. Augustine school and the surrounding Old Town are on the banks of the Mulde River. The mayor spoke of the ongoing engineering work in progress to prevent future flooding from ever costing Grimma billions in restoration again.

Next, the roll call began five minutes ahead of schedule at 9:40 a.m. It was acknowledged with sadness that visa requirements had prevented some delegates from making the trip, including one of the scheduled devotion leaders from India, Pastor Ananda Raju.

When the roll call was complete, Pres. Koelpin introduced the next item of business: official greetings from past officers and influential figures from the founding and following years of the CELC. Mark Schulz read greetings from Pastor Karl Gurgel and Pastor Richard Lauersdorf of WELS. Recently recorded video greetings from Prof. Armin Schuetze and past CELC president Rev. Steve Petersen were played on the large screen at the front of the auditorium. Thereupon, Eugene Schulz, who was present at the founding CELC convention in Oberwesel, Germany, was called upon to give his greetings in person, in which he recounted memories of the early conventions of the CELC. Perhaps the oldest guest in attendance in Grimma, Eugene served for many years as photographer and archivist for the CELC.

At 10:15 a.m., Rev. Dan Koelpin read the President's Address, included in the *Proceedings*.

Following the president's report, Dan Koelpin asked that the proposed Minutes Review Committee be ratified, consisting of Prof. Thomas Nass, Dr. Michael Smith, and Dr. Seth Erlandsson. The committee was ratified by voice vote.

Dr. John Brenner was next asked to come forward and present the report of the Theological Commission. The first item he presented was the request for associate membership by three new churches: SALEM (South Asian Lutheran Evangelical Mission)—Hong Kong, the Lutheran Church of Ethiopia, and East Asia Lutheran Synod. Each church has concluded doctrinal talks with the WELS Commission on Inter-Church Relations (CICR), and the CICR is recommending that the 2017 WELS convention make a formal declaration of church fellowship with each of them. The motion of the Theological Commission to accept these three churches into CELC associate membership was seconded and passed by voice vote, followed by applause from the entire assembly.

Dr. Brenner then presented for approval Article VII of the *The Eternal Word: A Lutheran Confession for the Twenty-First Century*. Article VII of this confession of the CELC is titled “The Church: Unity of Spirit—Bond of Peace.” It was written by the Theological Commission on the basis of the doctrinal papers presented at the Seventh Triennial Convention of the CELC in New Ulm, Minnesota in 2011. It was moved, seconded, and passed that Article VII be adopted as our mutual confession on the doctrine of the church.

Following the reports, the appointments of John Brenner and Davison Mutentami to the Theological Commission were ratified by unanimous voice vote.

At 10:40 a.m., Treasurer Mark Schulz was summoned to the dais to present the financial reports. He presented a summary of the previous triennium’s finances, and explained that he was prepared to answer in detail for every check written. Mark also explained the thorough American legal audit process that has been followed, and explained that it was this audit process which has led to individual churches being routinely asked to verify the amount contributed to the CELC each year.

Pres. Koelpin encouraged member churches to continue to finance the CELC into the future, recognizing how important these gatherings and this organization are for mutual encouragement, as we stand for the pure gospel in a confused world.

Mark Schulz then explained the thumb drives he had made, containing PowerPoint presentations from the various member churches. Because the CELC has so many member churches, there is no lon-

ger time at the convention for each church to give an oral presentation of its work. Therefore, the Planning Committee arranged for the production of thumb drives, and for only the three new associate member churches to present their history and work to the delegates orally. The delegates were further warned by Mark, for security reasons, not to share information on the internet about certain CELC member churches, which carry out work in countries not eager to allow evangelizing or mission activity.

It was moved, and seconded that the treasurer's report be approved. The motion was approved by unanimous vote at 10:58 a.m.

At 11:00 a.m., Prof. Thomas Nass was asked to come forward to present the "Ninety-Five Theses for the 21st Century," which were prepared by the fifteen-member CELC Reformation Anniversary Committee under the leadership of Co-Chairmen John Moldstad and Thomas Nass. The theses are intended to be a way for CELC member churches around the world to commemorate the 500th anniversary of the Reformation in a manner that shares the message of God's Word with our countrymen wherever our churches are located. Prof. Nass asked for a motion for approval of the theses, so that discussion could begin. The Evangelical Lutheran Free Church of Germany brought two final suggestions for improvement pertaining to theses 44 and 81. After minimal discussion, the suggestions were approved by an official motion and vote and will be reflected in the final copy to be published by Northwestern Publishing House. (During the convention, video recordings were made of attendees reading several theses, many in their native language, to be incorporated into a professional video presentation of the entire set of theses, interspersed with the singing of Lutheran hymns.)

Discussion ensued about thesis 75 and the role of social work as the church focuses on its mission of sharing the gospel. Several speakers advocated keeping the wording exactly as it is, strongly identifying the true mission of the church as preaching the gospel and not as social work or advocating social change, so that this topic might continue to generate such discussion also in the future, and keep us faithful to the Great Commission. While publicly demonstrating our love as Christians is an important touchpoint at times, it is nevertheless not part of the Great Commission which has been given to the church. Acts of Christian compassion



## MINUTES

are works that we primarily do as individual Christians in the world, in response to God's love, rather than as a part of the mission of the church. After thorough discussion, thesis 75 remained as presented.

At 11:30 a.m., the amended "Ninety-Five Theses" were approved by unanimous voice vote.

Rev. John Braun was invited to report on the Reformation anniversary book he authored and brought to distribute to the delegates as a gift from Northwestern Publishing House. In addition, he spoke briefly of the other Reformation 500th anniversary projects of NPH.

Dr. Tom Kuster of the Christ in Media Institute at Bethany Lutheran College, Mankato, Minnesota, spoke briefly about technology as a tool for outreach, inviting anyone to meet one on one with him before he formally presents the work of the organization to the joint assembly.

Pres. Koelpin then began discussion on the designation of the offering from the Closing Service, presenting the proposal of the ELFK and the CELC Planning Committee that we give the collection to the Roma ministry being conducted by WELS in connection with the Bulgarian Lutheran Church. A second option presented was that half the offering be given to the Roma ministry and the other half to Multi-Language Publications. WELS Pres. Mark Schroeder offered a motion that we give the entire amount to the Roma ministry, which was seconded. Before the vote, Missionary Mike Duncan gave us more information about the Roma ministry, their finances, and their challenges. The motion was then approved by unanimous voice vote.

At 11:48 a.m., Prof. Jon Bare of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary began the THETA Commission report. He briefly summarized the written materials and proposal of his fellow professor and THETA Commission member Dr. Kenneth Cherney, which had been printed in advance and included in the conference binder.

The stroke of the clock at noon brought the productive morning to a close and Secretary Timothy Buelow led the assembly in a closing prayer for the session and in a lunch prayer, following which we were dismissed for a tasty joint meal.

Following lunch, the convention reconvened at 1:20 p.m.. Rev. Davison Mutentami, of the Lutheran Church of Central Africa—Zambia Synod, led us in the afternoon devotion on the theme of “Faith Alone.” The devotion concluded with the singing of the hymn, “Faith Is a Living Power from Heaven.”

Before the first essay was read, Pres. Koelpin introduced ELFK Pres. Emeritus Gerhard Wilde. Pres. Wilde was one of the founding pastors of the CELC. Wilde told us the story of meeting ELS Pres. George Orvick in the early 1980s in the GDR. Orvick was with a tour group and had requested Pastor Wilde meet him at the “Interhotel” (East German government run “western tourist only” hotel) his group was staying at. Pastor Wilde was not even allowed to use the washroom at the hotel in his own country while waiting for Orvick to arrive, since it was a hotel designated for western tourists only. When Orvick and his group finally arrived, Mrs. Orvick went into the hotel to hold her and her husband’s places at the banquet table while Pres. Orvick remained outside as long as possible to talk to Pastor Wilde about the dream of beginning an international Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference. Orvick urged Pres. Wilde to work on clearing up the remaining “triangular fellowship” situations the ELFK remained in with churches that had drifted from orthodoxy over time, so that the conference could be formed. Wilde reported how astounding it is that he could travel to the west in a united Germany already in 1993 for the founding convention of the CELC at Oberwesel because God had brought down the wall dividing East and West, and how it was even more astounding that this year’s CELC convention is being held in Grimma—once an impossible dream due to the former communist government of East Germany.

Essay 1: “The Lutheran Reformation Then and Now” was presented by Prof. Holger Weiss, beginning at 1:40 p.m. and ending at 2:45 p.m. The entire essay is included in the *Proceedings*.

At 2:45 p.m., the session was recessed until 3:05 p.m., at which time discussion of Essay 1 commenced. The comments centered on adding non-German applications to the section on where the Lutheran Reformation finds itself in our present day, 500 years after it began. In his comments, Dr. Kebede spoke of the catechism being used in the Lutheran Church of Ethiopia as an effective and much-loved teaching tool. Rev. Mike Duncan concurred,

and spoke of the immense popularity and usefulness of the catechism in teaching the gospel in Pakistan and Nepal.

At 3:34 p.m., Dr. Sam Choi of the Seoul Lutheran Church in Korea was asked to deliver Essay 2: “The Reformed Reformation Then and Now.” The delegates followed along closely with the printed text, which Dr. Choi finished reading at 4:32 p.m. Discussion followed, focusing on how we can “compete” with the Reformed, which predominate Christianity in many areas of the world, including South Korea. Pastor Juhani Viitala spoke of the place of apologetics in doing outreach, while Pastor Mutentami highlighted the usefulness of technology.

At 5:00 p.m., the supper break was declared, and our German hosts served us an Italian meal (with German touches).

At 7:00 p.m., delegates and guests reconvened in the aula for informal presentations on the history, background, and work of the three new associate member churches: the Lutheran Church of Ethiopia, SALEM—Hong Kong, and the East Asia Lutheran Synod.

The evening presentations drew to a close at 8:40 p.m., and the delegates and guests were dismissed to spend the rest of the evening hours in social fellowship in classrooms which had been outfitted with refreshments for that purpose.

At 10:30 p.m., those staying at the dormitory in Grethen boarded a bus back to their quarters and the evening drew to a close.

## **DAY 2—FRIDAY, JUNE 30**

Friday morning, the ELFK volunteers once again offered us a delicious true continental breakfast.

At 8:30 a.m., we again assembled in the aula. The opening devotion was led by Pastor Ugis Sildegs of the Confessional Lutheran Church in Latvia. He spoke on Genesis 3, particularly the devil’s temptation, “Did God *really* say?” Satan knows the power of God’s Word and seeks to counteract it by introducing doubts. But if we stick with Scripture, *Sola Scriptura*, God will keep us strong in the one true faith. The devotion concluded with the singing of Martin Franzmann’s hymn, “Thy Strong Word.”

Immediately after the devotion and before the morning session, delegates were asked to proceed to the inner outdoor courtyard

of the school for group pictures, before a number of the women left to tour the city of Leipzig.<sup>1</sup>

Having reconvened in the auditorium, beginning at 9:37 a.m., Julio Ascarrunz Martinez began the reading of Essay 3: “The Radical Reformation Then and Now.” The paper was very thorough and helpful in pointing out the historical lines from the radical reformation 500 years ago right up to the present—movements that let claims of “personal revelation” contradict the Word of God in Scripture alone. Toward the conclusion of the essay, Rev. Ascarrunz Martinez became quite animated as he read quotes of Martin Luther condemning the fanatics. Translating for him during the discussion that followed, Rev. Larry Schlomer explained the animation: Martinez had once been Pentecostal and in reaction to false teachings he had learned, he normally speaks in “non-charismatic” low tones—unless he is speaking about heresies that formerly harmed him. Discussion was also animated, and both Rev. Mutentami of Zambia and Dr. Kebede of Ethiopia stated that Martinez’ experience described perfectly the situation surrounding the preaching of the true gospel in their own neighborhoods. His entire essay is also included in the *Proceedings*.

Following the lengthy discussion, Pres. Koelpin asked all voting delegates to take the sheet of paper from their binders with the nominees for office, and fill it out as their election ballot to be handed in and counted by the ELFK organizing committee. With that, the morning session was brought to a close with prayer and petition by Rev. Ugis Sildegs.

After another delicious lunch with potato soup as the main course, the convention reconvened at 1:20 p.m. with the afternoon devotion, led by Pastor Andreas Drechsler on the theme “*Solus Christus*—Christ Alone.” Andreas chose as his text the account of the Transfiguration in Matthew 17:1–9. The disciples

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<sup>1</sup>Half of the women enjoyed a tour of Leipzig guided by Dorothea Hoffmann and Rosemarie Hoffmann. The other half gathered during the morning business meeting time for a chance to visit and to sing. The voices, thanks to the live acoustics of the room, sounded like a beautiful chorus of nuns in the convent of Nimb-schen. The meeting was facilitated by Hanna Drechsler and Yvonne Hoffmann.

The time spent together was much treasured by all and led to the creation of a group email list for the purpose of future contact and mutual encouragement in the faith.—Sara Buelow

felt a bit alone after Moses and Elijah returned to heaven and they headed down the mountain, yet they still had all they needed: Jesus Christ alone. Pastor Drechsler applied these words, by highlighting how awesome our fellowship is, especially at such a convention, and yet, when we return home and feel all alone in our work, we still have all that matters, namely Jesus Christ alone.

Announcements followed at 1:35 p.m., and then at 1:40 p.m., Dr. Timothy Schmeling began Essay 4: “The Catholic Reformation Then and Now.” The scholarly paper was filled with both items commonly known to Lutheran pastors and other interesting items less easily discovered. A treasure trove of information was available to anyone following up on the footnotes. The essay is included in the *Proceedings*.

At 2:40 p.m., following the reading of the essay, it was announced that Pastors Martin Vršecký and Petr Krákora had arrived from Plzen, Czechia.

Discussion began on Dr. Schmeling’s essay, gravitating quickly toward the question: Which is our worst enemy in spreading the pure gospel, the Reformed heresy or the Roman Catholic heresy? Delegate Jim Huebner, WELS Vice President, suggested the enemy is the same, namely “the lie” that we are in any way responsible for our own salvation, which contradicts “the truth” that we are saved entirely by God’s grace. The devil sneaks this most ancient and fundamental heresy in using whatever form most effectively undermines the gospel at any given time and among any given people.

The convention recessed for an afternoon break at 3:15 p.m. The “15-minute” break ended at 3:40 p.m. with further discussion of the THETA Commission’s report. At 3:50 p.m., a resolution was made to have the THETA Commission, the Pastoral Studies Institute (PSI) of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, and the CELC Planning Committee together consider the future of the THETA Commission.

The results of the CELC Planning Committee election were announced: Gaylin Schmeling, President; Thomas Nass, Vice President; Timothy Buelow, Secretary; Larry Schlomer, Member-at-Large; and John Hartwig, Member-at-Large.

At 3:55 p.m., Michael Duncan of the Planning Committee came forward to present the proposal for the 2020 convention. He began by telling the story of Dr. Jordan, a medical doctor/evan-

gelist who had to flee Pakistan after his life was threatened when he sought to free a brother-in-law who had been kidnapped for ransom. Dr. Jordan is now completing his time as a vicar in preparation for his ordination in WELS in the United States. Pastor Duncan also brought greetings from the Lutheran mission field in Nepal. Mike then gave a lengthy explanation of the Planning Committee's proposal that the 2020 convention be held in Seoul, Korea. He expressed thanks for both invitations which had been received, from Seoul Lutheran Church and the Concord Evangelical Lutheran Church of Russia. Due primarily to flight costs and visa requirements, the recommendation of Seoul was made and Mike officially moved the Planning Committee's recommendation. The resolution was passed unanimously.

Following the resolution regarding the 2020 convention, Pres. Koelpin asked for invitations for the Eleventh Triennial Convention to be held in 2023. Dr. Kebede offered a proposal that it be hosted by the Lutheran Church of Ethiopia. Rev. Davison Mutentami of Zambia invited the Planning Committee to consider the Lutheran Church of Central Africa as potential hosts. Rev. Ingvar Adriansson invited the committee to consider holding the 2023 convention in western Sweden, to be cohosted by the Lutheran Confessional Church in Sweden and the Lutheran Confessional Church in Norway. Pres. Koelpin pointed out that invitations from other churches would also be considered if received by summer, 2018.

At 4:15 p.m., Pres. Koelpin and his wife Carol were honored and thanked by the entire assembly not only for the last three years in which Dan has served as president, but also for all their many years of service to the CELC.

Following announcements, Pastor Andreas Drechsler closed the afternoon session with prayer at 4:25 p.m.

Following supper, participants gathered once again in the aula, where they heard reports on the work of organizations that support church work in our fellowship: Kingdom Workers, presented by director Bill Meier; Christ in Media, presented by Dr. Tom Kuster; Multi-Language Publications, presented by director Rev. Nathan Seiltz; and Northwestern Publishing House, presented by Rev. John Braun.

At 8:20 p.m., Prof. John Brenner announced the somber news that the mother of Dan Koelpin had passed away today, and he led the assembly in prayer.

Once again, a time of fellowship followed, complete with refreshments. By mutual consent, the busses left for Grethen at 10:00 p.m., a half hour earlier than the night before.

### **DAY 3—SATURDAY, JULY 1**

The group left Grimma on three busses at 9:00 a.m. to spend the day touring Wittenberg, the city where the Reformation began and where Luther nailed his 95 Theses on the door of the Castle Church of All Saints on October 31, 1517. The ELFK Planning Committee had arranged for generous packed lunches for all delegates and registered guests. Arriving in Wittenberg just after 10:30 a.m., participants were divided into separate groups of 10-15, each to be led by an ELFK pastor in touring the most important sights of the town. The leaders were informative and helpful, and the time to see the town was generous. Some followed the more formal tours, this being their first tour of Wittenberg. Those who had been there before were allowed to focus on sights they had not thoroughly studied before, such as the new museum exhibits, or to see the town at a more leisurely pace. (It so happened that the stage set up in the town square for anniversary year presentations was occupied on that day by a Norwegian group, giving speeches and singing Norwegian folk music. Pastor Tor Jakob Welde of Norway commented, "This is *not* what I came to Wittenberg to hear," while delegates from the "little Norwegian synod" in America, the ELS, were thrilled.) While we enjoyed the tour immensely, we were also a bit taken aback by the secular emphasis of the anniversary celebration, spearheaded by the Lutheran World Federation and the various state churches of Germany, who seemed to think the Reformation paved the way for Green Party activism and other secular causes.

We reboarded the busses and departed Wittenberg precisely at 5:00 p.m. to make our way back to Grimma for the official convention banquet. Traffic was light and we arrived a little early for our joint banquet at "Göschens Gut," a wonderful banquet hall in the former barn of a famous printer. For this reason, at least one of the busses took a little side tour to see the new "church" building of the ELFK's Nerchau congregation on the other side of

the Mulde River, not far from Grimma. The congregation undertook a big project for a relatively small group, purchasing the social building of a former factory. With lots of volunteer labor, the building has been transformed into a marvelous facility with a large room on the top floor for worship and numerous classrooms. It is a very inviting building with a beautiful coat of light yellow paint and white window frames on the outside. Despite once being connected to a factory, the facility directly adjoins a nice residential neighborhood.

The banquet began at 7:00 p.m., featuring a wondrously diverse buffet of German specialties. Verbal thanks were formally given at the center of the hall to those who worked hard within the host church to prepare for such a large gathering. Thanks were especially directed to Karin Döhler-Richter. Karin was acknowledged as having done by far the most work of anyone on the ELFK Convention Planning Committee, a fact readily acknowledged by the CELC Planning Committee. A special, framed wall hanging was given her, signed by many of the participants in the convention. Karin was reluctant to be recognized—a testimony to her servant attitude.

At 9:00 p.m., the banquet came to a close as busses were boarded to take us back to our respective boarding facilities in Grimma and Grethen.

#### **DAY 4—SUNDAY, JULY 2**

Following another wonderful breakfast, the final business session of the convention convened at 9:00 a.m. Sunday morning in the aula of the Gymnasium St. Augustin.

The first item of business was the reading of the minutes from Friday's session. Several corrections were noted. Pres. Koelpin gave the floor to Rev. Thomas Heyn to share thoughts about the role of human reason in the church, as a follow-up to the second essay. Discussion ensued. Both Rev. Thomas Heyn and ELS Pres. John Moldstad spoke of the usefulness of apologetics in bolstering the faith of our own people, for example our young people who are bombarded by evolution and atheism in their schools. Pres. Mark Schroeder encouraged us to optimistically trust in the power of the Word and not retreat, but go forth confidently with the Sword of the Spirit, and Pastor Martin Vršecký made the point that even Jesus was not always well received when he taught the Word of



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God. Several others commented before time constraints brought the discussion to an end.

At 9:37 a.m., Pres. Koelpin returned to the issue of the THETA Commission theological sharing website. He announced that Pres. Schroeder has offered to cover the cost of the website until the joint theological committee comes forward with a proposal. Applause of thanks followed. Prof. Jon Bare summarized how the joint committee (THETA Commission, the Pastoral Studies Institute of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, and the CELC Planning Committee) will move forward, and explained how the website can be made good use of by all member churches.

Prof. Nass announced that all the video recording had been completed of delegates reading the “Ninety-Five Theses for the 21st Century.” In total, 35 individuals read aloud on camera.

At 10:17 a.m., Rev. Larry Schlomer of the CELC Planning Committee was called forward to introduce the official resolution of thanks, which reads as follows:

WHEREAS, the Lord granted safe travel and allowed many to gather together as representatives and guests of the Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference, and

WHEREAS, our brothers and sisters of the ELFK and, in particular, the ELFK Convention Planning Committee, have worked tirelessly and thoroughly to plan, organize, and host the Ninth Triennial Convention of the CELC in Grimma, and

WHEREAS, the CELC Planning Committee, including outgoing member, Rev. Michael Duncan, and led by CELC President Dan Koelpin who has served the CELC for six years as a member-at-large, six years as vice president, and six years as its president, has spent much time and effort to facilitate and coordinate the gathering of representatives of many churches from many places in this world, and

WHEREAS, essayists, worship leaders, the CELC treasurer, secretary, and chairman spent many hours in prayerful and careful preparation to make this meeting a success, and

WHEREAS, all of us have felt most welcome, well fed and thoroughly loved by all who spent their time to serve and care for us,

Therefore let it be

RESOLVED, that we thank the many members of the ELFK for their outstanding hospitality, and be it further

RESOLVED, that we thank the essayists, worship leaders, preachers, and CELC leaders for their time spent in preparation for the tremendous work that was evident at our convention, and be it further

RESOLVED, that we thank God for the gift of faithful leaders and we thank Dan Koelpin and the support of his wife, Carol, for these many years of faithful service to the CELC, and be it finally

RESOLVED, that we raise our voices in thanks to our Lord for his grace that made this meeting possible and the amazing display of his love we have heard and seen in the words and service of all who participated here.

At 10:19 a.m., Pres. Koelpin declared the proceedings of the Ninth Triennial Convention of the CELC officially closed in the name of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Following the official end of business, delegates made their way from the auditorium to the former cloister church attached to the south side of the St. Augustine School for the Closing Service. As we approached the church from the street, members of the brass choir of the ELFK were playing Paul Gerhardt hymns outdoors in front of the church in traditional German Lutheran fashion.

The service began shortly after the officially announced time of 10:30 a.m. Karsten Drechsler conducted the liturgy in a voice easily heard and understood by the hundreds assembled—both delegates and official guests, as well as many ELFK members who had driven many kilometers to be in attendance. While the service was conducted entirely in English, following Rite 2 (the Common Service) from the *Evangelical Lutheran Hymnary*, the entire service was printed in German in the service folder alongside the English so that no one would miss hearing the gospel. President Martin Wilde of the ELFK preached the sermon on the “chief article” (in German the “*Hauptartikel*”—the “head article”) of doctrine in the Lutheran Confessions, namely the teaching that we are justified before God by faith alone. He vividly illustrated how without a

head, we can do nothing, and without the “head article” or chief article, the church is like a headless man and will die swiftly.

Following the sermon, the installation of CELC officers was conducted by Pastor Martin Wilde. The elected officers vowed their loyalty to the infallible, inerrant Scriptures—the canonical books of the Bible—and to each of the Lutheran Confessions in the Book of Concord of 1580. They did so under the watchful gaze of Luther and Melanchthon from the stained glass windows at the front of the sanctuary.

The choir, assembled from members of ELFK churches, sang a beautiful rendition of Telemann’s *“Ein feste Burg”*—“A Mighty Fortress Is Our God.” The entire service was live streamed and recorded for viewing on YouTube. Hundreds of brothers and sisters committed to the one true faith once committed to the saints then communed at the Lord’s altar. Instrumentalists, primarily on wooden German recorders, beautified the atmosphere during the distribution. The service was brought to a glorious conclusion with the singing of “God’s Word Is Our Great Heritage” by Nikolai Grundtvig, set to the tune written by Friedrich O. “Fritz” Reuter, the musician from the late 1800s and early 1900s who grew up in the Zwickau-Planitz congregation of the ELFK and brought his career to completion as music professor at Dr. Martin Luther College (WELS) of New Ulm, Minnesota. President Emeritus Gerhard Wilde has written three additional stanzas in German to this hymn, which have now been published in the new hymnal of the ELFK. These were translated into English and sung at the service along with a completely new (English only) final stanza, written just for this occasion on the 500th anniversary of the Reformation.

After the congregation was dismissed, a delicious catered meal of hearty beef stew was served at the back of the sanctuary, and as guests spilled out into the street at the entrance of the church, once again the brass choir of the ELFK was playing beautiful hymns for the public on the pavement.

Some guests departed early to catch flights, but many stayed for the afternoon to tour Nimbschen, the cloister where Katie Luther was a nun, just on the outskirts of Grimma. While there, our gracious hosts provided coffee, cheesecake, and coffeecake.

Sunday evening supper back at the school showed how thrifty our hosts were, as we were treated to a wonderful new meal made with leftovers from our previous suppers.

At 6:30 p.m., newly elected CELC President Gaylin Schmeling welcomed the assembly back to the auditorium where we gathered to watch the new film about the true cause and meaning of the Reformation, *A Return to Grace* by Boettcher/Trinklein Productions. The film was introduced by Rev. John Braun of Northwestern Publishing House, which is distributing the film and related materials, including a Bible study to be used with individual segments of the movie.

Following the film there was once again a short time of fellowship before participants housed at the hostel in Grethen were bussed back to their residence at a reasonable hour.

On Monday morning, July 3, a final breakfast was served both in Grethen and Grimma, before most of the guests and delegates began their journeys home. Over twenty convention participants remained in Saxony for an additional six-day tour of Luther and Bach sights. This tour, enjoyed by all, was arranged by ELFK Deacon Holger Richter, with Dr. Gottfried Hermann as the tour guide.

Respectfully submitted,  
Timothy Buelow, Secretary  
July 31, 2017

With corrections from the CELC Minutes Review Committee

**APPENDIX #1:**  
**Guidelines for Funding the CELC**

The CELC was organized in 1993 at a plenary meeting held in Oberwesel, Germany. Article VII of the Constitution of the CELC states that “regular plenary meetings of the Conference shall be held triennially.” It is the custom of the CELC to hold these triennial conventions in various locations in the world. The Planning Committee believes that this is a good policy for the member churches. This gives them an opportunity to experience first-hand the Gospel ministry in other places, and the member churches can share the spiritual growth in their lives and lend encouragement to one another.

Since the first convention in 1993, subsequent triennial conventions were held in Quebradillas, Puerto Rico in 1996; Winterhaven, Florida, USA in 1999; Gothenburg, Sweden in 2002; Narita, Japan in 2005; Kiev, Ukraine in 2008; New Ulm, Minnesota, USA in 2011; Lima, Peru in 2014; and today we are here in Grimma, Germany.

The cost of conventions is large. The historical cost of conventions has been:

1999 Winter Haven, FL	\$32,508
2002 Gothenburg	\$28,239
2005 Narita	\$45,913
2008 Kiev	\$40,210
2011 New Ulm	\$30,006
2014 Lima	\$44,896
2017 Grimma* estimated	\$60,000+

During the early years of the organization, CELC received several grants of funds from a foundation and from an insurance company. Between 2008 and 2016 CELC received no outside grants and only modest individual contributions. CELC applied for a number of grants over the years and received a \$13,500 grant in December, 2016, from an American Foundation—the Antioch Foundation. We do not expect further grants from this Foundation, although we may re-apply in the future. We cannot rely upon outside grants as a major source of support for the CELC.

The primary source of funding is contributions from member churches. Guidelines for contributions were adopted by the CELC

in convention in Japan in 2005. The guidelines have not been modified or adjusted since then.

The guidelines assess the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS) \$5,500 annually, the Evangelical Lutheran Synod (ELS) \$3,500 annually, and the Lutheran Evangelical Christian Church of Japan (LECC) \$1,000 annually, for a total of \$10,000 per year. A goal of an additional \$10,000 would be contributed by the remaining members of the CELC. The Planning Committee and the CELC recognize that many of the members are struggling toward self-support or are in developing countries. The goal would require an average contribution from the remaining church bodies of the CELC of approximately \$555 per church, per year. CELC realizes that many of its members cannot contribute such an amount. Some may be able to contribute more and some may not be able to contribute anything. It is hoped that each church would make a serious effort to support the CELC to the best of its ability.

*Prepared by CELC Treasurer Mark Schulz*

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**APPENDIX #2:  
Guidelines for Convention Expenses**

<i>I. Travel Expenses</i>	<i>Paid By</i>
A. Delegates	<i>Primary Source:</i> The sending church body  <i>Secondary Sources:</i> —From restricted funds of mission boards and committees —From other supporting agencies
B. Accompanying missionaries	Their supporting mission boards, or restricted funds
C. Wives of delegates & others	Pay their own expenses
D. CELC officers	CELC

APPENDICES

E. CELC essayists, presenters & special invited guests	CELC
II. <i>Lodging Expenses</i>	<i>Paid By</i>
A. Delegates	Sending church body, or restricted funds
B. Accompanying missionaries	Their supporting mission boards, or restricted funds
C. Wives of delegates & others	Room expenses shared with spouse of attendee
D. CELC officers	CELC
E. CELC essayists, presenters & special invited guests	CELC
III. <i>Other Convention Expenses</i>	<i>Paid By</i>
A. Meals at the convention	CELC
B. Rental costs of convention site, meeting rooms, techno- logy equipment, etc.	CELC
C. Office expenses, secretarial, printing, telephone, etc.	CELC
D. Honoraria	CELC
E. Local transportation at convention site (airport shuttle, bus to worship site, etc.)	CELC

IV. *Visitors*

All visitors are expected to pay all their own travel expenses, lodging, and food expenses at the convention.

*Adopted by the 2002 CELC Convention*

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**LUTHERAN CONFERENCE**  
**After the 2017 Convention**

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## PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

### Daniel H. Koelpin CELC President

Dear friends in Christ, delegates, officers, guests, and hosts of the Ninth Triennial Convention of the Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference:

What a blessing it is to be here in Germany, the land of the Reformation, 500 years after Martin Luther posted his 95 theses on the door of the castle church in Wittenberg. The blessing is particularly treasured because this anniversary is being observed in a conference of confessional Lutherans who by God's grace have been enabled to remain faithful to the original and foundational truths of the Reformation—Faith Alone, Grace Alone, Scripture Alone. Our hosts, the Evangelical Lutheran Free Church of Germany, went through many struggles and hardships to remain true to the Word of God and their Lutheran heritage and we are honored to celebrate this milestone of history with them.

Once again we view this gathering as a precious opportunity to see well known yet distant friends and to meet new friends as well. We eagerly anticipate both regional and triennial conventions as a chance to learn more about the struggles and blessings in the lives and ministries of those we love, pray for, and support in Jesus. For every one of us this is a rare occasion to get a sense that we are part of something far greater than ourselves and our own respective churches and countries. We are here from around the world as those united in faith and purpose, as partners in the vital work of our Savior's commission to make disciples by baptizing and teaching the whole counsel of God. This is an essential time for much needed fellowship, mutual encouragement, and strengthening of each other in God's Word. May the Lord bless our efforts to carry out these purposes during the next days!

The theme for this Ninth Triennial Convention is "**Reformation—Then and Now.**" Four essays will be presented under this theme dealing with—the Lutheran Reformation, the Reformed Reformation, the Radical Reformation, and the Catholic Reformation. Each essay will concentrate on the impact of those particular reforma-

tion movements as they emerged 500 years ago and then where those movements are now in current history.

The CELC Planning Committee intentionally kept the number of essays reduced to four rather than the customary 5, in order to provide conference participants with the timely advantage of visiting Wittenberg during the year of this anniversary observance. In the interest of saving time discussion of the essays will also be done immediately after each presentation and with the entire assembly rather than trying to facilitate the logistics of dividing into smaller discussion groups. Time savings were also planned for this year by having our respective CELC church reports put on a flash drive and distributed to the conference attendants. The plan is that one flash drive would be provided for use within each church body. The Committee is requesting that member churches refrain from putting the content of this flash drive on the internet which might compromise the security of some of the mission workers in countries where the governments oppose the efforts of Christian churches.

In connection with the anniversary observance, a committee was also authorized at the last convention to develop a 95 Theses for the 21st Century. The Committee's representatives, President John Moldstad and Prof. Thomas Nass, will be presenting motions regarding the adoption of these theses which have been distributed in advance to both the delegates and the CELC Theological Commission. Additional anniversary emphases will include a visit to ruins of the convent in Nimbschen where Kathrine von Bora, Luther's wife, lived and worked as well as a Sunday evening presentation of the Luther film provided by the WELS. Finally, we are thankful that the Reformation Committee's Chairman, Pastor John Braun, has made arrangements for the showing of the film "A Return to Grace: Luther's Life and Legacy" on Sunday evening.

The essays presented in the coming days will be part of an ongoing doctrinal series entitled ***The Eternal Word; A Lutheran Confession for the Twenty First Century***. In this series, the essays presented at each convention are edited by the CELC Theological Commission to form concise statements of our faith. The statements then are made available to our member churches for their libraries, but are also accessible in digital form to all interested parties on the CELC website, [www.celc.int](http://www.celc.int). The Commission has also served us in reviewing the Article VII on the church, the 95

Theses for the 21st Century and some of the doctrinal statements of churches applying for associate membership.

In addition to the essays, the convention meets to carry out its business as an association of confessional Lutherans. During the business meeting our treasurer, Mr. Mark Schulz, will again provide an overview of the financial status of our conference. The expenses for the triennial conventions and other activities of our conference can run anywhere from \$45,000 to \$80,000 every three years. A number of churches have consistently committed money from their budgets. This is because they consider the CELC to be critical to the health and well-being of confessional Lutheranism in our time. We trust that each member church is grateful for this association and is providing support as it is able. We are very grateful for contributions to the CELC that have come from individuals, pastoral gatherings and foundations. We once again encourage church body leaders to help their membership see the wisdom of regularly supporting this vital organization.

This year three church bodies have applied for associate membership they are:

- Southeast Asian Lutheran Evangelical Mission (SALEM)—  
Hong Kong
- East Asia Lutheran Church
- Lutheran Church of Ethiopia

Associate membership enables church bodies still in the process of developing their church organization to participate in the fellowship of the CELC during their time of development. The time of associate membership in the conference enhances the respective churches' understanding of our CELC fellowship and is a stepping stone to full membership when they are ready to apply. Associates have rights of participation in all sessions and may serve as presenters, but voting rights and the holding of CELC offices are limited to full member churches.

During the past 6 years, eight church groups have applied for associate membership. Should the acceptance of the latest three associate memberships be ratified at this convention it will bring to 33 the number of churches that hold membership in the CELC, a significant growth from the original 13 churches that met at Oberwesel in 1993 to establish the conference.

The past six years have also seen the growth of regional conferences. Until 2012 only the European CELC churches had regional conferences. In 2012 the first African CELC regional conference was held in April at the Lutheran Church of Central Africa's (LCCA) seminary in Lusaka, Zambia. A subsequent African regional conference was held in April of 2015 at the LCCA Bible Institute in Lilongwe, Malawi. The initial Asia-Oceania CELC regional conference was held in Seoul, Korea in October of 2015, a subsequent conference for this region is being planned for 2018. Finally, the first regional CELC conference for Latin America was held in April of 2016 in Medellin, Colombia. All of these conferences reported positive experiences and a desire to continue with such gatherings on a regular basis, but due to expenses and travel difficulties most of the newly established regional conferences will probably not meet annually. For all the blessings of fellowship we enjoy we give thanks to our gracious Lord.

Each triennial convention also provides an opportunity for our conference to elect its officers and ratify appointments. A list of nominees and appointees has been provided in your convention folders. Voting delegates are encouraged to take the time to read the biographical information that has been provided on those who have agreed to serve if approved by the convention. Delegates also have the option to nominate additional candidates from the floor, but are asked to provide information on them for the benefit of other voters.

Another report will be coming from the CELC's THETA (Theological Education—Transfer and Augmentation) Commission. The Commission was established nine years ago in Kyiv to assist and enhance the educational efforts of confessional Lutheran seminaries around the world. The commission has functioned as a clearinghouse for helpful materials and programs of theological curricula. The THETA Commission will at this convention present some proposals as to how it perceives this can best be done now and in the future.

The voting assembly will be asked to make a final determination of where the 2020 convention will be held. Two invitations were received, one from the Concord Lutheran Church in Russia and one from East Seoul Canaan church in Korea. The Planning Committee will be presenting a recommendation with rationale to

meet in Korea, but this gathering will make the ultimate decision. We additionally encourage the church bodies in attendance to give consideration to offering to serve as host for the 2023 convention. The more the Planning Committee can know in advance where conventions will be held, the better it can implement the conventions and anticipate the needs of those attending. The offerings gathered at our worship services should also be designated by the convention.

We are fortunate to have many of the wives of our delegates, alternates and guests with us at this historic convention. Our convention planners have provided opportunities for them to have meetings of their own during our business sessions which will enable them to get know one another and share in their faith. We appreciate having so many women enhance our gathering.

As in the past several para-synodical and para-church agencies will be given an opportunity during the business meeting to share with our assembly ways in which their organizations can help the respective churches of the CELC. We thank the representatives of these organizations for coming to our conventions and for their willingness to offer specialized assistance to our CELC member churches in vital areas of mission outreach and service.

In closing I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the members of the CELC Planning Committee who have worked with me and others to put this convention together. My personal thanks is extended to Mrs. Nicole Kruschel for her work of managing the CELC website, sending out timely communications, and organizing the registrations. Special thanks is extended to the ELFK convention committee for its hard work and partnership in planning and preparing for this convention. Other appropriate thanks to essayists, preachers, cooking staff, etc. will be included in a motion at the end of the convention.

May the next few days enable all of us to reflect on the great blessings we have in the Reformation and in our confessional Lutheran heritage and how we need to promote it ever more boldly in these times when so many have lost sight of it. May the Lord enable our CELC to do just that.

## The Lutheran Reformation Then and Now

Holger Weiß

The 500th anniversary of the Reformation isn't important just for confessional Lutherans. Lutheranism in general is celebrating its 500th birthday. Other denominations are also participating. Even the Roman Catholic Church is joining the jubilee (albeit with some reservations). In Germany the anniversary was ceremonially started on October 31st, 2016 in Berlin by ecclesiastical and political representatives. Federal President Joachim Gauck expressed appreciation for the changes which have arisen from the Reformation. In many respects even the state was shaped by the Reformation.<sup>1</sup>

But is this birthday party—organized in a way that is very effective from a PR perspective—at all legitimate? Luther's posting of the Theses is often portrayed by the media as a legend.<sup>2</sup> Even the Evangelical Church of Germany (EKD) speaks of the important event as a "protestant founding myth."<sup>3</sup> But the posting of the Theses isn't a legend. Historical evidence for example can be found in a letter of Luther to Archbishop Albrecht dating October 31st, 1517. In it Luther mentions the 95 Theses. Obviously the theses were originally attached to the letter, although they weren't discovered in the archives.<sup>4</sup>

But is it enough to commemorate an event which happened 500 years ago like we otherwise observe anniversaries or birthdays—by having a nice celebration? Luther himself probably would protest the loudest, if we celebrate this anniversary elaborately without asking what Luther and the Reformation were all about. If we really want to celebrate the anniversary in accordance with

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<sup>1</sup><http://www.heute.de/festakt-zum-reformationstag-in-berlin-gauck-fordert-einen-agenten-der-entaengstigung-45803472.html> (accessed November 21st 2016).

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Erinnerung heilen - Jesus Christus bezeugen: Ein gemeinsames Wort zum Jahr 2017, Ed. Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland und Sekretariat der Deutschen Bischofskonferenz, Gemeinsame Texte 24, Hannover: 2017, p. 33.

<sup>4</sup>Gottfried Herrmann, *Luthers Thesenanschlag - eine Legende?*, Theologische Handreichung und Information 4 (2016), p. 6. It may very well be that the Theses weren't discovered at the archives in Mainz because they had been sent to Rome when the Archbishop brought a formal complaint against Luther.

the wishes of Luther and our Lutheran fathers, we need to ask about their actual concerns and motives. Then we will grasp the actual heritage of the Lutheran Reformation. And this is necessary, if we want to preserve it faithfully in order to pass it on to future generations. First, we want to get an overview of the Lutheran Reformation in the 16th century. Then we will think about its significant impact on Lutheranism today.

## Lutheran Reformation Then—an Overview

### 1.1. A Miner's Son Becomes a Reformer

Martin Luther was born in Eisleben on November 10th, 1483, the son of the miner Hans Luther and his wife Margaretha Lindemann.<sup>5</sup> After attending different schools at Mansfeld, Magdeburg, and Eisenach, Luther started his studies in 1501 in the college of Liberal Arts at Erfurt.<sup>6</sup> He earned the degree of a *Magister Artium* and took up the study of law in 1505. But after the death of a friend, and after Luther himself almost died during a thunderstorm, he discontinued his studies to become a monk. Luther searched for the greatest possible certainty of salvation. He wanted to achieve it by doing good works and living in strict obedience to the monastic vows.

But Luther soon realized that he wasn't able to achieve that. He wasn't even able to fulfill the 1st commandment completely by fearing, loving, and trusting, the true God above everything else. So Luther could only be scared of the holy and righteous God who judges sin and punishes the sinner in his righteous anger. How should he stand before this harsh judge? Luther found certainty of salvation neither through the ascetic life in the monastery nor through his theological studies, which were shaped by late medieval Ockhamism.<sup>7</sup> He took the medieval piety and the obedient

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<sup>5</sup>The historical overview follows mainly the presentation of Joh. Ph. Köhler, *Lehrbuch der Kirchengeschichte*, Milwaukee: 1917, p. 346ff.

<sup>6</sup>The studies contained grammar, dialectics, rhetoric, arithmetic, music and astronomy. The professors at the arts faculty of Erfurt felt connected to Ockhamism, although they also had already been open to the new intellectual movement of humanism.

<sup>7</sup>Back then there were two schools of thought within theology: **Thomism** traces back to Thomas Aquinas. It taught the *via antiqua* [old way], which gave more credit to human reason. The results were some mixing of philosophy and theology. **Ockhamism** was founded by Wilhelm of Ockham (1285-1347) and Gabriel

lifestyle to which he was obligated by his monastic vows very seriously. He believed that man was able to love and trust God. But in spite of his serious efforts, Luther failed again and again. He suffered from the constant accusations of his conscience. In his deep distress Luther initially received help from his friend and pastor Johann Staupitz.<sup>8</sup> He pointed Luther away from Jesus the judge, to Jesus the crucified. As a result, Luther, who was frightened about his sins and feared the anger and punishment of the holy God, could recognize the love of God. Köhler, however, remarks: “Although what he said was correct, Staupitz nevertheless remained in the middle ages and learned later from Luther to really understand the Gospel.”<sup>9</sup> Following the advice of his monastic brother, Johann Staupitz, Luther started not only to study the works of Augustin and Bernhard, he also started to study the Bible thoroughly—and that turned things around for Luther.

After being consecrated a priest in 1507, Luther, at the instigation of Staupitz, was called to the University of Wittenberg to complete his studies. After further short-term study at Erfurt and a journey to Rome due to some affairs of the Augustinian order, Luther returned to Wittenberg in 1511 and graduated as a doctor of theology in 1512. In theological lectures Luther expounded the Psalms, Romans, Galatians and Hebrews. In addition, he preached at the parish church and fulfilled different tasks in his Order. During these years the decisive turn of Luther’s life took place, though it cannot be dated with absolute precision. After scholars debated for a long time about the precise date of the so-called “tower experience,” the conclusion prevailed finally that Luther passed through a gradual process of understanding between 1515 and 1520.<sup>10</sup> Köhler mentions the reasons for this far reaching turn:

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Biel. It taught the *via moderna* [new way], which differentiated more clearly between divine revelation and human reason. Only the Bible was decisive.

<sup>8</sup>Johann Staupitz (died 1524) belonged to a reputable noble family of Saxony. He was born about 1470 at Motterwitz near Leisnig and entered the Augustinians convent at Tübingen in 1497. After earning a doctor’s degree he became a professor at the university. Later he contributed to the erection of the university at Wittenberg which was founded by Frederick the Wise in 1502. One year later he was elected as the vicar general of Augustinian convents of Germany. Cf. Carl Meusel, *Kirchliches Handlexikon*, Vol. 6, Leipzig: 1900, p. 398.

<sup>9</sup>Köhler, p. 347 (transl. HW).

<sup>10</sup>Hermann, p. 3.



“By this development Luther started to understand and present more purely the thoughts that have always been in the mind of believers but could not be presented clearly because of the inadequate philosophical mindset and the legalistic disposition: the actual knowledge of God is not given through the law but through the gospel; thereby the right and thorough understanding of the law is achieved and the law achieves its purpose. Luther suddenly started to understand some key passages of Scripture in particular, which then shed more light on the whole sequence of thought. Especially Rom 1:17 and thereby the whole letter to the Romans looked different when Luther understood that (the term) righteousness of God at this place doesn't refer to the anger of the judging God, but to the mercy and love which becomes our inner possession by trusting.”<sup>11</sup>

Luther's theological breakthrough wasn't caused by special experiences or by the influence of famous theologians or other contemporaries. The thorough reading and studying of the Bible precipitated the decisive turn by which Luther finally became the Reformer.<sup>12</sup>

## **1.2. The Controversy with the Roman Catholic Church**

By his study of Holy Scripture, Luther recognized how much the medieval Church had fallen away from God's Word and how many grave abuses had spread. One of them was the selling of indulgences, a fruit of the fatal false doctrines of purgatory and work righteousness. Near Wittenberg, the Leipzig Dominican Prior Johann Tetzel preached indulgences. After an agreement with Pope Leo X, Albrecht of Brandenburg raised through indulgences the 10,000 ducats that he had borrowed from the Fuggers in order to pay for the Electorate of Mainz. Half of the amount obtained would go to Rome to fund the building of St. Peter's church. Tetzel went on the road as a representative of Albrecht, and did his job in an especially shameless way. Luther took notice of the selling of indulgences and spoke about it in sermons and in the confessional. When that, however, didn't bear fruit and Luther also observed the evil results of the indulgences in the confessional,

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<sup>11</sup>Köhler, p. 166f (Transl. HW).

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 349.

he published 95 Theses on the door of the castle church of Wittenberg to initiate a discussion.<sup>13</sup> Luther also sent the Theses to out-of-town friends to invite a response. Only half a year later they were known in all Europe. They dealt with questions for which many people were looking for answers.<sup>14</sup> But the discussion of scholars Luther had hoped for didn't come about. It seems even the pope didn't take the matter very seriously at first. When the Dominicans stood up for Tetzel and denounced Luther, the papal court theologian Sylvester Mazzolini Prierias drafted on behalf of the pope a superficial and harsh evaluation which justified the selling of indulgences on the basis of papal infallibility.

At the beginning of 1518, Luther gave an account of his teaching at a conference of the Augustinians at Heidelberg, through which the hearts of some students were won for the saving Gospel (e.g. Butzer, Brenz). In May of 1518 Luther sent his *Resolutiones* with a detailed explanation of the Theses and a letter of his loyalty to the pope. Now Rome took the matter more seriously. The Papal legate Cajetan<sup>15</sup>, who was staying in Augsburg, had to deal with Luther because elector Frederick the Wise had rejected action against Luther in Rome.<sup>16</sup> Cajetan examined Luther mainly about two of the 95 Theses. He accused Luther of denying in Theses 58 that the treasure of the Church is identical with the merit of Jesus and the Saints. In addition, Cajetan said that through his comments on Thesis 7, Luther was saying that we aren't justified by the Sacrament itself, but by faith alone. No agreement was reached. Luther escaped from Augsburg and appealed to a general council.

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<sup>13</sup>Luther probably didn't nail the 95 Theses himself on the door of the church, but had it done by a university employee. Cf. Hermann, p. 6.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., p. 7.

<sup>15</sup>Thomas Cajetan (1469-1545) belonged to the Dominican Order since 1483 and was an zealous Thomist. In 1508 he became general of the Dominican Order, in 1517 cardinal, and in 1518 papal legate in Germany. Cf. Carl Meusel (Ed.), *Kirchliches Handlexikon*, Vol. 1, Leipzig: 1889, p. 629.

<sup>16</sup>Frederick the Wise (died 1526) reigned as elector of Saxony since 1486 and was personally devoted to the pilgrimages, veneration of relics, and the adoration of saints within the medieval Church. But he wanted the University of Wittenberg which had been founded by him in 1502 to be a place known for its legitimate science and piety. So he protected Luther against the powerful hand of his enemies. But shortly before his death Frederick received communion in both kinds and thereby confessed to the Reformation. Cf. Carl Meusel, Vol. 2, p. 630-631.

Rome, however, chose a more cautious course to start. After Emperor Maximilian died in 1519, an election for a new king would soon take place. Karl von Miltitz was sent to Germany to achieve the handing over of Luther by formally conferring an honor (“golden rose of virtue”) on Frederick the Wise. The elector, however, resisted and protected Luther again. After he had taken a closer look at the circumstances, Karl tried to win Luther over. Luther got himself into longer negotiations and restricted himself to contact Rome only by several humble letters. But he didn’t recant his convictions. Luther was ready to wait for a formal legal hearing and to be silent until then.

This changed, however, with the Leipzig Disputation in 1519. After Joh. Eck had disputed with Karlstadt for a week about the free will, Luther was provoked to intervene by the theses of Eck and disputed about the papacy, beginning on July 4th. Eck wanted to intimidate Luther by insinuating that Luther’s teaching could be compared to the Hussite heresy. Luther retorted by stating: “Pope and Councils may err”. Now it became clear to the general public that Luther’s battle was directed against the papacy and its power. In the period that followed, Luther drafted his main Reformation writings: “An kaiserliche Majestät und den christlichen Adel deutscher Nation von des christlichen Standes Besserung”, “De captivitate babilonica ecclesiae” and “Von der Freiheit eines Christmenschen”.

Meanwhile, Eck travelled to Rome in 1520. From there he brought along the papal bull *Exsurge Domine* [Arise, O Lord]. Luther and his followers were threatened with the ban if they wouldn’t recant within 60 days. When Eck published the bull and burned the writings of Luther in the west of the empire, Luther publicly broke with the papacy. He drafted his short text *Adversus execrabilem Antichristi bullam* [Against the bull of the Antichrist] and burned the bull before the Elster Gate at Wittenberg on December 10th, 1520. So Rome published on January 3rd, 1521 the bull *Decet Romanum pontificam* [It is fitting for the Roman Bishop] to finally impose excommunication on Luther.<sup>17</sup> His further fate

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<sup>17</sup>The Catholics of Worms addressed a petition to the Pope on June 18th, 1971 (at the 450th anniversary of Imperial Diet of Worms) to rescind the ban of Luther. While the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) rescinded the excommunication between Rome and Constantinople, Rom considered a suspension of the ban

now depended on the stance of the empire. The princes, under the lead of Frederick the Wise, prevailed in having Luther called to the Imperial Diet at Worms to be examined. It was the first Imperial Diet held by young King Karl V on German soil. Trusting God's protection and help, and with an assurance of safe conduct, Luther travelled to Worms. In the famous session on April 18th, 1521, Luther held to his confession that was grounded in Holy Scripture. He did so in a longer speech held first in German and then in Latin. He indeed would have been ready to recant, but only if his mistakes would have been proven to him from Holy Scripture. Otherwise, he wasn't able to recant, as he then would have denied God's Word—and Luther couldn't reconcile such behavior with his conscience. Already on April 19th the Emperor declared to the Estates of the Empire that he was determined to take action against Luther as a true and convicted heretic.<sup>18</sup> When Luther departed, the papal nuntio Aleander, who, together with Eck, had delivered the bull threatening excommunication, drafted the Edict of Worms on behalf of the emperor. It imposed the imperial ban on Luther and his followers, and mandated the burning of their writings and the implementation of a spiritual censorship in regard to all books printed in Germany.<sup>19</sup> The emperor signed and proclaimed the edict on May 26th, 1521 (after elector Frederick the Wise had departed).

### **1.3. The Consolidation of the Reformation**

On his way back Luther was kidnapped in a “cloak and dagger operation” and taken to the Wartburg Castle on the order of Frederick the Wise. For the time being, Luther “went underground” and stayed at the Wartburg Castle from May 1521 to March 1522 concealed as “Junker Jörg.” But he didn't remain idle. Luther drafted further writings and tackled his most important work: the German translation of the Holy Scriptures (September-NT 1522). In 1521 Luther's coworker Philipp Melanchthon published the

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of Luther impossible and not an appropriate way to express effectively how the evaluation of Luther by Catholics had changed. The catholic relationship to “Lutheran communities” should be improved by further study, prayer and application of “other means of ecumenical action”. Cf. <http://www.unifr.ch/iso/assets/files/Iserloh/15.pdf> (accessed March 9th, 2016).

<sup>18</sup>Karl Heussi, *Kompendium der Kirchengeschichte*, Tübingen, <sup>10</sup>1949, § 75 y.

<sup>19</sup>*Ibid.*

1st edition of his *Loci Communes* (a first summary of the most important biblical doctrines) in Wittenberg. The Augustinian convent also started practical reforms together with the university. Andreas Bodenstein of Karlstadt urged suspension of celibacy and the monastic vows. Gabriel Zwilling demanded the chalice for the laity and the suspension of the private Mass, where priests celebrated the mass without the congregation. The elector, however, prohibited the innovations when riots occurred among the laity during the implementation of the new communion service. With the approval of Luther, Karlstadt established at Christmas a simple communion service, including only the words of institution and the distribution. Most Augustinian monks left their monastery. The city council of Wittenberg implemented a new order to remove the images from the church and to put all spiritual benefices and endowments into a general treasury for the payment of the clergy and the support of the poor. The so-called Prophets of Zwickau, Niklas Storch, Markus Stübner, and Thomas Drechsel, added fuel to the fire. They had been expelled from Zwickau and in December of 1521 they began spreading spiritual Schwärmerei<sup>20</sup> at Wittenberg. Karlstadt started to preach against scholarly education. Latin schools were closed and such a confusion arose that the elector prohibited any further innovations. Against the will of the elector, Luther returned from the Wartburg Castle to Wittenberg on March 3rd, 1522. He cooled the heated atmosphere by preaching daily sermons (Invokavit sermons). Luther urged Christian patience with the weak. However, the sacrificial prayers of the mass continued to be omitted from the liturgy of the communion service. The general treasury was retained, but the chalice for the laity was abolished for the time being. The Zwickau Prophets had to leave Wittenberg.

God granted that at first there were no further threats from the government against Luther and the Reformation. The emperor was at war with France. This kept him away from Germany until 1530. And the government of the empire, since 1522 led by Duke Ferdinand, the brother of Karl V, wasn't willing to obey the pope completely. A new imperial diet decided, however, in 1524 to enact the edict of Worms as much as possible. A national assembly was scheduled in November to deal with questions of the Reformation.

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<sup>20</sup>A "Schwärmer" teaches that the Holy Spirit works apart from the means of grace.

But Duke Ferdinand, the Bavarian dukes and most southern German bishops prevented it. The split within the German church and empire became final. But the Reformation movement hadn't only grown by winning over further rulers. The gospel message spread among the people and the Reformation became a widespread popular movement.<sup>21</sup>

But the next years also brought clarifications and divisions. During the Peasant's War of 1525 Luther had to deal with the enthusiast and rabble-rouser Thomas Müntzer. Luther entered into controversy with the Swiss Reformer Ulrich Zwingli about the doctrine of the Holy Supper. In his work "De libero arbitrio," the famous humanist Erasmus of Rotterdam attacked Luther's teaching of the complete inability of the human nature to do any spiritual good as "unbiblical" and "dangerous." Luther answered with arguably his most important writing "De servo arbitrio." In it he emphasized the doctrine of election of grace as well as the doctrine of hardening. He also completed the presentation of the main features of his teaching about the Holy Scriptures. Later, Luther only had to expand individual parts of it. In addition to these clarifications, the outward expansion of the Reformation also continued. The Lutheran faith spread also beyond the borders of Germany (e.g. into Sweden and Denmark).

Because of the Peasant's War the Reformation had become discredited in the eyes of some people without warrant. Some Catholic rulers in Southern German misused the conflict to persecute evangelicals. In Northern Germany Georg of Saxony, Albrecht of Mainz, Joachim of Brandenburg and Erich and Heinrich of Braunschweig used it as an opportunity to form the "alliance of Dessau." Young Hessian Landgrave Philipp answered by forming the "alliance of Torgau" with elector Johann of Saxony. Later Ernst of Lüneburg, Heinrich of Mecklenburg, Wolfgang of Anhalt and Albrecht of Preussen also joined. Already in January of 1525, the emperor had taken Franz of France prisoner during the battle at Pavia. In January of 1526 they concluded the "peace of Madrid." As a result of this victory, Karl sent his instructions to the Imperial Diet at Speyer in 1526 on how to take action against the evangelicals. At the Imperial Diet the Catholics formed the majority. But the evangelical princess

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<sup>21</sup>Köhler, p. 361.

drew comfort from the words above their emblem: “The word of the Lord stands forever” (Is 40:8; 1 Pe 1:25). After the Pope released King Franz of France from his oath, he formed with him the League of Cognac. So the emperor needed the support of the evangelical princess both against Rome and against the imminent danger of the Turks. And therefore the Catholic rulers had to temper their demands. Concerning the edict of Worms it was therefore resolved that every prince should proceed with it as he was able to answer for it before God and the Emperor.

So for the Reformation, a three year period of rest began, which was used for organizing the Lutheran churches. Now the German state churches<sup>22</sup> were established that still exist today, although some alterations occurred and changes happened in the outward circumstances. The territorial rulers implemented the reforms. Luther conferred the duty on them to maintain order within the church.<sup>23</sup> Actually the Reformers wanted to reinstate the true Episcopal and Visitation Office, as it was greatly needed. But they didn't consider themselves competent to exercise it. So they asked the electors to function as “emergency bishops.”<sup>24</sup> In 1528 the Emperor could form new alliances with the Pope and with France. Afterwards, he convened a new Imperial Diet at Speyer in 1529. The Catholic majority decided to implement the edict of Worms to a greater extent. No further reforms were to be undertaken in all states and cities of Germany. Catholic worship was to be tolerated. Bishops that had been suspended from office were at least to again receive their wages. In addition, harsh action was to be taken against the so-called “Sacramentarians.” Five evangelical princess and fourteen cities protested. From then on, they were called “Protestants.”

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<sup>22</sup>Luther knew that such a system of “state churches” does not correspond to what is taught in Holy Scripture about the Church. In his preface to the German Mass, Luther says clearly that the great majority of the people still aren't believers, although they attend worship. They still need to be won for the Gospel message. Therefore Luther advises those who seriously want to be Christians and confess the Gospel by word and deed to gather around the means of Grace in houses, to register by name, to collect offerings and to exercise church discipline as it is commanded by the word of Jesus. Cf. Martin Luther, *Die Deutsche Messe*, Martin Luther Taschenausgabe, Vol. 3, Berlin: 21983, pp. 119-120 (WA 19,75).

<sup>23</sup>Heussi, § 78.

<sup>24</sup>Kurt Aland, *Geschichte der Christenheit*, Vol. 2, Gütersloh: 21991, p. 111.

At the same time Electoral Saxony, Hesse, Strasbourg, Ulm, and Nuremberg formed a defensive alliance. Philipp of Hesse also wanted to include the Swiss Reformation and hosted a colloquy in October of 1529 at Marburg. On the one side were Luther, Melancthon, Jonas, Brenz and Osiander. On the reformed side were Zwingli, Ökolampad, Butzer, Hedio and others. The proceedings resulted, however, in a final separation as no agreement could be achieved in the doctrine of the real presence of the body and blood of Christ under the bread and wine in holy communion. Although brotherhood was offered, Luther rejected. He recognized that they weren't united in spirit.<sup>25</sup> He sharply opposed Zwingli in the 17 Schwabach Articles which Luther had already drafted at Wittenberg in September of 1529.

#### **1.4. From the Imperial Diet at Augsburg to the Religious Peace of Augsburg**

After the Pope crowned Karl V Emperor at Bologna, Karl convened an Imperial Diet in Augsburg. He wanted to appear again in Germany for the first time in nine years. Karl was hoping to resolve the ecclesiastical questions in an amicable way. The elector of Saxony instructed his theologians to draft the Torgau Articles regarding ecclesiastical abuses. Melancthon reworked the Torgau Articles and the Schwabach Articles to produce the "Augsburg Confession." This first evangelical confession was signed by the Protestants of Speyer, by Reutlingen and Nuremberg. It was read in German to the Emperor and the Estates of the Empire on June 25th, 1530 at Augsburg. The emperor instructed the Catholic theologians Faber, Eck and Cochläus to write a "Confutatio" [refutation]. It was read as his opinion. But when the evangelicals asked for a transcript of it, they were refused. On the basis of his notes, however, Melancthon drafted the "Apology" [defense]. But it wasn't accepted by the Emperor. The Imperial Diet resolved to maintain the Edict of Worms. Time for consideration was offered to the Protestants until April of 1531 A council was also announced.

The evangelical rulers formed the Alliance of Smalcald in February of 1531 in order to take a stand against the Emperor if necessary. After England, France, Denmark and even the Catholic dukes of Bavaria were included, it was possible to form an anti-Habsburg

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<sup>25</sup>Köhler, p. 375.



alliance. When the Emperor saw this, he relented at first. A moratorium was enacted at Nuremberg in 1532. It allowed tolerance of the evangelicals until the proposed council. Within the next years the Turks and the French, however, demanded the attention of the Emperor. He stayed away from Germany for nine more years. The Alliance of Smalcald was also strengthened outwardly when the gospel message spread further. But at the same time, the Reformation suffered several setbacks. After the simple clarity of the Lutheran doctrine had been attacked during the controversy with Zwingli, Calvinism now gained more influence. Especially countries in the west and east of Europe were won for Calvinism, which significantly hindered the further spread of the biblical Lutheran faith. Finally, political intrigues and the unchristian moral conduct of leading personalities<sup>26</sup> also caused great damage to the Smalcald League and the Lutheran Reformation.

When Pope Paul III (1545-1549) finally called for a council in Mantua (Italy) in May of 1537, Luther wrote the Smalcald Articles to demonstrate which articles of faith couldn't be abandoned. At the meeting of the Smalcald League, however, only the theologians discussed and signed the Articles. They were not presented to the Estates of the Empire as they were considered to be too harsh. On behalf of the Estates of the Empire, Melanchthon drafted as an appendix to the Augsburg Confession his "Traktat von der Gewalt und Obrigkeit des Papstes" and "Von der Bischöfe Gewalt und Jurisdiktion". In it he granted a leadership role to the pope as long as it was based on human right. The proposed Council, however, didn't come about again. Much later a Council took place at Trent (1545-1563) and laid down clearly Roman Catholic doctrine in order to be distinguished from Lutheran belief. Martin Luther finally died at Eisleben on February 18th, 1546. So he didn't witness the Emperor taking military action against the Smalcald League and defeating it (1546/1547). But after further political entanglements, the Emperor saw himself forced to guarantee the Protestants full peace and equality with the Catholics in the Peace of Passau in 1552. In 1555 at the Imperial Diet of Augsburg, the Protestants still had to put up with being called "Confessional relatives of Augsburg" (*Corpus Catholicorum, Corpus Evangelicorum*). But the expansion of that kinship wasn't limited any more,

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<sup>26</sup>For example the bigamy of Landgrave Philipp of Hesse.

even though the spiritual principalities which still existed weren't allowed to be reformed.<sup>27</sup> The church leadership of the territorial rulers which had started as an order of emergency became a permanent institution. Later it was boiled down to the short formula "*Cuius regio, eius religio*": the territorial ruler determines the religious confession of the land. Whoever was of a different opinion was allowed to emigrate. The peace of Augsburg was announced on September 25th, 1555. Now it was officially approved that there would be an Evangelical Lutheran Church in Germany in addition to the Roman Catholic Church.

### **Lutheran Reformation Now—What's the Lasting Heritage?**

Luther's posting of the 95 Theses now celebrates its 500th anniversary. In Germany the event isn't being celebrated just in the current year. The evangelical state churches wanted to prepare for it with a whole "Reformation decade." In so doing much was said about the impact of the Reformation on our country. The official text that was published by the church leadership of the Evangelical Church of Germany (EKD) on occasion of the anniversary says for example:

"As an event of world-historical relevance, the Reformation didn't only change church and theology but also all private and public life and (among other factors) shaped it up to the present. It gave impetus to education, contributed to the development of the modern basic rights of religious freedom and freedom of conscience, changed the relation of church and government, contributed to development of the modern concept of freedom and the modern understanding of democracy—only to mention a few examples."<sup>28</sup>

Certainly there is some truth here. The Lutheran Reformation doubtlessly changed society and prepared the way for what we enjoy today and often wrongly take for granted. But were these

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<sup>27</sup>Regarding the spiritual principalities a "spiritual reservation" (*Reservatum ecclesiasticum*) came into force: By changing his confession a spiritual ruler became a private person. He lost his spiritual dignity and his secular lordship. Cities within the spiritual principalities belonging to the Augsburg Confession were allowed to remain evangelical. Cf. Wolfgang Sommer, Detlef Klahr, Kirchengeschichtliches Repetitorium, Göttingen: 21997, p. 161.

<sup>28</sup>Rechtfertigung und Freiheit: 500 Jahre Reformation 2017, Ed. Kirchenamt der EKD, Gütersloh: 2014, p. 9 (transl. HW).

aforementioned impacts actually the main concerns of the Reformers? That's the question we are going to deal with in the second part of this paper. By studying three major topics, we want to demonstrate the true heritage of the Lutheran Reformation which we should preserve thankfully and pass on to future generations.

### **2.1. The Lutheran Reformation and the Commitment to Holy Scripture**

The Lutheran State Church of Germany today forms with Lutheran church bodies in other countries the "Lutheran World Federation" (LWF). They consider themselves the heirs of the Lutheran Reformation. Actually the whole Evangelical Church of Germany (EKD) considers itself the heir of the Lutheran Reformation, although it not only includes church bodies which call themselves "Lutheran" but also Reformed and Union state churches. But are those churches still committed to the main concern of the Lutheran Reformation?

The decisive turn in Luther's life wasn't brought about by personal experiences or the influence of famous theologians. The important insight which made Luther the reformer was given to him by God through the study of Holy Scripture. Luther was convinced that Holy Scripture was the Holy Spirit's own special book, writing and word. He confessed that Holy Scripture, even down its wording and phrasing, originated from the Holy Spirit. Therefore Luther took a vigorous stand for the Bible as the Word of God. He didn't want to debate even one word with someone who rejects that the writings of the Evangelists are God's Word, since such a denier of the divine inspiration of Scripture rejects the decisive fundamentals (*prima principia*).<sup>29</sup> This basic attitude was essential for Luther and the whole Lutheran Reformation. Although there is no special article about Holy Scripture in the confessional writings of the Lutheran church, they constantly point out that the Bible is the source and foundation of all right preaching and teaching in the Christian Church. It is the norm by which to measure all doctrine. Gottfried Wachler says rightly with reference to the Augsburg Confession (CA XXI,1f):

"For our Confession "divine word" and "Holy Scripture" are one and the same. What is rooted in Scripture and there-

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<sup>29</sup>Helge Stadelmann, Grundlinien eines bibeltreuen Schriftverständnisses, Wuppertal: 1990, p. 20.

fore is in accord with it, is in accord with the divine Word. Neither at this nor at any other place do (our confessional writings) differentiate between the true Word of God and the fallible word of man within Scripture, but the whole of Holy Scripture is equated with the Word of God.”<sup>30</sup>

In its official text on the occasion of the anniversary of the Reformation, the Evangelical Church of Germany says, however, that Evangelical Christianity went through an open “History of Learning” since the actual Reformation:

“Reformation isn’t a completed event. It’s a process of renewal which continues. Therefore many theological insights and institutional forms have existed since the 16th century which so to speak came into being later in the spirit of the Reformation. We call that the Reformation’s “History of Learning.”<sup>31</sup>

This “History of Learning” started mainly with Johann Salomo Semler (1725-1791), the father of the historical-critical method of Bible interpretation. Semler rejected the doctrine of the inspiration of the Bible. He declared that the interpreter was obliged to interpret the Bible “historically.” In his “Abhandlung von freier Untersuchung des Canon” (1771-1775) Semler differentiated between God’s Word and man’s word in Holy Scripture. As a result of rationalism and enlightenment, the historical-critical interpretation of the Bible developed in Germany and spread like wildfire at German universities. Many biblical doctrines fell prey to radical criticism until finally practically nothing was left of biblical belief. Rudolf Bultmann, who taught New Testament at the University of Marburg, declared in the 20th century that nobody really could expect anymore that people who use electric lights and radio still believe in the world of spirits and miracles taught by the New Testament. He denied the ascension of Christ and his descent into hell, his visible return for judgment, and the main doctrine of Scripture teaching us that Christ made atonement for our sin by suffering and dying on our behalf.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>30</sup>Gottfried Wachler, *Bekenntnis zur Bibel: Heilige Schrift und Lehre der Kirche nach dem lutherischen Bekenntnis*, Zwickau 1999, p. 27 (transl. HW).

<sup>31</sup>Rechtfertigung und Freiheit, p. 35 (transl. HW).

<sup>32</sup>Helge Stadelmann, p. 36.

So the Evangelical Church of Germany (EKD) says in its official text:

“Since the 17th century, the texts of the Bible are studied according to the historical-critical method. Therefore they cannot be considered to be God’s Word anymore as in the time of the Reformers. The Reformers still assumed principally that the texts of the Bible indeed originated from God himself.”<sup>33</sup>

The Lutheran state churches today don’t feel bound to the main concern of the Lutheran Reformation anymore. They explicitly distance themselves from the Reformers who still assumed that the texts of the Bible indeed originate from God. They don’t want to understand anymore the Reformation principle “Scripture alone” (*sola scriptura*) means that Holy Scripture indeed was given by God word for word. They believe human experiences with God became condensed in the biblical texts. As a result, other people can now rediscover themselves and their personal experiences with God in the Bible. The texts of the Bible today can only be called God’s Word because people feel spoken to and touched on the inside “in, with, and under” those texts.<sup>34</sup> This understanding of Holy Scripture originates with the reformed theologian Karl Barth. To him the whole Bible was the refutable word of man. Therefore he wanted to interpret Scripture in a historical-critical way. But Barth believed on the other hand that the Bible marvelously could become the Word of God to us when and how it is pleasing to God, namely when a certain passage of the Bible becomes God talking to us personally.<sup>35</sup>

But there are also some larger Lutheran church bodies with a more conservative attitude. Therefore they don’t belong to the Lutheran World Federation, but have united themselves with the “International Lutheran Council” (ILC). Do those churches still feel bound to the central commitment to Holy Scripture, which was essential for the Lutheran Reformation of the 16th century? At first it seems so. Whoever visits the home page of the ILC can read:

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<sup>33</sup>Rechtfertigung und Freiheit, p. 84.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., p. 85.

<sup>35</sup>Helge Stadelmann, p. 38-39.

“The ILC is a worldwide association of established confessional Lutheran church bodies which proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ on the basis of an unconditional commitment to the Holy Scriptures as the inspired and infallible Word of God and to the Lutheran Confessions contained in the Book of Concord as the true and faithful exposition of the Word of God.”<sup>36</sup>

If, however, somebody looks into individual members of the ILC, it becomes more than doubtful if those Churches indeed still feel themselves bound to the commitment of the Lutheran Reformation to Holy Scripture. In Germany the Independent Evangelical-Lutheran Church (SELK) is a member of the ILC. For many years it has been increasingly open to the historical-critical interpretation of the Bible to a certain extent. Alexander Deeg<sup>37</sup> stated in a speech on June 10th, 2015 at the 13th synod convention of the SELK in Hermannsburg:

“The paradigm of the *Inspiration* (the Holy Spirit is author of Scripture) isn’t formal, objective (as this statement developed in Old Protestant Orthodoxy!). It only proves itself to be this during the reading of the Bible. During the reading of the Bible, while listening to its word, those words of man can become the Word of God which speaks to and changes me where and how it is pleasing to God.”<sup>38</sup>

Churches associated with the ILC obviously follow the path of the Lutheran church bodies which are united with the LWF. They don’t confess without restriction that Holy Scripture is verbally inspired by the Holy Spirit and the inerrant Word of God. They only grant that the Bible as a word of man can by the action of God become a Word of God when it speaks to and changes a person.

In contrast to LWF and ILC, the confessional Lutheran churches which have united themselves in the Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference (CELC) united behind the main concern of

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<sup>36</sup><http://ilc-online.org> (accessed November 22nd 2016).

<sup>37</sup>Alexander Deeg is not himself a member of the SELK. But he was allowed to present a paper to the Synod Convention of the SELK. His paper wasn’t objected to.

<sup>38</sup>Alexander Deeg, *Vom Lesen der Heiligen Schrift*, In: *LuThK* 39 (2015): 112 (transl. HW).

the Lutheran Reformation already in their first common doctrinal statement. In it the historical-critical interpretation of the Bible was rejected, and the clear commitment was made:

“Scripture is given by inspiration of God (. . .). Inspiration does not consist only in the inspiration of the message or the thought content, neither does it apply only to the biblical writers, but it is a verbal inspiration, an inspiration of every word in the Bible.”<sup>39</sup>

Like Luther and the fathers of the Lutheran Church, we want to confess clearly that Holy Scripture has been inspired by the Holy Spirit word for word. Therefore it doesn't only become God's Word if we feel personally spoken to. Holy Scripture is the inerrant Word of God and therefore authoritative for faith and doctrine. This is the heritage of the Lutheran Reformation which we feel bound to and which we want to pass on to the future generations.

### **2.3. The Lutheran Reformation and the Doctrine of Justification**

Luther's decisive turn came about when insight into the biblical doctrine of justification was given to him by God through the study of the letter to the Romans. Based on the term “justice of God,” Luther understood that a human being who is by nature depraved by sin and therefore spiritually dead cannot earn salvation for himself. God by grace alone declares us righteous through faith, because Jesus Christ redeemed us by his sinless life and his vicarious suffering and death. This central doctrine of the Bible on justification by grace alone through faith alone is also clearly stated by the confessional books of the Lutheran church to be the main article of faith by which the Christian church stands or falls.<sup>40</sup> The Roman Catholic Church, however, rejected this pivotal doctrine of Holy Scripture at the Council of Trent. There all were condemned who say “human beings are justified either by imputation of Christ's righteousness alone or by the forgiveness of sins alone, to the exclusion of the grace and love which is poured out into their heart by the Holy Spirit and

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<sup>39</sup>Gottes Wort: Das ewige Wort (Vol. 1), Ed. Konfessionelle Evangelisch-Lutherische Konferenz, Zwickau: 2000, p. 16-17.

<sup>40</sup>AS, B I,1; BSLK, 415.

inheres in them; or also that the grace by which we are justified is only the favor of God.”<sup>41</sup>

This condemnation has never been revoked by the Roman Catholic Church up to this day. Nevertheless the LWF published in 1999 a mutual statement on the doctrine of justification together with the Roman Catholic Church. It was also signed by the World Methodist Council in the year 2006.<sup>42</sup> And the paper that was recently published by the Evangelical Church of Germany (EKD) together with the German Conference of Catholic Bishops says this mutual statement demonstrates that the gospel of justification can be interpreted and accentuated differently, but the different “variants” have lost their schismatic impacts.<sup>43</sup> So the paper tries to unite Roman Catholic and evangelical understanding of the doctrine of justification.<sup>44</sup> But the view of the Roman Catholic Church indeed hasn’t changed since the Council of Trent. The attitude of the great evangelical Churches has changed, as they distance themselves more and more from biblical doctrine because of continued Bible criticism. So Roman Catholic work righteousness today isn’t considered a dangerous heresy anymore, leading people into eternal damnation. It’s only a “different interpretation” or “accentuation” of the “gospel of justification.” The confessional Lutheran Churches of the Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference (CELC), however, hold firmly and without restriction, to the biblical Lutheran doctrine of justification up to this day. Already the Second Triennial Convention of the CELC at Puerto Rico from April 23rd through April 25th, 1996 was dedicated to the theme “Justification of Grace through Faith: Our Heritage from the Lutheran Reformation.” The established unanimity in doctrine could later be adopted and published in

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<sup>41</sup>Canones et decretae Concilii Tridentini Sessio VI: Canon XI, Transl. Smet, quoted from: Einigungssätze zwischen der Evangelisch-Lutherischen Kirche Altpreußens und der Evangelisch-Lutherischen Freikirche, Groß-Oesingen: 1983, p. 108 (transl. HW).

<sup>42</sup>Cf. Martin Hoffmann, *Einig in der Rechtfertigung?*, In: “Theologische Handreichung und Information” 4 (1999): 2-11 and 1 (2000): 2-14.

<sup>43</sup>Erinnerung heilen - Jesus Christus bezeugen: Ein gemeinsames Wort zum Jahr 2017, Ed. EKD and Sekretariat der Deutschen Bischofskonferenz, Hannover: 2016, p. 23.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid., p. 43-44.



the second doctrinal statement of “The Eternal Word” on the doctrine of justification.<sup>45</sup>

### **2.3. The Lutheran Reformation and Ecumenism**

Luther didn’t only confess himself to the pure doctrine of Holy Scripture before the pope and the emperor. In his controversies with the Schwärmer, the reformed or the humanists, Luther always pointed to God’s Word as the only rule for faith and doctrine. God’s Word shouldn’t be denied. Therefore Luther, also during the Marburg Colloquy, wasn’t ready to offer the hand of brotherhood to Zwingli. He recognized the missing unanimity in faith and doctrine. So it wasn’t possible for him to have church fellowship and to cooperate with the Swiss Reformers.

This clear confession, however, has been completely lost in the mainline Lutheran churches today. They don’t confess themselves to Holy Scripture as the inerrant Word of God which has been verbally inspired by the Holy Spirit. They don’t warn any more against false doctrine. And they don’t understand why it should be wrong to have fellowship or to cooperate with those who promote or tolerate a different doctrine. Already two hundred years ago, the anniversary of the Reformation was used to implement an ecclesiastical union among Lutherans and Reformed in Prussia.<sup>46</sup> Also, the rulers of other German territories united their former independent Lutheran and Reformed state churches into a “United Church.” More progress was made in ecumenism when the ecumenical movement became stronger in the 20th century. All German state churches were united in the “Evangelical Church of Germany” (EKD) after World War II. And from March 12th through March 16th, 1973, the “Leuenberg Agreement” was developed at Leuenberg near Basel to establish pulpit and altar fellowship among the Lutheran, Reformed, and United Churches of Europe.<sup>47</sup>

This anniversary of the Reformation is supposed to bring further “progress” in ecumenism. Much ecumenical cooperation with

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<sup>45</sup>Gaylin R. Schmeling, *Make Known God’s Manifold Wisdom*, p. 18ff.

<sup>46</sup>Heussi, § 188 g.

<sup>47</sup>[Http://www.ekd.de/glauben/grundlagen/leuenberger\\_konkordie.html](http://www.ekd.de/glauben/grundlagen/leuenberger_konkordie.html).

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<sup>1</sup>All Scripture quotations are from the NIV2011.

the Roman Catholic Church is already going on. People want to celebrate the anniversary of the Reformation together with the Roman Catholics as a “common festival of Christ.” Pope Francis even travelled to Sweden to introduce the year of the anniversary in an ecumenical worship service at Lund together with prominent leaders of the LWF. In this way they gave thanks for the “common path in ecumenical solidarity.” The pope and the president of the LWF simultaneously issued a call to repentance because of the schism that still exists in western Christianity. Pope Francis noted in his sermon the contribution of the Reformation to the fellowship and the influence of Christianity.<sup>48</sup> The Evangelical Church of Germany and the German Conference of Catholic Bishops have organized a joint worship service of repentance and reconciliation at Hildesheim in March of 2017. Again they want to ask for forgiveness for the schism which still exists in Christianity, which obviously nobody really understands anymore. And they want to give thanks for the gifts they have in each other.<sup>49</sup> Within the large Lutheran churches obviously nobody is offended anymore by the fact that the pope didn't revoke the ban against Luther and his doctrine up to this day. They regret that it's still not officially possible to have a common communion service between the Roman Catholic Church and Evangelical Churches, as there are still differences in the doctrine of Holy Communion and in the understanding of the public ministry. These differences, however, do not seem to be an obstacle to ecclesiastical cooperation or to prevent the pope from officially introducing the anniversary of the Reformation. Yet there are still indulgences in the Roman Catholic Church today. Popes proclaimed indulgences for example at the World Youth Days at Cologne (2005) and on the occasion of the year of Paul (2008/2009). Letters of indulgence aren't sold any more. Today you get your indulgence from the radio, television, or internet. Recently, Pope Francis proclaimed a holy year of mercy (December 8th, 2015 through November 20th, 2016). It eased conditions for getting a jubilee indulgence.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>48</sup>Karl-Hinrich Manzke, Lund: Ein historisches Ereignis von Rang, in: “ideaspektrum” 44 (2016): 3.

<sup>49</sup>Erinnerung heilen, p. 5-6.

<sup>50</sup>Gottfried Herrmann, p. 7-8.

Unfortunately, also the churches of the ILC don't share the clear confession of the Lutheran Reformers of the 16th century either. The Independent Evangelical-Lutheran Church in Germany (SELK) for example is also a member of the Association of Christian Churches (ACK),<sup>51</sup> which serves the ecumenical cooperation between different churches (e.g. EKD, the Roman Catholic Church, the Baptists, or Mennonites). Most people in Germany don't understand anymore why it shouldn't be possible to have church fellowship or to cooperate even if there isn't full agreement in faith and doctrine. Ecumenical thinking has spread and anchored itself in our pluralistic society. All who criticize such ecumenical efforts are denigrated as "sectarians" or "fundamentalists."

But whoever really wants to preserve the heritage of the Lutheran Reformation and pass it on to future generations, must share the clear confession the Reformers of the 16th century advocated, trusting God's protection even at the risk of their life. As confessional Lutheran churches, we don't reject ecumenism in a good, biblical sense. Where full agreement in doctrine is achieved, it's necessary and beneficial to establish church fellowship and to cooperate. But where this full agreement hasn't been achieved, it's not possible to establish church fellowship with a clear conscience. But as much as it is up to us, we will earnestly pray for and seek to overcome those differences. Our confessional Lutheran churches have reached full agreement in faith, doctrine, and confession. The chief purpose of the Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference is "to give outward expression to the unity of spirit and oneness in faith and confession that binds the members of the conference together."<sup>52</sup> May God preserve and strengthen this unity among us also in the future, that we may preserve the actual heritage of the Lutheran Reformation of the 16th century purely and pass it on to future generations.

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<sup>51</sup><http://www.oekumene-ack.de/ueber-uns/mitglieder>.

<sup>52</sup>Schmeling, p. 35.

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**Links**

[www.ekd.de/glauben/grundlagen/leuenberger\\_konkordie.html](http://www.ekd.de/glauben/grundlagen/leuenberger_konkordie.html)

ESSAY

[www.heute.de/festakt-zum-reformationstag-in-berlin-gauck-fordert-einen-agenten-der-entaengstigung-45803472.html](http://www.heute.de/festakt-zum-reformationstag-in-berlin-gauck-fordert-einen-agenten-der-entaengstigung-45803472.html) (accessed 11/21/2016).

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**Prof. Holger Weiß delivering his  
essay on the Lutheran Reformation**

Essay #2  
**The Reformed Reformation Then and Now**  
*or*  
**The Reformation and Human Reason:**  
**focused upon Zwingli and Calvin**

Rev. SungGyu Choi

In the sixteenth century, the Reformation was the period of reforming the false doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church. There were many reformers during that period including three great men. They were Luther, Zwingli, and Calvin. Luther and Calvin were very well known but Zwingli was not. Luther and Zwingli were contemporaries. Zwingli was called the forerunner of Calvin because they shared common views of many Christian doctrines. Zwingli and Calvin used human reason in reforming Christianity. Regarding the Lord's Supper, Calvin stood between Luther and Zwingli. Zwingli was a humanist and nationalist. His reformation was based upon humanism and he became an ecclesiastical reformer. Calvin was called the reformer of the second generation. He added to the first generation's reformation also by using human reason.

**Zwingli (1484—1531)**

**His Life**

Ulrich Zwingli was born in the small village of Wildhaus in the Toggenburg valley of St.Gallen canton, Switzerland, on January 1, 1484. (Seven weeks earlier Luther had been born.)<sup>1</sup> Zwingli's father was the village mayor (Ammann) as his grandfather had been. His mother was the sister of John Meili who became a priest. He was the third among seven sons and had two sisters. His father was very ambitious for his son and was able to send him to the best schools.

At the age of eight, Zwingli was sent to Wesen where his uncle was dean. At ten he transferred to Basel, where he studied Latin, music, and dialectics. He also studied in Bern and Vienna. Zwingli was tremendously impressed by Maximilian's brilliant

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<sup>1</sup>Philip Schaff, *History of The Christian Church*, Vol. 8, trans. KyoungSoo Park (Seoul: Christian Digest, 2004), 39.

reign during his stay in Vienna (1500-1502).<sup>2</sup> When he lived in Basel and Bern, Zwingli was strongly influenced by humanism. He studied scholasticism, astronomy, and physics. He especially focused on the study of the classics.<sup>3</sup> He had excellent musical talents and played the lute, harp, violin, and flute well. He became a friend of Heinrich Glareanus, a leading musical humanist in Switzerland.<sup>4</sup> Zwingli returned to Basel, where he received his B.A. degree in 1504 and received his M.A. in 1506.<sup>5</sup>

In Basel, Zwingli met Dr. Thomas Wyttenbach, an Erasmian reform-minded scholar. His influence made him enjoy reading the New Testament in Greek and books of the early church fathers.<sup>6</sup> He became proficient in Greek. Later, he called Dr. Wyttenbach his loving and faithful teacher. From Dr. Wyttenbach, he became aware of the Catholics' false teachings and learned that salvation is by Christ alone.<sup>7</sup> At the age of 22, Zwingli was installed as a priest in Glarus by the bishop of Constance. He served there for 10 years (1506—1516).<sup>8</sup> That experience gave him a solid foundation for his later reform activities.<sup>9</sup> He twice experienced war as a military chaplain—in 1512 and in 1515. So he was called a nationalist. The second experience as chaplain made him see one of the great evils of Switzerland, namely, that mercenary service enriched and corrupted Swiss youth and destroyed the moral values of society. After that, he condemned mercenary service as a sinful action. While in Glarus, Zwingli corresponded with Erasmus through a friend. Zwingli praised Erasmus as an extraordinary philosopher and theologian. Erasmus regarded Zwingli as an intelligent and witty man.<sup>10</sup> Zwingli might have adopted humanism because of Erasmus. It was from him he derived the mild

<sup>2</sup>Lewis W. Spitz, *The Renaissance and Reformation Movements: The Reformation*, rev. ed., vol. 2 (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1987), 382.

<sup>3</sup>Schaff, *Christian Church*, 41.

<sup>4</sup>Spitz, *Renaissance and Reformation*, 382.

<sup>5</sup>Justo L. Gonzalez, *The Story of Christianity: The Early Church to the Dawn of the Reformation*, Vols. 1 and 2 (Peabody: Prince Press, 1985), 46.

<sup>6</sup>Spitz, *Renaissance and Reformation*, 382.

<sup>7</sup>Schaff, *Christian Church*, 42.

<sup>8</sup>Schaff, *Christian Church*, 43.

<sup>9</sup>Spitz, *Renaissance and Reformation*, 382.

<sup>10</sup>Schaff, *Christian Church*, 44.

opinion about hereditary sin and guilt. He was against semi-Pelagianism and strongly supported the doctrine of predestination.<sup>11</sup>

In 1516, Zwingli received a call from the church at Einsiedeln and left Glarus.<sup>12</sup> Einsiedeln was a popular place for pilgrims because a statue of the Virgin Mary was there. Zwingli read many books by the early church fathers during his stay in Einsiedeln. He put notes in his own Bible from the Bible which Erasmus first published in March, 1516.<sup>13</sup> That August, Zwingli blocked the activities of monk Bernardin Samson, who was going to sell indulgences.

In 1519, Zwingli became a people's priest at Zurich. He was called to the Great Minster (Grossmünster) because he was a preacher and a famous patriot.<sup>14</sup> Later, some called him the Luther of Zurich. He did reform many things in that city. Bullinger said, "Zurich was the same as Corinth in Greece before the gospel was preached."<sup>15</sup> Because of the mercenary service, the city was filled with wealth, extravagance, and the desire for power. Zwingli's preaching, devotion, and learning soon won him the respect of his parishioners in Zurich.<sup>16</sup> His sermon themes were only focused on the contents of the Bible. He regarded the Bible as the canon of theology and practice. When Francis I of France requested Swiss mercenary soldiers, all cantons except Zurich (where Zwingli lived) sent them. Zwingli feared harmful consequences. The pope insisted that Zurich dispatch the soldiers, but Zwingli focused on the Pope's unjust use of power. He became more sharply focused on the evil effects of the papacy.<sup>17</sup> Zwingli's enemies spread the word that his teachings were the same as those of the German heretic. Later Zwingli would declare that, even before having heard of Luther's teachings, he had come to similar conclusions through his study of the Bible. Some historians said that he seemed to be influenced by Luther. In any case,

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<sup>11</sup>Schaff, *Christian Church*, 44.

<sup>12</sup>Spitz, *Renaissance and Reformation*, 383.

<sup>13</sup>Schaff, *Christian Church*, 48.

<sup>14</sup>Schaff, *Christian Church*, 54.

<sup>15</sup>Schaff, *Christian Church*, 55.

<sup>16</sup>Gonzalez, *Story of Christianity*, 48.

<sup>17</sup>Gonzalez, *Story of Christianity*, 49.



Zwingli's reformation seemed not to be directly influenced by Luther. Rather it was a parallel movement that soon established links with its counterpart in Germany.<sup>18</sup>

Zurich was under the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the Bishop of Constance. In 1522, when Zwingli preached against the laws of fasting and abstinence, some of his parishioners ate smoked sausages on Ash Wednesday.<sup>19</sup> When the bishop accused them of sinning, they threw the entire blame on Zwingli. Zwingli then wrote the paper *Regarding the Choice and the Freedom of Food*, in order to defend his stance.<sup>20</sup> On January 29, 1523, he gave a speech in the Great Hall of Zurich where he publicly rejected Roman teaching. After that, he expanded the scope of his attacks on traditional Christianity by declaring that priestly celibacy was not biblical. A debate between Zwingli and a representative of the bishop followed. Zwingli won that debate. After that, he published *Sixty-Seven Articles*<sup>21</sup> which clearly outlined his objections to the wrong teachings of the Roman Catholic Church:

The rest of the articles spelled out his objections to the assumption of high priestly powers by the pope, the celebration of the mass as a sacrifice rather than as a remembrance, prayer for the intercession of saints, compulsory fasting, pilgrimages, monastic vows, clerical celibacy, the misuse of the ban, gabbled prayers, the sale of indulgence, the doctrines of penance and purgatory, the priesthood, the role of the state in religion, and other teachings and practices.<sup>22</sup>

The relationship between Zurich and Rome was broken. After that, Zwingli's reformation continued, and his goal was to restore biblical faith and practice. His methods were different from that of Luther's.

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<sup>18</sup>James M. Kittelson, *Luther The Reformer: The Story of the Man and His Career*, (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1986), 187.

<sup>19</sup>Schaff, *Christian Church*, 62.

<sup>20</sup>Schaff, *Christian Church*, 63.

<sup>21</sup>Spitz, *Renaissance and Reformation*, 385.

<sup>22</sup>Spitz, *Renaissance and Reformation*, 385.

Luther's reformation was different because he was willing to allow all traditional customs except those things which the Bible prohibited. But Zwingli took an opposite view. He rejected all customs of the Roman Catholic Church except those things which the Bible commanded.<sup>23</sup> Radical changes took place in Zurich. For example, divine statues were destroyed, distributing bread and wine to laity was allowed, and priests, monks, and nuns could marry. Zwingli also prohibited the use of instruments in the worship service even though he had excellent musical talents. But Zwingli was a humanist and remained a humanist.<sup>24</sup>

The Swiss Confederation was not centralized. Each canton had its own laws and government. In 1291, three cantons—Uri, Schwyz, and Unterwalden—were united and eventually grew into a confederation of 13 cantons.<sup>25</sup> Seeking common goals such as mutual defense treaties and independence from the German Empire, they came together and held a diet. Because of these complex issues, some cantons became Protestant, while others remained faithful to Rome. Some feared that religious disagreement could bring civil war. The Catholic cantons took steps to seek an alliance with Charles V, and Zwingli recommended that the Protestant cantons initiate military action before it was too late. But authorities in the Protestant cantons did not listen to Zwingli's advice.

In October of 1531, the five Catholic cantons suddenly attacked Zurich.<sup>26</sup> Sadly, Zwingli died on the battlefield at Kappel on October 11, 1531.<sup>27</sup> (Zwingli died 15 years before Luther.) Slightly more than a month later, the Peace of Kappel was signed. The Protestants agreed to cover the expenses of the recent military actions, and in return each canton would have the freedom to make its own choice in matters of religion.

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<sup>23</sup>Gonzalez, *Story of Christianity*, 50.

<sup>24</sup>Theo. Dierks, "Huldreich Zwingli, the Father of Reformed Theology," *Concordia Theological Monthly* 14, No. 6, (1943), 337; August Baur, *Zwingli's Theologie*, Vol. I: 46, says: "In his theological education and development Zwingli shows himself essentially dependent on Humanism and especially on Erasmus and must therefore be designed as an Erasmian in philosophy and theology."

<sup>25</sup>Spitz, *Renaissance and Reformation*, 381.

<sup>26</sup>Gonzalez, *Story of Christianity*, 50.

<sup>27</sup>Spitz, *Renaissance and Reformation*, 381.

## His Theology

Zwingli and Luther had some agreements regarding theology, but basically, they held different beliefs concerning God. Zwingli didn't have a conversion event similar to Luther's. Luther had a frightening experience and swore to become a monk. Zwingli gradually became a Christian by studying the Bible. Luther's "monastic discovery" was the basis of his reformation, but Zwingli based his on the study of humanism. Zwingli regarded his reason to be more important than Luther did his. One good example is the doctrine of predestination. Both Zwingli and Luther agreed that the salvation was only by grace. Luther insisted on the doctrine of justification and salvation by faith alone without human merits. Zwingli said that salvation is the consequence of the nature of God. He understood that God is almighty and omnipotent and that God decides everything, including man's salvation. Basically, his understanding of God was that God created the world and that man was corrupted since Adam's Fall. He insisted man was not capable of knowing God and that God revealed Himself to man:

God exhibits man to himself so that he recognizes his disobedience, treachery, and misery no less than Adam (did); as a result, man despairs of himself. But God at the same time exhibits the fullness and riches of His goodness to man, so that, when he has despaired in himself, he nevertheless recognizes that his Creator and Father still has for him a certain and ready grace, so that he cannot under any condition be torn away from Him, whose grace he desires.<sup>28</sup>

In addition, Zwingli had a very poor understanding of the atonement of Christ. He did not understand that God forgave men their sins in Christ Jesus—once, for all. In his *Exposition of the Christian Faith*, Zwingli wrote that many pious, wise, faithful, constant, valiant, and virtuous men would be found in heaven. He included Hercules, Theseus, Socrates, Aristides, Antigonus, Numa, Camillus, the Catos, and the Scipios.<sup>29</sup> This meant that Zwingli regarded them as heirs of heaven even though they were

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<sup>28</sup>Dierks, *Zwingli*, 336.

<sup>29</sup>Dierks, *Zwingli*, 337.

not even Christians. Zwingli agreed that salvation was through Christ alone, but he taught salvation had a wider way, that is, God revealed Himself not only through Christ but also in many other ways.<sup>30</sup> Zwingli insisted that all those who are not capable of understanding the law are “in a state of innocence.”<sup>31</sup> It meant that he denied the doctrine of original sin and corrupted the doctrine of justification by faith alone. His interpretation could be seen as the forerunner of pluralism in modern times, which teaches many ways to reach salvation.

Zwingli held that the Bible had to be the inspired Word of God. He agreed that Scripture interprets Scripture. He denied the means of grace. He believed that the Holy Spirit works faith immediately without means.

Zwingli did not know the proper distinction between law and gospel. He designated the revelation of God as law and gospel. He did not stress their antithesis but rather their agreement.<sup>32</sup> Zwingli thought in a broad sense that law was merged into gospel, as noted by John Maxfield:

In a narrow sense, Gospel refers to the salvation in Christ, to redemption and forgiveness of sin but in a wide sense, it includes the law. The Gospel is everything that has been made known by God to men in the Old and New Testament by which they can be made certain of the grace and will of God.<sup>33</sup>

Maxfield insisted that Zwingli taught a universal atonement rather than a limited atonement; however, some theologians did not agree.<sup>34</sup> He said that the Formula of Concord never condemned the Reformed doctrine regarding atonement.<sup>35</sup> He also focused on the original language of the Bible. This might have been influenced by humanism.

<sup>30</sup>Dierks, *Zwingli*, 337.

<sup>31</sup>Dierks, *Zwingli*, 342.

<sup>32</sup>Dierks, *Zwingli*, 339.

<sup>33</sup>Dierks, *Zwingli*, 339–40.

<sup>34</sup>John A. Maxfield, “Luther, Zwingli, and Calvin on the Significance of Christ’s Death,” *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 75 (2011), 96.

<sup>35</sup>Maxfield, *Luther, Zwingli, and Calvin*, 96.

## The Colloquy of Marburg

Luther and Zwingli were contemporaries. There was a famous debate between Luther and Zwingli called the Colloquy of Marburg. (It took place in 1529.)<sup>36</sup> That debate addressed the question of how Christ is present in the Lord's Supper. Luther and Melanchthon came from Wittenberg. Bucer from Strasburg, Oecolampadius from Basel, and Zwingli from Zurich were also there. The purpose of this meeting was to try to unite Protestants of Germany with those of Switzerland and to confront the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church. Before that meeting, Luther and Zwingli had fiercely criticized each other. For example, Zwingli had stated regarding his Wittenberg foe:

That rash man Luther keeps killing human and divine wisdom in his books, though it would have been easy to restore this wisdom among the pious. But since the heretics, that is, his followers, together with the wicked, have become so deaf to all truth that they refuse to listen, I was for a long time doubtful about expending this enormous labor which I knew would be in vain . . . May I die if he does not surpass Eck in impurity, Cochlaeus in audacity, and, in brief, all the vices of men!<sup>37</sup>

At Marburg they quickly came to agreements concerning the person of Christ, justification by faith, baptism, and other teachings of Scripture. Among the 15 items in the Marburg Articles, 14 were agreed upon, but one was not. Luther accused Zwingli of using poor logic when applying John 6:53–58 to the doctrine of the Real Presence. Zwingli responded, “this passage is going to break your neck.” Luther retorted, “Don't boast too much. Necks do not break that easily here. You are in Hesse, not Switzerland.”<sup>38</sup> German punishment did not allow breaking a man's neck. Even though the men agreed with the first part of the 15th Article, in the last part there was no agreement:

We all believe and hold concerning the Supper of our dear Lord Jesus Christ that both species should be used accord-

<sup>36</sup>Gonzalez, *Story of Christianity*, 52.

<sup>37</sup>Spitz, *Renaissance and Reformation*, 391.

<sup>38</sup>Spitz, *Renaissance and Reformation*, 392.

ing to the institution of Christ; also that the mass is not a work whereby one obtains grace for another, dead or living; also that the Sacrament of the Altar is a sacrament of the true body and blood of Jesus Christ, and that the spiritually partaking of this body and blood is especially necessary for every true Christian. In like manner, that the use of Sacrament, like the Word, is given and ordained by almighty God in order that weak consciences may thereby be excited to faith by the Holy Spirit. And although at present we are not agreed as to whether the true body and blood are bodily present in the bread and wine nevertheless each party should show Christian love to the other, so far as conscience can permit, and both should fervently pray Almighty God that he, by his Spirit, would confirm us in the right understanding. Amen.<sup>39</sup>

At the conclusion of Colloquy at Marburg, Luther refused the hand of fellowship to Zwingli, saying, “You have a different spirit.” They had failed to reach a consensus. Zwingli thought that the sacraments did not cause or convey grace. It is from Christ though the Spirit alone that grace and faith are received, apart from the means of grace. Zwingli focused on the role of the Holy Spirit rather than the means of grace. He sarcastically said that the Spirit does not need a wagon to come to us. He thought that the Lord’s Supper was not Christ’s body and blood for the forgiveness of sins but rather a mere memorial meal with bread and wine. After the colloquy of Marburg, Protestants were divided into Lutherans and Reformed.

### **Conclusion**

What was the influence of Zwingli in the history of the Christian church? Zwingli thought that the reformation of Luther did not go far enough. Zwingli radically changed all religious and civic teachings except those which the Bible commanded. As a humanist and patriot, he regarded human reason the norm of his reformation. Zwingli really wanted all cantons under the rule of the papacy. The main difference between Luther and Zwingli was the interpretation of the means of grace. Zwingli thought that the

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<sup>39</sup>Hermann Sasse, *This is My Body: Luther’s Contention for the Real Presence on the Sacrament of the Altar*, (Eugene: Wipf and Stock Pbulisher, 2001), 219–20.

Holy Spirit worked directly. In other words, the activities of the Holy Spirit did not need means. He strongly believed in the will of God and predestination. Currently, there are many Presbyterian churches in Korea. Some of them remove the cross from the altar because they regard it as a sort of idol worship. These churches seem to follow the teachings of Zwingli.

### Calvin (1509—1564)

#### His Life

John Calvin was born in the small town of Noyon, northeast of Paris, France, on July 10, 1509.<sup>40</sup> He was one of five sons. When Calvin was born, Luther was teaching his first lectures at the University of Wittenberg. Calvin's father, Gerard Cauvin served as secretary to the bishop and procurator of the cathedral chapter. His family belonged to the middle class in Noyon.<sup>41</sup> Calvin's mother, Jeanne Lefranc, died when Calvin was young.<sup>42</sup> Calvin was a boy of eight when Luther published his ninety-five theses. When he was only eleven, Calvin was appointed to a chaplaincy. With the income of a chaplain, he could study in Paris.<sup>43</sup> Calvin's father wanted him to become a priest. Calvin learned grammar and rhetoric from Marthurin Cordier who was not only a first-rate teacher, but also the founder of modern pedagogy, which advocated universal education. He also learned Latin from Cordier. Later, Calvin dedicated his commentary on Thessalonians to Cordier.<sup>44</sup> Next, Calvin moved to the College de Montaigu and learned philosophy and theology. The College de Montaigu became famous because Erasmus and Loyola were graduates. Erasmus was the prince of humanism and Loyola was the founder of the Society of Jesuits in the Roman Catholic Church.<sup>45</sup>

In March 1528, Calvin's father changed his mind and suggested that he study law at Orleans. His father wanted Calvin to pursue

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<sup>40</sup>Gonzalez, *Story of Christianity*, 61.

<sup>41</sup>Gonzalez, *Story of Christianity*, 61.

<sup>42</sup>Schaff, *Christian Church*, 261.

<sup>43</sup>Schaff, *Christian Church*, 263.

<sup>44</sup>Schaff, *Christian Church*, 263.

<sup>45</sup>Yangho Lee, *The Reformation: Aimed at a World in Which God's Will is Achieved*, (Seoul: DongYeon Publishing House, 2016), 193.

a career in law just as Luther's father had wanted for his son.<sup>46</sup> Calvin became captivated by the study of humanism and the classics. In the College de Orleans, Melchior Volmar taught Calvin Hebrew and Greek. Prof. Volmar publicly agreed with the Reformation of Luther. Calvin was influenced by Prof. Volmar's stance. Later, Calvin dedicated his commentary on 2 Corinthians to Prof. Volmar.<sup>47</sup> After studying humanism, Calvin learned of the harmful teachings of the Roman Catholic Church and agreed with the need for a reformation. This realization propelled him to transfer to Bourges in the fall of 1529.<sup>48</sup> There he studied the New Testament in Greek and was possibly introduced to Lutheran theology. Calvin was basically influenced by Luther and Zwingli because they were the first generation of reformers. Calvin studied in Paris from 1528 to 1533.<sup>49</sup> His conversion to Protestantism happened no later than 1533. In 1532, he published his first book, *'The Commentary of On Mercy.'* This book well represented Calvin's literary taste and preference. Philip Schaff commented on his book:

This book belongs to the category of classical philosophy and moral philosophy. It deals with the highest level of special affection for the Stoic school, considerable insight into Greek Roman literature, mature Latin, uncommon commentary technique, clear and sound judgment, and sharp insights into the harmful consequences of the autocracy and the weaknesses of the judicial system.<sup>50</sup>

It is interesting to note that his first book was not related to the Reformation but to the commentary of an ethics philosopher. This book was a compilation of humanistic teachings that Calvin had learned in his youth.<sup>51</sup>

In 1534, Calvin returned to his hometown of Noyon and gave up his ecclesiastical position. In 1535, Francis I changed his policy

<sup>46</sup>Gonzalez, *Story of Christianity*, 62.

<sup>47</sup>Gonzalez, *Story of Christianity*, 265.

<sup>48</sup>Lee, *Reformation*, 194.

<sup>49</sup>Schaff, *Christian Church*, 264.

<sup>50</sup>Schaff, *Christian Church*, 267.

<sup>51</sup>Lee, *Reformation*, 195.



of tolerating Protestants to being intolerant of them, so Calvin went into exile in Switzerland.<sup>52</sup> At Basel he published his famous *Institutes of the Christian Religion* in 1536. The publication of *Institutes* by the twenty-six-year-old was a very important event for Calvin. Calvin reworked and enlarged the text for many years. The final edition came out in 1559, but no basic idea was ever changed. While Calvin moved toward Protestant views, his homeland of France experienced increasing religious turmoil.<sup>53</sup>

After visiting some cities of France, Calvin headed to Strassburg. But the route was closed by military operations and he had to make a detour through Geneva. Guillaume Farel, the local Protestant leader, heard that Calvin was in Geneva. He came to Calvin at night. Calvin had not intended to become a leader of the Reformation in Geneva. He just wanted to settle down in a calm environment where he could study Scripture and write about his faith. But Farel threatened him with a curse.

“May God condemn your repose, and the calm you seek for study, if before such a great need you withdraw, and refuse your succor and help.”<sup>54</sup>

Calvin changed his mind and stayed in Geneva. Later, Calvin said of the meeting with Farel:

Everywhere I went I was careful to hide that I was the author of the book. Finally, in Geneva, Guillaume Farel continued to be buried alone until he held me in Geneva with a terrible curse, not as advice or counsel. I felt the curse of Farel as if God had put the hand of power upon me from heaven to captivate me.<sup>55</sup>

Before Calvin’s arrival in Geneva, the reformers were facing difficulties. The Protestant city of Bern had dispatched missionaries to Geneva. These missionaries were supported by small groups of educated laity. The members of the group were ardently eager to reform the church because the clergy there were simply obeying

<sup>52</sup>Gonzalez, *Story of Christianity*, 63.

<sup>53</sup>Lynn Hunt, *The Making of the West: Peoples and Cultures*, 2nd ed. (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2007), 480.

<sup>54</sup>Gonzalez, *Story of Christianity*, 65.

<sup>55</sup>Lee, *Reformation*, 197.

the orders of the government of Geneva. The Bern missionaries, whose leader was William Farel, lacked sufficient personnel to reach their goals.

In 1538, Calvin and Farel were driven out of Geneva when the city council turned against them. Calvin went to Strassburg, where Martin Bucer was the leading reformer. Calvin was influenced by Bucer. The church government and church discipline in Strassburg left a strong impression on Calvin. Calvin would carry these ideas with him when he returned to Geneva. It was during his stay at Strassburg that he signed the Augsburg Confession in its “Variata” form. While staying in Strassburg, he married Idelette de Bure, the widow of an Anabaptist. Unfortunately, she died in 1549. Calvin recalled that staying in Strassburg was the happiest time in his life.<sup>56</sup> In 1541, Calvin was invited back to Geneva because Farel’s Protestant party had regained control of the city. He did not want to return to Geneva, but Bucer and Farel strongly persuaded him. When he returned to Geneva, his purpose was to make it a theocracy, that is, a community ruled by God. He set out to create a city where people believed and lived as Christians. Dancing, playing cards, and theaters were forbidden. Everyone was required to attend church twice each Sunday, and those who failed to do so without good reason were disciplined. Eventually, Geneva became a single theocratic community, in which dissidence was not tolerated.<sup>57</sup>

The Zwinglian reformers merged with the Calvinists. In 1549, Calvin and Bullinger succeeded in overcoming the differences between Zurich and Geneva regarding the Lord’s Supper. The so-called Zurich Consensus declared that the Lord’s Supper is not merely a metaphor for the spiritual meal.<sup>58</sup>

In June 1559, the Genevan Academy was founded. It was important to Calvin and Calvinism. Many people came from all over Europe in order to study Calvinism. This academy helped spread the teachings of Calvinism. Calvin oversaw the operation of the Geneva Academy, until his death on May 27, 1564.

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<sup>56</sup>KyungSoo Park, *The Reformation: Visiting the historical places*, (Seoul: The Christian Literature Society of Korea, 2013), 137.

<sup>57</sup>Hunt, *Making of the West*, 481.

<sup>58</sup>Schaff, *Christian Church*, 503.

Calvin and Luther had different personalities. Luther was sociable to the point of volubility, free and open, warm and cordial with people of all stations of life, but Calvin was shy to the point of diffidence, precise, and restrained.<sup>59</sup> Even though they had different temperaments, they made big contributions to the Reformation.

### **Calvin's Theology**

Calvin's main focus was to affirm the sovereignty of God and to glorify His glory.<sup>60</sup> The Lutherans focused on the grace of God and justification by faith. They shared some common beliefs, such as total depravation, verbal inspiration, and negating free will in the role of salvation. But the main difference was the use of human reason in understanding Scripture. Calvin insisted that revelation never contradicted reason. The doctrine of double predestination was the main example of salvation based on human reason. It was used to answer a common question: "Why some and not others?"

In 1536, Calvin published the first edition of his book, *Institutes of the Christians Religion*. In this book, he followed the outline of Luther's *Small Catechism* and added Christology. Before explaining Christology, he mentioned sin and Adam's Fall. Calvin's intention was to emphasize the grace of God, that is, the gospel first and then the law.<sup>61</sup> He did not fully understand the law and gospel.

In 1551, the Parisian Jerome Hermes Bolsec, a former Carmelite friar, spoke out against teachings of Calvin.<sup>62</sup> Bolsec insisted that Calvin's predestination doctrine made God the author of sin. He insisted that the grace of God should be given to all people in the world. Bolsec maintained that when the gospel was preached, some people accepted it and others did not. He insisted that the reason was due to their own free will. In Calvin's view, Bolsec did not understand the exact meaning of free

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<sup>59</sup>Spitz, *Renaissance and Reformation*, 412.

<sup>60</sup>Spitz, *Renaissance and Reformation*, 418.

<sup>61</sup>Jaejin Kim, "Consideration of Calvin's acceptance of the theology of Luther: focusing on slave will and freedom of choice," (paper presented at the annual meeting by *Korea Reformed Theological Society 67th Conference*, Seoul, November 7, 2009), 3.

<sup>62</sup>Spitz, *Renaissance and Reformation*, 427.

will. Calvin agreed with the doctrine of total depravation. And he also insisted that the grace of God was needed in order to be saved, as Luther did. However, in the process of salvation, Calvin did not allow for the free will of a person.<sup>63</sup> Luther said that a man is like a horse with a saddle,<sup>64</sup> Calvin said that a man is like a horseman and horse.<sup>65</sup> The horse can be pulled by the horseman. Both Calvin and Luther did not accept the teaching that man's free will played a role in salvation.

Luther and Calvin had different understandings concerning the salvation process. Luther accepted it as a mystery because it was beyond human reason. Calvin believed that salvation was the decision of God based upon his sovereignty. Double predestination was the result of this concept. Calvin's belief in double predestination held an important position in his teachings. He insisted that God already decided both those who were saved before one's birth and those who were damned. However, Luther believed only those who were saved were predestined. Calvin agreed with Luther that all people are totally depraved by nature and that grace was needed for salvation. But Calvin did not agree in only the election to salvation. Calvin explained the process of salvation using human reason. If God elects some to salvation through the gospel message, then others are logically elected to damnation if they do not accept it, even though they listen to the same message. That is Calvin's human reason and understanding. Calvin did not accept the mystery of salvation. Calvin's theology also logically assumed that God was the author of sin even though Calvin never stated that directly. In addition, Calvin did not think that baptism was important to the Christian. He claimed that if someone were elected to salvation, he would be saved without baptism.

In Geneva, religious conflicts under the leadership of Calvin were severely dealt with. Take for example the case of Michael Servetus. Michael Servetus was a prominent Spanish physician. He had also published a treatise *On the Errors of the Trinity*.<sup>66</sup> In it

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<sup>63</sup>Kim, *Calvin's acceptance*, 5.

<sup>64</sup>Schaff, *Christian Church*, 344.

<sup>65</sup>Kim, *Calvin's acceptance*, 12.

<sup>66</sup>Spitz, *Renaissance and Reformation*, 406.

he denied some teachings such as the Trinity, infant baptism, the union of church and state, and the Council of Nicea. Servetus was connected to a group called Libertines.<sup>67</sup> He was condemned as a heretic. The leaders in Geneva decided that Servetus should be burned to death even though Calvin had argued in favor of a less cruel death by beheading.<sup>68</sup> It shows how severe Geneva's leaders and Calvin were. After Servetus's execution, there was no rival for Calvin's authority in Geneva.

Regarding the doctrine of the Lord's Supper, Calvin held a middle position between Luther and Zwingli. Luther insisted on the real presence, and Zwingli insisted on symbolism. Calvin seemed to be inclined towards Luther's teachings. He agreed that Christ is present during the Lord's Supper, but only in a spiritual way. Martin Bucer and Calvin prided themselves on standing midway between Zwingli and Luther, but their beliefs were basically Zwinglian in a more refined form. Gonzalez summarized Calvin's position:

Calvin affirmed that the presence of Christ in communion is real, although spiritual. This means that such presence is not merely symbolic, nor is communion a mere devotional exercise; rather there is in it a true divine action for the church that partakes of the sacrament. On the other hand, this does not mean that the body of Christ descends from heaven, nor that it can be present in several altars at the same time, as Luther claimed. Rather, in the act of communion, by the power of the Holy Spirit, believers are taken to heaven and share with Christ in a foretaste of the heavenly banquet.<sup>69</sup>

Calvin seemed to favor Luther in this matter, but he did not agree that Jesus's resurrected body was not limited to space and time. In other words, Calvin did not accept Jesus's body as omnipresent and omnipotent. Calvin apparently considered the sacramental controversy between Lutherans and Zwinglians solved when the Zurich Consensus of 1549 modified Article X of the Augsburg

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<sup>67</sup>Schaff, *Christian Church*, 591.

<sup>68</sup>Gonzalez, *Story of Christianity*, 67.

<sup>69</sup>Gonzalez, *Story of Christianity*, 68.

Confession.<sup>70</sup> Calvin insisted that one spiritually participates in the body and blood of Christ through the Holy Spirit. He rejected Zwingli's symbolism. He believed that the Lord's Supper is a powerful and effective sign by which the Holy Spirit unites the heavenly Lord to us through food. Christ's body and blood are present efficaciously but not in reality. Thus Calvin rejected the transubstantiation of the Catholics and the real presence of the Lutherans. Calvin maintained that the finite is not capable of the infinite. Therefore, the elements cannot contain the body and blood of the Lord or be His true body and blood.

Calvin did agree with Luther's views on Christian liberty. The Christian is the freest of all in being above the law but is the servant of all in acting willingly in love for the good of his fellow man.<sup>71</sup>

### **The Institutes**

Calvin felt a need to write a summary of the Christian faith because there were few summaries available. Most Protestant literature was focused on controversial issues and said little regarding basic doctrines such as the Trinity and the incarnation. So Calvin wrote the *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. The first edition of the *Institutes* appeared in Basel in 1536 and was a 516-page book.<sup>72</sup> It consisted of six chapters. Gonzalez in his book summarized it briefly:

The first four dealt with the law, the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the sacraments. The last two, more polemical in tone, summarized the Protestant position regarding the "false sacraments" of Rome, and Christian freedom.<sup>73</sup>

Spitz commented about the book:

The centrality of Paul and the influence of Augustine and Luther are evident throughout, although Calvin's compre-

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<sup>70</sup>The text of the two editions (1530 and 1540) is as follows: Ed. 1530. Of the Supper of the Lord, they teach that the body and blood of Christ are truly present [under the form of bread and wine], and are distributed to those that eat in the Lord's Supper. And they disapprove of those who teach otherwise. Ed. 1540. Of the Supper of the Lord, they teach that with bread and wine are truly exhibited the body and blood of Christ to those who eat in the Lord's Supper.

<sup>71</sup>Spitz, *Renaissance and Reformation*, 417.

<sup>72</sup>Gonzalez, *Story of Christianity*, 63.

<sup>73</sup>Gonzalez, *Story of Christianity*, 63.

hensive knowledge of the Scriptures and patristic writers also comes through in force.<sup>74</sup>

This first edition was sold out in nine months. Calvin continued to edit his book. The Latin and French editions of 1559 and 1560 were the last versions published during Calvin's lifetime. His book began with only six chapters but ended up with four books and eighty chapters.

Calvinism spread widely in Europe partly due to the *Institutes* but mainly due to the influence of the Geneva Academy. Because of the Academy, many students came from various areas in Europe. After graduation, they returned to their native lands and shared the teachings of Calvin.

### **Conclusion**

The Renaissance and humanism were major themes of the sixteenth century. In modern times, pluralism and atheism are major themes. We should return to Luther's main theme: *Sola Fide, Sola Gratia, Sola Scriptura*. The absolute truth is not attained in multiple ways as pluralism insists. Those who believe in pluralism confuse others by suggesting that there are several ways to reach the truth. Jesus said, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." (John 14:6 NIV) Jesus is the only way to reach the truth. The Scripture is only the source of truth. This is not negotiable.

Atheism is growing rapidly in Korea. The proportion of atheists to the total population is above 50 percent. Unfortunately, teenagers and young adults especially make up a large portion of this group. Atheism is increasing worldwide. Atheism basically stems from human reason. Those who try to understand God by human reason and logic fail and then turn to atheism.

Today, advanced technologies tend to lead younger generations to become atheists. But in Luther's time the advances in printing technology helped the Reformation spread quickly and widely. It is said that the Reformation gave the laity the Bible. Nowadays, advanced technologies give people lots of information including theologies, commentaries on the Bible, lectures, and sermons.

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<sup>74</sup>Spitz, *Renaissance and Reformation*, 417.

Those resources can give people a better understanding of God's Word. It depends on how they use them. The ideals of the Reformation should be carried on. Luther reformed false teachings that contradicted what the Bible taught. The source of the Reformation was the Bible. We should stay faithful to the infallible Word of God!

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## **The Radical Reformation Then and Now**

Julio Ascarrunz

For many reasons 1521 was a memorable year for the history of the Reformation. On January 3rd of that year, Martin Luther was excommunicated by the papal bull *Decet Romanum Pontificem*<sup>1</sup>. This bull was issued by Pope Leo X to enforce the excommunication with which Luther was threatened in the Bull *Exsurge Domine* of 1520<sup>2</sup>. Later, on May 25, the recently elected emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, Charles V, promulgated the Edict of Worms against Luther. With this document Luther was declared a fugitive and heretic, and with this, the rupture between the Lutheran Reformation and Roman Catholicism became official. From that moment on, owning any of Luther's books was considered a crime.

The Edict did not respect the prior agreement that guaranteed Luther's safe return to his home. On the contrary, it stipulated that he be arrested and sentenced as soon as possible. On the way home, and in order to protect him, Prince Frederick the Wise organized a mock kidnapping and hid him in the Wartburg Castle for eleven months. During that time, from December 1521 to March 1522, Luther translated the New Testament into German.

However, there is another event to take into account, that happened this same year. We refer to the official manifestation of a dissident movement of the Reformation that historians have called «THE RADICAL REFORM». How did it come about? What are its postulates? What effect did it have on the church then and now? These are some of the points that I will consider in this essay titled: «RADICAL REFORM, THEN AND NOW».

### **Origins of Radical Reform**

How did the Radical Reformation come about? Where did it come from? To answer this question, we need to know that in the early Middle Ages a religious movement emerged in the eastern church

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<sup>1</sup>For more detail see: <http://asv.vatican.va/en/doc/1521.htm> or <http://asv.vatican.va/es/doc/1521.htm> (for Spanish)

<sup>2</sup><http://asv.vatican.va/en/doc/1520.htm>

(apparently founded in 750 AD by the Armenian Constantine Silvano of Manamali), which was characterized by its adoptive Christology and its rejection of the use of images of Mary and the saints, as well as promoting Manichaeian ideas. In the 8th century the movement enjoyed the protection of the Emperor Constantine Copronius (741-775). But in the ninth century it suffered many persecutions, most of them from the Empress Theodora. The Paulites, in their flight, established colonies in Thrace, Armenia, Asia Minor and the Balkans. By the end of the 10th century they had established themselves in Europe.<sup>3</sup>

The relation between the paulicianos and the emergence of Anabaptism is explained by the writer George Huntston Williams with these words:

«From an analogical, if not a genetic, point of view, the close relationship between Greek (and Armenian) Paulism and Anabaptism is astonishing, except for pacifism. But even here Paul's insistence on the cross of personal suffering and probable martyrdom, in connection with the baptism of believers, makes us think of the Anabaptists. The Paulites argued that the age of thirty years was adequate to receive baptism, and practiced it in the form that Servetus would later defend. Repudiating the baptism of the Greek Orthodox Church, the members of that ancient Eastern sect, which has survived to modern times, also practiced rebaptism. His whole theology was centered around baptism in the Jordan, which was the basis for his adoptive Christology and his insistence on the baptism of believers.»<sup>4</sup>

After Luther posted his 95 theses, many longed to end right away everything that had to do with Roman Catholicism. Luther, on the other hand, was more moderate. «Everyone knew about the moderation of Luther, who was slow to let go of his habits of an Augustinian friar, of the Latin Mass, of being contrary to violence and haste. He was afraid that his message, which only had to do with the personal relationship between man and God and with

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<sup>3</sup>Ramos, M. A. (2000, c1998). *Nuevo diccionario de religiones denominaciones y sectas* (electronic ed.). Nashville: Editorial Caribe.

<sup>4</sup>Williams, George Huntston. (1983): *La Reforma Radical*. Fondo de Cultura Económica. México., pág. 354

solving the problem of salvation, was going to be used to subvert the social order. Now, not everyone agreed with such patience.»<sup>5</sup>

In 1521, while Luther was hiding in the Wartburg Castle, Thomas Müntzer, a German preacher of the Lutheran Reformation who was in charge of the working parish of St. Catherine in Zwickau, began to promote radical reform. The radical reform movement did not seek to correct the abuses that Catholicism committed in the church. On the contrary, he proposed a total break with any practice that had no precedent in the Bible or any new revelation. The Lutheran Reformation was focused on doctrine, the church, and the believer. The radical reform went further. He sought to reform society and transform it into the earthly Kingdom of God.

While in Zwickau, Müntzer became a follower of a secular trio of charismatic preachers founded by the weaver Nikolas Storch, which is the reason why they were known as the storchites. They were also called Schwärmgeister, meaning enthusiasts, in the sense of fanatical spirits, and Luther called them «Prophets of Zwickau.» The other members of the trio were Thomas Drechsel and Mark Thomas Stübner (the only one with a university education). This group was influenced by the doctrines of the Taborites<sup>6</sup> and the Waldenses and some of the Pauline errors. They taught that the Millennium would be preceded by the rise of the Antichrist,<sup>7</sup> practiced possession by the Spirit and held that God still used direct revelation in visions and dreams. The influence of the Zwickau Prophets arrived in Wittenberg due mostly to the influence of Gabriel Zwilling, who worked to spread his ideas among the believers who had embraced the Reformation and won the sympathy of the spiritual authority of the city, Dr. Andreas Rudolph Bodenstein von Karlstadt (also known as Carlstadt) friend and colleague of Luther. Soon the success of the Zwickau prophets was radically exposed in Wittenberg: «The iconoclastic direct action soon came: students, bourgeois, enthusiastic people, invaded temples, expelled papist priests, destroyed

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<sup>5</sup>Egido, Teófanos. (1992): *Las Reformas Protestantes*. Editorial Síntesis, S.A. Madrid. Pág. 168

<sup>6</sup>Radical branch emerged from the followers of John Hus (Hussites) «They announced the coming of Christ and assembled in a mountain that they named Tabor, hence their name.» (Ramos, M. A. (2000, c1998)

<sup>7</sup>Williams, p. 68

liturgical books, burned altars and shot down images, all with a clatter and arms.»<sup>8</sup> The Radical Reformation had begun.

Luther, aware of such events, left the castle where he was hiding on March 6, 1522 to prove that he did not agree with the radical reformation. From the 9th to the 16th of March he preached a series of sermons that served to reestablish order in the city.

Although Carlstadt was not directly involved in the acts of vandalism, he was blamed because a few days earlier he had published a book (titled: *Von Abtueung der Bilder*) in which he presented arguments based on the Old Testament for the destruction of images which were considered to promote idolatry. Carlstadt gave up preaching in Wittenberg and went to Orlamünde where, after being installed as pastor of the congregation, he continued his departure from the principles of Lutheran reform by refusing to baptize newborn children and immersing himself further in the ideas of radical reform. Carlstadt's theories alarmed Luther. In September of 1524 Carlstadt was expelled from the dominions of the elector of Saxony when he already had prepared for printing eight of his most radical writings regarding the sacraments.

On the other hand Müntzer was expelled from his parish in Zwickau and in 1521 he fled to Prague. After trying unsuccessfully to convince the inhabitants there to adopt his ideas of establishing the kingdom of God through a peasant revolution, he decided to go to Allstedt (Saxony). He stayed there for two years and sang his German Mass with popular songs that served to incite the struggle against the ungodly (that is, those who did not think like him) and managed to form the «League of the elect» to establish the true kingdom of God.

Faced with opposition to his radical communist ideas Müntzer emigrated and arrived in the free city of Muhlhausen (Thuringia) where he encouraged the poor peasants, who had rebelled against the princes, to fight to establish the Kingdom of God. He convinced them that the end of the wicked was near and that God himself would come to support the peasant rebellion. His prophecies did not have the desired impact as only 300 responded to the call. With «The Sword of Gideon» (a title that he gave

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<sup>8</sup>Egido, p. 169

himself), his very small army launched into an almost suicidal battle, singing the hymn «Come Holy Spirit». On May 25, 1525 the peasants were defeated. Müntzer was captured and two days later was beheaded as an example to others. Thomas Müntzer is now considered a hero by many socialists and communists, and as a precursor of socialism in Germany.

The main characteristic present in the adherents of the radical reform is their rupture with the basic principle of the Reformation, SOLA SCRIPTURA. Although they generally base their doctrines on the Bible, they ultimately rejected the «external Word» and in its place stressed the “inner word.” «At the time of Luther’s Reformation, the “heavenly prophets,” the Anabaptists and Schwenkfeldians, rejected the “external Word” and in its place stressed the “inner word,” stigmatizing obedience to Scripture as “letter service” (*Buchstabendienst*;) while in modern times the Christian Church must cope with the enthusiasm of such religious organizations as the Quakers, Swedenborgians, Irvingites, and others. In addition to these visionaries it must oppose also those who separate the operation of the Holy Ghost from the Word of Scripture and rely on private revelations as the norm of their faith»<sup>9</sup>

### **The Children of Radical Reform**

The ideas of the prophets of Zwickau, Müntzer, and Carlstadt echoed in different places and people, as a result of mutations of the radical reform, that we can call “Sons of Radical Reformation”. The greatest of these are undoubtedly the so-called Anabaptists, and closely related are the Spiritualists and the Evangelical Rationalists.

### **The Spiritualists**

Within the radical Reformation a peculiar tendency constituted the so-called spiritualism. Spiritualists taught that the church is invisible and that visible practices such as sacraments or ecclesiastical discipline were unnecessary. They believed that God spoke to believers apart from the Bible. Contrary to the forensic justification taught by the Lutheran Reformation the spiritualists

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<sup>9</sup>Mueller, John Theodore. (1999, c1934). *Christian Dogmatics* (electronic ed.). St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House. p. 95

proposed an experiential redemption that consisted in a progressive divinization of the believer through suffering. Spiritualism had many important leaders. Two of those who stood out during the time of the reformation were Sebastian Franck von Wörd (1499-1542) and Kaspar Schwenckfeld von Ossig (1489-1561)

### *Sebastian Franck*

He was a mystic, book printer, translator, theologian and German historian, who, though impressed by the ideas of Luther and Zwingli, largely followed his own theological proposal. He is author of the *Chronicle: book of time and historical Bible* and more than 20 books, including comments on other authors. Although he exhibited with almost missionary zeal his spiritualist theology, which he claimed to have received from God, he never attempted to organize a sect. His work titled *Paradoxes* (1534) is the one that best exposes his thought. In it he affirms that the true divinity only reveals itself in intimacy and that outer religion is not important and that therefore one must be tolerant of those who profess another faith. Franck, who is also nicknamed Glüber (dreamer) believed that God communicates with human beings through a portion of divinity that remains in each individual.

Franck, at the beginning of 1518, began his theological studies with the Dominicans in Heidelberg. He was ordained a Catholic priest. But in 1525 he went to join the Reformation. He began his ministerial activities as a Lutheran preacher at Ansbach-Bayreuth in 1526. Shortly afterwards he was called to be a pastor in the town of Gustenfelden (dependent of Nuremberg, in the same margraviate). His first work was a translation into German in 1528 (with certain additions), of the first part of the Latin *Diallage* of Andres Althamer, (*Diallage, hoc est conciliatio locturaum Scripturae qui prima facie inter se pugnare videntur*), which opposed the Sacramentarians and Anabaptists. In his introduction to the German version of the *Diallage*, in a paragraph in which he speaks of spiritualism, Franck declared himself in favor of ecclesiastical pluralism, stating: «Every home [should] have its own faith, as is the custom in Bohemia.»<sup>10</sup> In the same year he renounced the pastorate and the Lutheran Reformation.

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<sup>10</sup>Williams, p. 301

### *The Schwenckfeldians*

Diplomat Kaspar Schwenckfeld von Ossig (1489-1561) was a German nobleman, knight of the Teutonic Order, who joined Lutheranism in 1518 and by 1522 became one of the main exponents of the Lutheran Reformation in Silesia, where he owned large properties. However, on June 11, 1524, he published a treatise entitled «*Warning to All Silesian Brethren*» in which he expounded his own doctrine on the sacraments, evidencing his adherence to the spiritualist wing of radical reform. In 1540 he severed his relationship with the Lutheran Reformation.

«His supporters organized several congregations and a group reached the Thirteen Colonies of North America in 1734 [ . . . ] The most important publication of the movement is the Grosse Confession (1540) in which it presents its doctrine of the deification of the humanity of Christ.»<sup>11</sup>. The Book of Concord explicitly condemns the heresies of Schwenckfeld and his followers (Formula of Concord XII: 20-17)

The characteristic distinction that spiritualists make between the text of the Bible, which they call the external word, and a personal and subjective religious experience, which they call the internal word, is notorious. «[Spiritualists] with a spirituality codified in the direct experience of God, known and felt through freedom. By their internalization, by their individualism, by their incompatibility with any of the official and state confessions, almost all of them were precursors of freedom of conscience, of tolerance, and their attitudes would be assumed by the later pietistic movements.»<sup>12</sup>

### **The Anabaptists**

Within the radical reform movement, different groups had their common denominator: denying the validity of the baptism of children who had not reached the age of the use of reason. They were called Anabaptists (from Greek *aná*, again, and *baptistēs*, the one who baptizes) for practicing re baptism.

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<sup>11</sup>Ramos, M. A. (2000, c1998)

<sup>12</sup>Egido (1992, pág. 187)

The book of Concord explicitly condemns the heresies of the Anabaptists (Formula of Concord XII - 2-11)

*The German Anabaptism*

Hans Hut was a bookbinder and traveling bookseller between Wittenberg and Erfurt who admired Müntzer, whom he met in 1524 when he was invited to stay in his house for a day and a night. On May 31, 1525 Hut preached against the baptism of children, the idolatry of using images and against the mass. It was then that he said: «The citizens must confront the authorities with a knife, for the opportune time has come: the power is in their hands.»<sup>13</sup> By these words Hut was identified as a follower of Müntzer. But in the court of Augsburg he declared that he was never a true follower of Müntzer because he did not understand him. Hut was renamed Pentecost, on May 26, 1526 by Hans Denk, a humanist scholar and former associate of Zwingli, who in 1525 organized an Anabaptist church in Augsburg, along with Melchor Rinck, Luis Haetzer and Jacobo Kautz.

Hut was a passionate missionary of Anabaptism and considered himself an apostle (sent) by God and, based on Daniel 12 and apocalypse 13, prophesied that the second coming of Christ would happen on Pentecost of 1528. In 1526 he preached a sermon rebuking the peasants for having taken up arms instead of waiting for the time of God.

Hut was quite successful in implementing Anabaptism in Austria where he became known as «the Apostle of Austria.» There three of his converted, Leonardo Schiemer, John Schlawfer and Ambrose Spittelmaier, who later died as martyrs, rigorously emphasized the three featured doctrines of Anabaptism. «Common features to the three were a much greater insistence on the imminence of the second coming of Christ than that proclaimed by the Swiss brothers, a much higher insistence on personal suffering as confirmation that they have followed the way of Christ in this world, and a greater emphasis also on the need to share possessions, a feature which was later intended to fully develop into communism. Another group was the Christian refugees in Austrian Moravia, also known as the Hutterites [Jakob Hutter].»<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup>Williams, p. 104

<sup>14</sup>Williams, p. 197



On the other hand, the doctrines of these Anabaptists were very heretical and their move away from the Lutheran reformation is remarkable. «The conviction to be prophets and apostles was extremely rooted in them. One of the evangelists, referring to Christ himself, said he was a Prophet like any other, and that only from the time when he received the Holy Spirit (in the Jordan), was he (adopted) as “a true God . . . like his father in heaven.»<sup>15</sup>

In August, 1527 the Anabaptists called a Synod to which Hutter, of Austria and Denk from Worms, after crossing Switzerland, attended in order to discuss a document in which seven decrees had previously been prepared, especially those relating to the Kingdom of the Heaven, to the manner and to the expected date of Christ’s advent and the role that the Anabaptists would have in it. «A second purpose of the Synod was the management of a greater number of apostles, so that they would proclaim the Anabaptist gospel and organize what Hutter, Denck and their colleagues believed would be the “third” reformation, i.e. the end reformation.»<sup>16</sup>

About 70 Anabaptists attended this meeting which came to be known as “The Synod of Martyrs” because so many of them assembled that it alarmed the leaders of the city who proceeded to arrest both Hutter and the patrician Langenmantel. Hut died in prison in June of 1527 when a fire broke out in his cell. His body, tied to a chair, was taken to the court which ruled that it be burned at the stake. After the Synod, Denck was astonished by the sudden collapse of the Synod’s plans. Banished from Nuremberg, he went to Basel and came to the conclusion that radical reform was a tremendous mistake that he needed to repent of. That same year, shortly after writing an autobiography of his life, he died of the plague in Basel before he was 32 years old.

### *The German Revolutionary Anabaptism*

Müntzer was a disciple of Nicholas Storch, the founder of the Zwickau prophets. Another person who was influenced by Storch was Furrier Melchior Hoffman, a man who resembled Müntzer in many ways, to the point that he was considered to

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<sup>15</sup>Williams, p. 204

<sup>16</sup>Williams, p. 206

be his direct successor. Hoffman presented himself as a prophet announcing that the year 1533 would be the end of time, giving rise to the beginning of Christ's Millennial Kingdom. By his constant reference to the ministry of Enoch and Elijah at the end of time it was easy for many to see in him the prophet Elijah. He was associated with Leonardo and Ursula Jost, a marriage that claimed to have prophecies and visions, and with another supposed prophetess named Barbara Rebstock. Hoffman called the city of Strasbourg «The New Jerusalem» where one day the 144,000 spoken of in the book of Revelation would congregate and that behind a bloody site would be the seat of the royal priesthood. To support his claims he cited the apocryphal book 4th of Ezra.

Faced with such speculation, the reformers living in Strasbourg advised Hoffman to return to his fur trade. But he was convinced that theological preparation was a hindrance and he hoped that the Holy Spirit would make up for any shortcomings he had. At the appointed time, Hoffman's prophecy failed notoriously and instead a synod was held which ended up condemning various religious agitators who promoted radical reform. Hoffman was sentenced to life imprisonment. He died ten years later.

Baker John Matthys took Hoffman's place among his followers. He assumed the command, stating that God had revealed to him great things that he was not allowed to tell anyone, and that he was Enoch, the other witness of the book of Revelation (with the understanding that Hoffman was Elijah). In 1533 he arrived in Amsterdam with great pretensions where he heard that they already identified themselves with Cornelio Polderman or with Gaspar Schwenckfeld similar to the Enoch successor of Hoffman. Matthys reacted with great fury, and with great and desperate curses condemned to hell for all eternity all those who refused to hear his voice and did not acknowledge and accept him as the true Enoch. Angered by such threats some went into rigorous fasting and prayer, after which they finally accepted the prophet. Matthys did not intend to confine himself to waiting for the arrival of the Messianic Kingdom. On the contrary, he maintained that it was necessary to impose its coming by the violence of the sword. With that in mind he proclaimed the city of Münster as the «New Jerusalem.» The tailor Juan de Leyden, one

of his followers, implanted revolutionary Anabaptist doctrines among its inhabitants. After winning the elections in February of 1534 Matthys established a regime of totalitarian government above the burgomaster and the council. "In the short time of a month and a half all properties were declared to belong equally to all. Private possession of coins, food and everything necessary for daily sustenance was prohibited. The doors of the dwellings had to be permanently open, though carefully so that the cattle would not escape."<sup>17</sup> Those who did not agree with the new regime were invited to leave. Catholics and Lutherans quietly left the city. Those who remained had to adapt to the new regime of a communist and polygamous nature that did not last long. In this way Müntzer's ideal ended in complete failure.

### *The Swiss Anabaptism*

The anabaptist and revolutionary ideas proclaimed by Müntzer crossed the German territory from Saxony to Thuringia, reaching even France, Swabia and as far as the Swiss border. One person who was strongly influenced by Müntzer's ideas was a former priest named Baltazar Hubmaier. In 1523 in Switzerland Hubmaier (then pastor in Waidhust, Austria), Felix Manz and others, discussed with Zwingli the need to reject infant baptism. Before this proposal a dispute was organized in Zurich on January 17, 1525 in which Zwingli rejected Anabaptism. But he was opposed by many of his former associates, including the capable and respected Conrad Grebel. The city council, acting as judge, declared that Zwingli had won the debate and ordered that all children be baptized. The Anabaptists were to be exiled or imprisoned. A second dispute in November ended the same way. In March of 1526 the order was given to drown the Anabaptists if they persisted in their heresy. Felix Manz, Jacobo Faulic, and Enrique Riemon were the first upon which this sentence fell.

However, from 1525 to 1529 this movement grew rapidly in Switzerland. Its leaders, being exiled, took their doctrines to other countries and even to the south of Germany. Such is the case of Hubmaier who in June 1526, fled to Nickolsburg, Moravia, after being persecuted in Austria and Switzerland. There

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<sup>17</sup>Egido, p. 184

he had instant success, gaining between six and twelve thousand followers in a single year. Hubmaier in place of baptism established the custom of presenting newborns to the congregation, and after reading in the Gospel according to Mark, verses 13-16 of chapter 10, entrusted them to the prayers of believers. It should be noted that Jesus did not have children presented as an alternative to baptism.

*Hutterites, Mennonites and Amish*

Other prominent leaders of Anabaptism were Jakob Hutter (1500-1536) and Menno Simons (1496-1561), a former Catholic priest and Jacob Amman (1644-1730).

In 1528 Hutter founded, , an Anabaptist church in Moravia. His followers were known as Hutterites or as Huterian brethren. Eventually they moved to Ukraine, Canada and South Dakota, seeking freedom and facilities to develop their lifestyle.

Menno Simons followed the moderate tradition of the original Swiss Anabaptists and was the organizer of Anabaptism in northern Germany and Holland. His followers are known as Mennonites. They are currently the largest branch of Anabaptism. They have numerous members in North America and several European countries, as well as missions in numerous countries, including several Latin American republics.

Jacob Amman is the Mennonite who established the Amish.

**Evangelical Rationalism**

Within the radical reformation there was a rationalistic tendency that placed reason far above biblical revelation. The most notorious exponent was Michael Servetus (1511-1553) who at the age of 20 was already a radical reformer. Servetus denied that the Trinity was a biblical doctrine, considered that «The Papist Trinity, baptism of infants and the other sacraments defended by the papacy are doctrines of demons.» He also rejected the doctrine of predestination and infant baptism, and believed that the millennial kingdom of Christ was about to begin. Servetus was arrested in Geneva and tried for heresy. Being found guilty he was executed on the October 27, 1553 by order of the city Council that arranged for him to be burned in the bonfire. “Ser-

vetus is a fascinating figure because he brought together in one person the Renaissance and the left wing of the Reformation. He was at the same time a disciple of the Neoplatonic Academy of Florence and of the Anabaptists”<sup>18</sup>

Lelio Sozzini, (Socino, 1525-1562), and his nephew Fausto Sozzini (1539-1604), who were followers of the Servetus doctrine, are considered to be the forerunners of Unitarianism (denying the trinity). The followers of Socino formed “The Reformed Minor Church” (officially called the Socinians) that flourished in Poland for nearly a hundred years. At its height it claimed to have up to three hundred congregations. They established a colony in Rakov, northeast of Krakow, and set up a printing press and founded a university. In 1658 the king decreed that all members of the minor Reformed church should leave Poland within three years; otherwise, they would be executed. Hundreds of them preferred exile. Brutal persecutions erupted. A few small congregations of exiles survived for a time in Transylvania, Prussia and the Netherlands, but these isolated groups also gradually disappeared.

The most well-known unitarianism is English, whose pioneers were the Protestant ministers John Biddle and Teofilo Lindsey, who in 1774 founded the Essex chapel in the city of London. Joseph Priestly, a famous scientist, was a proponent of unitarian congregations in various places until his exile to the United States to support the French Revolution. In 1813, it was recognized as the unitarian movement that was organized like the British and Foreign Unitarian Union in 1825.

In the United States, Priestley organized a church in Pennsylvania. For a time the Unitarians controlled the chair of Theology at Harvard.

### **Doctrine of Radical Reform**

The radical Reformation did not have a homogeneous doctrine, however some of its common emphases need to be mentioned.

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<sup>18</sup>Roland H. Bainton, (1973) *Servet, el hereje perseguido (1511-1553)*. Madrid: Taurus.

CONCERNING THE WORD OF GOD

1) In addition to the Bible, they taught that there is another word of God, an inner word written in the hearts of people:

«Thomas Müntzer finally attributed to “all Scripture” a purely propaedeutic value, saying that what he did was “kill” the believer so that he could awaken the Word within and respond to the Spirit»<sup>19</sup>

«Far less radical than Müntzer, rational and evangelical spiritualists were content to say that the written Word, with all its paradoxes and all its apparent contradictions, could not be grasped without the Holy Spirit, virtually identified with the Inner Word. Fearing that men would revere the letter of the Bible in such a way that they would forget the living God from whom it came, Sebastian Franck, Cíerneme Ziegler, Gaspar Schwenckfeld, the “epicurean prelate” Wolfgang Schultheiss (of Strasbourg) in a minor measure, certain contemplative or spiritualist Anabaptists such as John Denck and the Hutterite Ulrich Stadler tended to regard Scripture as a witness of the faith or as nourishment of an already formed faith»<sup>20</sup>

From there they have considered their own subjective conclusions as having the same authority as the Word of God. In the case of the rationalists it is clear that reason was the final authority in matters in which the Scriptures seemed to be unreasonable.

Williams summarizes the radical reform view of the Bible with these words: «We can make a similar characterization of the three extremes that were at the heart of the Radical Reformation. The temptation of spiritualists, for example, was to identify the biblical Word and the inner spirit to the extremes of experiential subjectivism and violence inspired by the Maccabees. The temptation of the evangelical rationalists was to impose on the biblical Word the canons of reason and conscience (scruple), transforming religious worship into study and the church into a school of ethics. Finally, the great adventure of the Anabaptists was to identify the saving Word of Scripture, valid for them as evangelical Christians, with the words of the New Testament converted into a new law.»<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup>Williams, p. 907

<sup>20</sup>Williams, p. 908

<sup>21</sup>Williams, p. 912

*The Augsburg Confession*

«Our churches condemn the Anabaptists and others who think that through their own preparations and works the Holy Spirit comes to them without the external Word.»<sup>22</sup> (Art. 5)

2) They deny the power of the gospel in the sacraments as means of grace.

From this view of the Radical Reformation we note three important errors in its doctrinal perspective:

a. An Anthropocentric Soteriology: Salvation has to do mostly with what man does and little with what God did. In this regard Professor Lange points out:

«The Anabaptists of Luther’s time taught that *the Holy Spirit spoke directly to people, denied that he used means of grace to convert*. Ulrich Zwingli (1484-1531), the Swiss reformer, also taught this error. *The assurance of salvation, then, had to be derived from subjective experiences of the person, rather than the objective promises that God gives in His Word.*» (Emphasis added)<sup>23</sup>

b. Another source of revelation that has equal authority as Scripture. This idea joined to another that holds that holy life is part of salvation, elevates the concept that they have of man as a being that has the power to be perfect, arriving at the extreme of being like God.

«By insisting on the [anabaptism or] baptism of believers, or on the possession of the gifts of the Spirit, or on the experience of regeneration, and by being very often indifferent to the general political and social order, the various spokesmen of the Radical Reformation not only tactically opposed the Magisterial Reformation, but also clearly distinguished themselves from sixteenth-century Protestants as to what constituted experience and the concept of salvation. They preferred instead to insist on other concepts: regeneration, the new being in Christ, the energy of the

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<sup>22</sup>Concordia: The Lutheran Confessions. 2005 (Edited by Paul Timothy McCain) (33). St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House.

<sup>23</sup>Lyle W. Lange. De Tal Manera Amó Dios Al Mundo. p. 234

Spirit, the revival of the moral conscience or, in a veiled language, deification.»<sup>24</sup>

c. The diminution of the attributes and nature of Christ and his work.

«The Anabaptists of Luther's time held that Jesus was less than God; Men like Hans Denck (d. 1527) and Ludwig Hetzer (m. 1529) followed in the footsteps of Paul of Samosata. Socinianism denies the deity of Christ.»<sup>25</sup>

3) Consistent with their anthropocentrism, they have their hopes placed on this earth. They are millennialists.

«Millennialism appeared at the time of Luther in the teachings of Carlstadt, Zwingli, and the Anabaptists of the time, including Thomas Muenzer and the Zwickau prophets: Nicholas Storch, Thomas Drechsel, and Marcus Stuebner. Article XVII of the Augsburg Confession condemns millennialism.

«The Mennonites, who come from the Anabaptists, adopted millennialism, as did the English Congregationalists. Philip Spener (1635-1705), the father of Pietism, a movement that emerged in German Lutheranism, was also amillennialist. Johann Loehe of Neuendettelsau, Germany, who contributed to the founding of the Iowa synod, was amillennialist. Since the Iowa Synod was one of the participants in the formation of the American Lutheran Church in 1930, millennialism has always been tolerated in the ALC. Dr. Michael Reu (1869–1943), the leading theologian of the Iowa Synod and author of Lutheran Dogmatics, was amillennialist. The Lutheran Church in America and its early bodies have tolerated millennialism. So it is not surprising to find that today's ELCA also sees millennialism as a pending issue.»<sup>26</sup>

4) Although not all adherents of the radical reform were Anabaptists, all were opposed to infant baptism.

5) They taught that man had free will in spiritual matters.

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<sup>24</sup>Williams, p. 7

<sup>25</sup>Lange, p. 244

<sup>26</sup>Lange, p. 244



The Radical Reformation considers that man can, by his own power, work for his salvation. Consequently, they separated the Spirit from Scripture by denying the power of the gospel in the means of grace. Müntzer wrote: «I preach a Christian faith which does not agree with Luther's, but which is in conformity with the hearts of the elect throughout the world. Every man, although born Turkish, can have the beginning (Ankunft) of this same faith. That is the movement (Bewegung) of the Holy Spirit, as it is written of Cornelius [in Acts 10]». It is obvious that these statements go against Scripture and agree with Pelagianism. Already in those days this situation was denounced by William Turner in his work: *A preseruatiiue or triacle agaynst the poyson of pelagius lately renewed and styrred up agayn by the firious secte of the anabaptistes* (Londres, 1551) with quite strong terms:

«This monstre [the Pelagianism] is in many poyntes lyke vnto the watersnake with seuen heades. For as out of one bodye rose seuen heades: So out of Pelagius rose vp these seuen sectes: Anabaptistes, Adamites, Loykenistes, Libertines, Swengfeldianes, Daudianes, and the spoylers.»<sup>27</sup>

- 6) They prefer to be called simply «brothers» avoiding as far as possible the term «church». In that sense, for the Radical Reformation, it is possible to have fellowship with those who have different doctrines.
- 7) Since, according to the Radical Reformation, man has the power to do good works, has a free will before he is a believer so that he actively collaborates in his conversion (sometimes taking the decision to follow Christ («decisionalism»)) and believe that man himself receives merit for his works of sanctification, it is not strange that part of the Radical Reformation has promoted the doctrine of the deification of man.

These false teachings are contrary to the principle of faith alone because they have as their center the work of man in justification by faith. In this way radical reform is more humanism than Chris-

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<sup>27</sup>The quotation from Turner's book in the text comes from Champlin Burrage (1912) *The Early English Dissenters In The Light Of Recent Research (1550—1641)* Cambridge. vol. 1, p. 59. A facsimile can be consulted at: <https://archive.org/details/earlyenglishdiss01burruoft>

tianity. The best hopes of the radicals are oriented to an earthly kingdom of God that corresponds well with millennialism and postmillennialism.

*Radical Reform Today*

The radical reform movement at that time had two urgent goals:

1. Restore Christianity to its original form (the one proposed by them)
2. Prepare the world for the imminent coming of the Kingdom of Christ.

The urgency for both shows that more than a reformation this movement was a social revolution, or as someone described it, was «a counter revolution aborted in the heart of the Reformation»<sup>28</sup> The historian Williams is in agreement with this when he states: «Of course, it can be stated of all the Radical Reformation that it was an aborted movement.»<sup>29</sup>

However, that does not mean that it was extinguished because, like leaven in a batch of dough, its doctrine and purpose survived through the centuries to impregnate much of what is contemporary Protestantism. Although today we can point to the Mennonites and the Moravian Unitarians as direct descendants of the Radical Reformation, there are also ideological heirs. Among these we find in the first place the German pietism that emerged from the ministry of Philip James Spener (1635-1705), who gave the movement its name with his book «Pia desideria» («Pious desires») and with the meetings of his «Colleges of Piety». They emphasized the work of the believer over and above the grace of God.

In England, at the beginning of the 17th century, Baptists arose who not only practiced re baptism but also taught that the only valid way to baptize is by «immersion.» This group is one of the fastest growing in the United States of America. Some of its notable members were billionaire John Davison Rockefeller and preacher William Franklin «Billy» Graham.

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<sup>28</sup>Louwell H. Zuck (1957) *Anabaptism: An Abortive Counter-Revolt within the Reformation*. *Church History*, vol. 26. No 3. pp. 221-226. (See online: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3161743>)

<sup>29</sup>Williams, p. 957

A group of similar growth is the one originated by George Fox. «Their groups were convinced that they were directly enlightened by the Spirit and that clergy, sacraments, temples, and places of worship were to be left behind. They called themselves friends, but they soon became known to others as “Quakers,” by the inarticulate guttural sounds they uttered, and by the bodily tremors that agitated them when they believed that the Spirit made himself present in their meetings.»<sup>30</sup>

Another group that was not so relevant in its beginnings is the one that arose from the preaching of John Wesley (1703-1791), the son of an Anglican minister and university graduate. Methodism, as this group became known, incorporated both Scripture and reason, religious experience and traditions having equal authority over faith.

Later all of these movements resulted in the formation of Pentecostalism and Neo Pentecostalism, which at present are the living expression of the same errors of radical reform. We affirm this based on the facts. Here are some examples that show that radical reform remains in evangelicalism and Pentecostalism.

«One of the main purposes of the Bible is to correct man’s elevated opinion of himself, but is currently being interpreted by Christian leaders as seeking the exact opposite. How can it be that creatures whose capital sin is that they think too well about themselves have been convinced that their problem is actually poor self-esteem?» (Hunt, Dave. *Más allá de la Seducción*. pág. 18)

All of these movements that descended from radical reform have gradually introduced another authority as being on the same level as the Scripture which is honored as the Word of God. This new authority is the apostolic authority that at present has already been officially organized to the point that it recommends forgetting names such as Neo-Pentecostalism or post-denominationalism because the name chosen by them is the New Apostolic Reformation. C. Peter Wagner has formed what he now calls the «International Coalition of Apostles» over which he personally

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<sup>30</sup>González, J. L. (2003). *Historia del cristianismo: Tomo 2* (2:336). Miami, Fla.: Editorial Unilit.

presides. He has also formed the «New Apostolic Round Table» where he functions as the «apostle convener» and Chuck Pierce as «apostle counselor». Wagner sees the Coalition as the vehicle to summon and assemble apostles from all over the world in a vast network that initially must consist of 500 or 1000 apostles. Membership will be strictly by invitation. The offices, in the suburbs of Dallas, Texas, are run by John Kelly, «executive apostle.» There will be «apostolic summits» in different parts of the United States and around the world.

Wagner explains the reason for the name of the movement in this way: «I use the term ‘Reform’, because [ . . . ] these new wineskins seem to be at least as radical as those of the Protestant Reformation almost five hundred years ago. ‘Apostolic’ denotes a strong approach to reach out, coupled with a recognition of the apostolic ministries of the present time. ‘New’ adds a contemporary twist to the name.»<sup>31</sup>

Wagner acknowledges that this new reform is linked to radical reform when he says: «My point of departure is that the necessary theological foundations were laid in the Protestant Reformation: the authority of the Scriptures, justification by faith alone and the universal priesthood of all believers. The Wesleyan movement introduced the demand for personal and corporate sanctity. The Pentecostal movement outlined the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit in a variety of ministries of power. The office of intercessor was restored in the seventies, and the office of the prophet was restored in the eighties. The final piece arrived in the nineties with the recognition of the gift and the office of the apostle. The New Apostolic Reformation is the present form in which God is rescuing the theocratic government of the Church»<sup>32</sup>

An example of what the present titles of apostles and prophets imply in neo Pentecostalism can be seen in the statements of its most famous preachers:

«Kenneth Hagin argues that: “Man was created on an equal basis with God, and can stand before the presence of God

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<sup>31</sup>Peter Wagner “Una nueva reforma apostólica”, en: H. Caballeros & M. Winger. El poder transformador del avivamiento. Buenos Aires: Peniel, 2005, p. 179.

<sup>32</sup>Peter Wagner, citation taken from: Daniel Oliva “La nueva reforma apostólica y la apostolicidad de la iglesia”, in: Signos de Vida No 33, Quito, 2004, pp. 28-29.

without any awareness of inferiority . . . God has made us as close to Him as He could [ . . . ] He made us the same kind of being as He is . . . Man lives in the domain of God. He lives on equal terms with God [ . . . ] (He who believes is called Christ [ . . . ]) That is what we are . . . we are Christ).<sup>33</sup>

«Morris Cerullo Vocifer: Did you know that from the beginning of time God’s fundamental purpose was to reproduce Himself? Who are you? Let’s see, who are you? Let’s say it: Sons of God! Repeat! What works within us, my brother, is the manifestation of the expression that all that God is and all that God has is ours. And when we stop here, my brother, you’re not looking at Morris Cerullo; You are looking at God. You are looking at Jesus»<sup>34</sup>

As Paul Crouch, president of TBN, said: «I am a little god! Critics, get out!»<sup>35</sup>

### **Conclusion**

Martin Luther, when in 1521 was summoned to give his point of view regarding the initiatory prophets of the Radical Reformation, warned against the carnal origin of the movement and finally «Luther would characterize in the future all of its evangelical components, although they were so diverse from each other, like Ulrich Zwingli, John Agricola, and Gaspar Schwenckfeld, with a single formula: men animated by the same demonic spirit that had possessed Carlstadt, the Zwickau prophets and Müntzer».<sup>36</sup>

Heinrich Bullinger, the man who took the most care to study the Radical Reformation, concluded that «the origin of the Radical Reformation was, after all, Satan»<sup>37</sup>

Our Lord and Savior Jesus said: «For false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and miracles to deceive even the elect—if that were possible.» Mt. 14:24

The Radical Reformation was a tool of Satan to inject his venomous false doctrine among thousands of believers who fled the fountain

<sup>33</sup>Hanegraaff, Hank. (1993) *Cristianismo en Crisis*. Editorial Unilit. Miami. P.113

<sup>34</sup>ibidem

<sup>35</sup>Hanegraaff, p.117

<sup>36</sup>Williams, P. 108

<sup>37</sup>Williams, P. 108

of Catholic apostasy but then fell into the flames of fire of the radical errorists. The Radical Reformation extended from 1521 to 1527, but its leaven impregnated Protestantism 500 years ago.

Considering that Jesus Christ was already our double substitute and to protect the pure gospel we will want to fulfill the following biblical demands:

«Dear friends, although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share, I felt compelled to write and urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to God's holy people. [ . . . ] save others by snatching them from the fire; to others show mercy, mixed with fear—hating even the clothing stained by corrupted flesh» (Jude 3, 23)



Dr. SungGyu Choi delivering  
his essay on the  
Reformed Reformation



Rev. Julio Ascarrunz delivering  
his essay on the  
Radical Reformation

## The Catholic Reformation Then and Now

Rev. Timothy R. Schmeling, Ph.D.

It is the eve of the five hundredth anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation. Naturally, many are wondering, “Is Lutheranism still relevant today?” If one were to examine the historiography of Martin Luther (1483–1546), one would see that Roman Catholic church historians have come to paint a much more positive picture of the reformer and the need for his theology than they did in the past.<sup>1</sup> In 1976, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger (1927–), the future Pope Benedict XVI, went so far as to make the following striking assertion (which it should be noted never came to fruition):

The researches of the past few years converge in understanding that the CA [*Confessio Augustana*] as the basic Lutheran confessional document was drawn up as it was not only for diplomatic reason, that it might be possible to interpret it under the laws of the empire as a catholic confession; it was also drafted with inner conviction as a searching for evangelical catholicity—as a painstaking effort to filter the bubbling cauldron of the early Reformation movement in such a way that it might give it the shape of a catholic reform. Accordingly, efforts are under way to achieve a Catholic recognition of the CA or, more correctly a recognition of the CA as catholic, and thereby establish the catholicity of the churches of the CA, which makes possible a corporate union while the differences remain.<sup>2</sup>

Nearly two decades later, Rome and the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) forged a seemingly monumental agreement on what Lutherans are accustomed to call the “article on which the church

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<sup>1</sup>Theo. M. M. A. C. Bell, “Roman Catholic Luther Research in the Twentieth Century: From Rejection to Rehabilitation,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Martin Luther’s Theology*, ed. Robert Kolb, Irene Dingel, and L’ubomír Batka (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 584–97.

<sup>2</sup>Joseph Ratzinger, *Theologische Prinzipienlehre* (Munich: Wewel, 1982), 212, quoted in Avery Dulles, “The Catholicity of the Augsburg Confession,” *The Journal of Religion* 63, no. 4 (October 1983): 337–54.

stands or falls” known as *The Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification* (JDDJ).<sup>3</sup> Just this past year, Pope Francis (1936–) celebrated the Reformation at an ecumenical prayer service in the Lutheran Lund Cathedral, urging Roman Catholics and Lutherans alike to work towards reconciliation. Is there real hope that the unfortunate, but necessary breach (John 17:20–21; CA) in the Medieval Latin Church can finally be mended, or is the Lutheran Reformation still necessary? Has contemporary Roman Catholicism come to embrace at least the core of Luther’s reform? This essay will argue that the Lutheran Reformation is still necessary by first providing an overview of Early Modern Catholicism.<sup>4</sup> Second, it will chart the evolution of Roman Catholicism into the twenty-first century.

Renewal and reform movements in the Latin Church did not begin with Martin Luther. Such movements are as old as Christendom itself, as the canons of the councils and every new monastic movement well attest. Still the nature, scope, and urgency of such efforts entered new and uncharted territory in the Late Middle Ages when the papacy was experiencing one of its lowest ebbs.<sup>5</sup> The Latin Church had grown rife with abuses that the Avignon Papacy (1309–77) and Western Schism (1378–1415) brought to a head. The Council of Constance (1414–18) set out to bring “unity and reform to God’s church in head and members.”<sup>6</sup> This reform failed to be carried out largely because the popes sought to reclaim their power in the wake of the council’s attempt to subordinate them

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<sup>3</sup>Heinrich Denzinger, *Compendium of Creeds, Definition, and Declarations on Matters of Faith and Morals*, ed. Peter Hünermann, Robert Fastiggi, and Anne Englund Nash, 43rd ed. (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2012), (no. 5073–74), 1129–30.

<sup>4</sup>For a historiographical survey of Early Modern Catholicism, please see the appendix at the end of the essay.

<sup>5</sup>For an overview of Early Modern Catholicism, see *Religion Past and Present: Encyclopedia of Religion and Theology*, 4th ed., s.v. “Counter-Reformation”; *Theologische Realenzyklopädia*, s.v. “Katholische Reform und Gegenreformation”; *Encyclopedia of the Renaissance*, s.v. “Catholic Reformation and Counter Reformation”; *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Reformation*, s.v. “Catholic Reformation.”

<sup>6</sup>*Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, ed. N. P. Tanner, G. Alberigo, J. A. Dossetti, P.– P. Joannou, C. Leonardi, P. Prodi, and H. Jedin (London and Washington: Sheed & Ward and Georgetown University Press, 1990), 1:409.



to councils.<sup>7</sup> A medieval pun captures the popular frustration with the Renaissance popes' neglect of the faith for power, influence, and opulence. The acrostic play on 1 Timothy 6:10 suggests that anyone who goes to Rome (*Roma*) would inevitably sell his soul: **R**adix **O**mnium **M**alorum **A**varitia (i.e., greed is the root of all evil).<sup>8</sup> There are few clearer examples of the devolution of the papacy into nepotism, simony, and libertinism than the Borgia papacy of the promiscuous Alexander VI (1431–1503). Still it was latter's sworn enemy, the "Warrior Pope" Julius II (1443–1513), who undercut Emperor Maximilian I's (1459–1519) call for a reforming council by summoning Lateran V (1512–17) under his direct control. In contrast to the rise of national churches, Lateran V not only "abrogated the Programmatic Sanction of Bourges (1438)," it also "affirmed that the pope has authority over all councils and only he can convoke, transfer, and close a council. Thus, Lateran V effectively put an end to conciliarism."<sup>9</sup>

If the reform of the head (pope and papal curia) of the church looked bleak on the eve of the Lutheran Reformation, the reform of its members was not nearly as dismal. A new "highly individualistic and activist" spirituality emerged, which maintained that only the inner renewal of the person via fervent prayer, rigorous self-discipline, and courageous good works could bring about the reform of the church.<sup>10</sup> Efforts to revitalize preaching and catechesis that were as old as the mendicant movements found new interest in the Late Middle Ages, especially in the form of endowed preaching positions.<sup>11</sup> The Modern Devotion (*Devotio*

<sup>7</sup> ". . . [E]veryone of whatever state or dignity, even papal, is bound to obey it [council] in those matters which pertains to the faith, the eradication of the said schism and the general reform of the said church of God in head and members." See *Decrees*, 1:409.

<sup>8</sup>Nine Robijntje Miedema, *Rompilgerführer in Spätmittelalter und Früher Neuzeit: Die "Indulgentiae ecclesiarum Urbis Romae"* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 2003), 1.

<sup>9</sup>Nelson H. Minnich, "The Last Two Councils of the Catholic Reformation: The Influence of Lateran V on Trent," in *Early Modern Catholicism: Essays in Honor of John W. O'Malley, S. J.*, ed. Kathleen M. Comerford and Hilmar M. Pabel (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), 3–4, 15. See also *Decrees*, 1:642.

<sup>10</sup>John C. Olin, ed. *Catholic Reform: From Cardinal Ximenes to the Council of Trent 1495–1563* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1990), 11–12.

<sup>11</sup>E. J. Dempsey Douglass, *Justification in Late Medieval Preaching: A Study of John Geiler of Kaisersberg*, 2nd ed. (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1989).

*Moderna*), lay confraternities (e.g. Oratory of Divine Love), congregations of clerics regular (e.g. Theatines), and religious observantist movements (e.g. Capuchins) rose up, all of which placed renewed stress on the cultivation of the interior life.<sup>12</sup> Far from being a turn to godlessness, Renaissance humanism, which called Christians to focus on the active life (instead of the contemplative life) and cultivate virtuous civic engagement, facilitated both Roman Catholic and Protestant reform movements.<sup>13</sup> In contrast to other lands, Post-Reconquista Spain never really flirted with Protestantism in part because the Franciscan Cardinal and Chancellor of Castile Francisco Ximénez de Cisneros (1436–1517) helped bring about a renewal of the Spanish clergy, a humanist-informed approach to education (including Hebrew and Greek studies) at the University of Alcalá, and the *Complutensian Bible*. The latter included the Hebrew, Greek, and Latin texts of the Bible before Erasmus of Rotterdam (1466/69–1536) published his Greek New Testament in 1522.<sup>14</sup> Studies have even suggested that England was not nearly as ripe for reformation as previous scholars have claimed and that many in England were generally content with their church.<sup>15</sup>

The fundamental problem was not so much that pastoral care and the cultivation of piety was not happening in the Late Middle Ages; the problem was that the theology behind its pastoral care and piety actually fostered spiritual anxiety.<sup>16</sup> This is evident in Martin Luther's quest for a merciful God. If the synergistic

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<sup>12</sup>R. R. Post, *The Modern Devotion: Confrontation with Reformation and Humanism* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1968); John Patrick Donnelly and Michael W. Mahler, eds., *Confraternities & Catholic Reform in Italy, France, & Spain* (Kirksville, MO: Thomas Jefferson University Press, 1999); Richard L. DeMolen, ed., *Religious Orders of the Catholic Reformation* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1994).

<sup>13</sup>Charles Edward Trinkaus, *In Our Image and Likeness: Humanity and Divinity in Italian Humanist Thought* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970).

<sup>14</sup>Erika Rummel, *Ximénez de Cisneros: On the Threshold of Spain's Golden Age* (Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 1999).

<sup>15</sup>Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England, 1400–1580* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992).

<sup>16</sup>Steven E. Ozment, *The Reform in the Cities: The Appeal of Protestantism to Sixteenth-Century Germany and Switzerland* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975), 22–32; Steven E. Ozment, *The Age of Reform. 1250–1550* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980), 218–19.

Thomist theology of grace and works created doubts about God's favor in scrupulous Christians, then the Semi-Pelagian Ockhamist theology (that Luther was schooled in) of "To those who do what is in them, God will not deny grace" (*Facientibus quod in se est, Deus non denegat gratiam*) only exacerbated that doubt. The latter taught that man actually had to start out his conversion by reaching out to God with a half-merit (*meritum congrui*) in hope that God would bless it with grace. Only then could salvation be acquired via a faith formed by love (i.e., by full-merits [*meritum condigni*] or good works). This is why Martin Luther felt so liberated when he rediscovered passive (alien) righteousness in Romans 1:17 (i.e., that man is justified by faith alone on account of the imputed righteousness of Christ [passive or alien righteousness] and not on the basis of his own active [proper] righteousness).<sup>17</sup> At the Leipzig Debate (1519), Luther started to recognize that neither pope nor council could overturn Sacred Scripture's doctrine of justification by faith alone. Once he realized neither the pope nor the bishops had the desire to bring a full doctrinal reform, he wrote his 1520 threefold plan for reforming the church (*To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation, The Babylonian Captivity of the Church, and Freedom of a Christian*), which included a call for a free Christian council normed by Scripture alone.<sup>18</sup> In effect, Luther's reformation not only challenged the

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<sup>17</sup>Martin Luther, *Luther's Works*, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan, Helmut Lehmann, and Christopher Brown (St. Louis and Philadelphia: Concordia Publishing House and Fortress Publishing House, 1955–), 34:323–38.

<sup>18</sup>*To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation* called for a free Christian council governed by Scripture alone (as opposed to an unscriptural Roman papacy or an infallible council) to reform the church. It further demonstrated the spiritual vocation of the princes and their duty (as the most capable members of the priesthood of all believers) to reform the church (in lieu of true bishops). *The Babylonian Captivity of the Church* charged the Roman papacy with not only corrupting the sacraments, particularly the Eucharist, but even holding them hostage. Fleshing out the two kinds of righteousness as a fundamental Biblical hermeneutic and the center of his theology, Luther shows in the *Freedom of a Christian* how the Christian is both a free lord no longer enslaved to sin through the passive righteousness of Christ and as a result also a dutiful servant. The Christian's active righteousness, moreover, was never intended to earn God's favor (either before or after the fall), but was always intended to serve God by serving one's fellowmen in accord with one's various vocations as a part of God's providential care. For the three programmatic writings, see Luther, *LW*, 44:123–217; 36:3–126; 31:327–77 respectively.

abuses that had arisen in the church, he opposed the theological heart of the Roman Catholic reformation with none other than the sole-sufficient Word of Christ: Just as a bad tree cannot become good by bearing good fruit, so too human active righteousness can never cause passive righteousness.<sup>19</sup>

Initially the popes were neither able to comprehend the significance of the Luther Affair, nor were they equipped to respond.<sup>20</sup> Since the memory of conciliarism still loomed large and evangelical theology had struck such a cord with the people of every segment of society, the attempt of the worldly-minded Medici, Pope Leo X (1475–1521), to simply silence Luther with a bull of excommunication, *Exsurge Domine* (June 15, 1520), was not sufficient to end the tumult.<sup>21</sup> In fact, the Diet of Nuremberg (1522/23) even chimed in, calling for a free, Christian Council on German soil. When well-intentioned Pope Adrian VI (1459–1523) tried to reform the curia, the task of untangling this bureaucratic nightmare proved too great for the Dutch outsider and tutor of Emperor Charles V (1500–58). The indecisive approach to Protestantism by the second Medici pope, Clement VII (1478–1534), fared no better. He neither succeeded in pacifying the Lutherans with clerical marriage and communion in both kinds, nor could he prevent King Henry VIII of England's (1491–1547) own reformation.

The pontificate of the Farnese pope, Paul III (1468–1549), marks a transition in the papacy. He would not only become an active participant in Roman Catholic reform, but he would also intro-

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<sup>19</sup>"The following statements are therefore true: 'Good works do not make a good man, but a good man does good works; evil works do not make a wicked man, but a wicked man does evil works.' Consequently it is always necessary that the substance or person himself be good before there can be any good works, and that good works follow and proceed from the good person, as Christ also says, 'A good tree cannot bear evil fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit . . . .' Furthermore, no good work helps justify or save an unbeliever. On the other hand, no evil work makes him wicked or damns him; but the unbelief which makes the person and the tree evil does the evil and damnable works. Hence when a man is good or evil, this is effected not by the works, but by faith or unbelief . . . ." See Luther, *LW*, 31:361–62.

<sup>20</sup>Eamon Duffy, *Saints and Sinners: A History of the Popes*, 4th ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014), 196–208.

<sup>21</sup>Denzinger, *Compendium*, (no. 1451–92), 363–67.

duce Counter-Reformation.<sup>22</sup> First, Paul III was compelled to call a council of the church that would embody both of the aforementioned focuses of reform. This was due to the rise of new Protestant movements and the emperor's need after the Diet of the Augsburg (1530) to resolve the ecclesial schism for the sake of effective governance. To be sure, he would not call for a council until June 2, 1536. Yet he finally did open the council in 1545. This was because the Habsburg-Valois Wars (1494–1559) and the failure of the Regensburg Colloquy (1541) to resolve the breach between Catholics and Protestants delayed it. Second, Paul III had a group of nine reform-minded cardinals prepare a preliminary plan for the council called the *Consilium de emendanda ecclesia* (1537).<sup>23</sup> It clearly placed blame on the papal curia for many of the corruptions in the church and sought to restore a pastoral ideal among the bishops. Still it offered no concrete steps for actualizing reform. Finally, Paul III initiated some of the repressive measures of the Counter-Reformation, which would only reach their zenith in the fanatical Pope Paul IV (1476–1559). Even before the latter became pope, the then Cardinal Gianpietro Caraffa had convinced Pope Paul III to reorganize the inquisition (i.e., disciplinary mechanism of the Roman Church that used both mental and physical torture to ensure conformity in faith and morals) in Italy.

No other pope illustrates the Counter-Reformation at its worst like Pope Paul IV.<sup>24</sup> Before the inquisition could be organized in Italy, Caraffa already had chambers for interrogations in his own home. The subsequent words capture his zeal for inquisition: "If our own father were a heretic, we would carry the faggots to burn him!" He likewise remarked, "No man is to lower himself by showing toleration toward any sort of heretic, least of all a

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<sup>22</sup>Elisabeth G. Gleason, "Catholic Reformation, Counterreformation and Papal Reform in the Sixteenth Century," in *Handbook of the European History, 1400–1600 Late Middle Ages, Renaissance, and Reformation*, ed. Thomas A. Brady, Jr., Heiko A. Oberman, and James D. Tracy (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1995), 2:317–45.

<sup>23</sup>John C. Olin, ed. *The Catholic Reformation: Savonarola to Ignatius Loyola* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1996), 182–97.

<sup>24</sup>Robert Bireley, *The Refashioning of Catholicism, 1450–1700: A Reassessment of the Counter Reformation* (Washington, D. C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1999), 46–47, 51–52; Gleason, "Catholic Reformation," 2:317–45.

Calvinist.”<sup>25</sup> As Pope Paul IV, he punish cardinals that he believed were soft on Protestant views of salvation (Giovanni Morone [1509–80] and Reginald Pole [1500–58]). Caraffa forced Jews to wear badges and confined them to the ghettos. Last but not least, he introduced the *Index of Forbidden Books* (1559). It naturally condemned Protestant books. However, it also condemned the writings of certain Renaissance humanists, like Erasmus, as well as the reading of their new, more historically and philologically sound editions of the church fathers. Scholarship has somewhat mollified the nature and scope of the inquisition and the index in light of the secular standards of the time. But most recognize the theological police-state mentality they fostered, especially under Pope Paul IV.

One of the greatest instruments of Roman Catholic reform and Counter-Reformation was the Society of Jesus (Jesuits) approved by Pope Paul III in 1540.<sup>26</sup> While convalescing from a cannonball injury to the leg, a Basque soldier named Ignatius Loyola (1491–1556) decided to rededicate his life as a soldier of Christ. After an all-night vigil before the Black Madonna of Montserrat, he left his sword and former life behind. He then spent a transformative year in Manresa, where he began writing the central text of Jesuit spiritual identity. The *Spiritual Exercises* is a retreat manual for the clergy and laity designed to facilitate the abandoning of oneself to God in service to others as well as the ever-increasing mastery of the passions through a process of discernment.<sup>27</sup> While studying at the University of Paris, he gathered a small circle around him that vowed to convert the Muslims of the Holy Land. If that failed, they decided to offer themselves to the papacy as a new kind of mendicant order that swore an addi-

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<sup>25</sup>Lewis Spitz, *The Renaissance and Reformation Movements*, rev. ed. (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1987), 2:477.

<sup>26</sup>John W. O'Malley, *The First Jesuits* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993).

<sup>27</sup>“In the persons of their founders the antithetical character of original Protestant and Counter Reformation piety is strikingly revealed. Whereas Luther had despaired of calculated efforts at self-reform and salvation, concluding that neither sublimation nor repression, no matter how diligently practiced, could ever bring peace of mind, Ignatius carefully examined himself and discovered a self-control like that of the first man, who could sin or not sin at will. Here was a new type of religious self-confidence that ran counter not only to the Reformation, but to much traditional spirituality as well.” See Ozment, *The Age*, 412.

tional vow of unwavering service to the mission of the papacy.<sup>28</sup> Since they focused on itinerant ministry and were not required to pray the divine office communally, they were poised to be the great missionaries and educators of the age. The new order grew at a phenomenal rate and became instrumental in refuting Protestantism and fostering Tridentine reforms, although this was not their original intention. The Renaissance humanist and new scholastic curriculum of the Jesuit colleges (e.g. Roman College), spelled out in the *Ratio studiorum* (1599), helped recatholicize a significant number of lands lost to Protestantism and formed formidable Roman Catholic theologians like Robert Bellarmine (1542–1621) and Francisco Suárez (1548–1617). Moreover, it was the great Jesuit missionaries to the Americas and Asia, like Francis Xavier (1506–52), that helped make Roman Catholicism the global church that it is today.<sup>29</sup>

The long awaited council finally opened on December 13, 1545. Trent proved a conducive location because it was an Italian city within the Holy Roman Empire. The purpose of the Council of Trent (1545–63), the nineteenth ecumenical council according to Roman reckoning, was to refute Protestantism, to define Roman Catholic doctrine, and to make a reform of the institution and practices of the Roman church.<sup>30</sup> No pope ever came to the council, but his legates presided over it. At first only three papal legates, one cardinal, four archbishops, twenty-one bishops, and five generals of orders attended, most of whom were Italians. By the end of the council, a hundred and ninety-nine cardinals, archbishops, and bishops were present. In addition, three patriarchs, seven abbots, seven superiors general of religious orders, and thirty-nine deputies for absent bishops attended.

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<sup>28</sup> **“If we wish to proceed securely in all things, we must hold fast to the following principle:**

*What seems to me white, I will believe black if the hierarchical Church so defines.*” See Olin, *The Catholic*, 198–211, especially 210.

<sup>29</sup> John W. O’Malley, eds. et al., *The Jesuits: Cultures, Sciences, and the Arts, 1540–1773* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999–2006).

<sup>30</sup> For an overview of Trent, see *Religion Past and Present: Encyclopedia of Religion and Theology*, 4th ed., s.v. “Trent, Council of”; *Theologische Realenzyklopädie*, s.v. “Tridentium”; *Encyclopedia of the Renaissance*, “Trent, Council of”; *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Reformation*, s.v., “Trent, Council of”; *The New Catholic Encyclopedia*, 2nd ed., s.v., “Trent, Council of.”

The council proceedings were anything but boring, quiet, and servile; rather, they were multifaceted, spirited, and sometimes even harsh.<sup>31</sup>

The twenty-five sessions of the council unfolded in three phases. The first period (1545–48) took place under the pontificate of Paul III. It was comprised of ten sessions (sessions 1–10). When Charles V initiated the Schmalkaldic War (1546–47) to force the Lutherans to the table, the pope had the council moved to Bologna under the pretext of avoiding an outbreak of disease. Paul III feared the emperor might force his hand next. Between 1547 and 1548, the last two sessions (8–9) unfolded which only prorogued the council. Pope Julius III (1487–1555) resumed the council at Trent for its second period (1551–52) because of imperial pressure to legitimize it in the eyes of the Protestants. It was comprised of six sessions (sessions 11–16). Charles V facilitated the attendance of a small group of Protestants at this time, but none were permitted to vote. Johannes Brenz (1499/99–1570), the Lutheran Reformer of Swabia, even submitted a confession to the council called the *Confessio Wirtembergica* (1552). The council was interrupted by the Saxon Elector Moritz's (1521–53) military alliance against Emperor Charles V, which ended the interims (1548) and brought about the Peace of Passau (1552). Following the death of the very unpopular Pope Paul IV and the growth of French Calvinism, Pius IV (1499–1565) opened the third period (1562–63) of the council, which was comprised of nine sessions (sessions 17–25).<sup>32</sup>

Just as the *Augsburg Confession* (1530) would provide a fundamental definition of Lutheranism, so too the Council of Trent would do the same for Roman Catholicism. The following doctrinal and reforming decrees (typically followed by chapters and canons) best exemplify how Roman Catholicism differentiates

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<sup>31</sup>John W. O'Malley, *Trent: What Happened at the Council* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013); Paolo Prodi, and Wolfgang Reinhard, eds., *Il concilio di Trento e il moderno* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1996); Hubert Jedin, *Geschichte des Konzils von Trient* (Freiburg i. B.: Herder, 1951–75), the first two volumes of which are translated as *A History of the Council of Trent*, trans. Ernest Graf (St. Louis: Herder, 1957–61).

<sup>32</sup>*Decrees*, 2:657–799.



itself from Lutheranism and lays out its most significant reforms.<sup>33</sup> Session IV of the council “accepts and venerates with like feelings of piety and reverences” Scripture and tradition (which the majority understood as a material supplement to the Bible). It declared the antilegomena and the apocrypha books of the Bible “sacred and canonical.” The Vulgate was made the authoritative text for “public reading, debates, sermons, and explanations.” Scripture was to be interpreted via the “consensus of the fathers,” but in the end it is “holy mother church [teaching magisterium] . . . whose function it is to pass judgment on the true meaning and interpretation of the sacred scriptures.”<sup>34</sup> Session V does not embed original sin into a problematic Aristotelian framework. Yet it taught that original sin was fully removed in baptism, maintained that the remaining concupiscence is not sin, and left room for (but did not dogmatize) the immaculate conception of the Virgin Mary.<sup>35</sup> This session’s reform decrees required diocesan schools for improving priestly formation. Bishops and priests were obligated to preach on Sundays and feast days.<sup>36</sup>

Session VI on justification was one of the longest and most controversial because of the failure of the Augustinian General Girolamo Seripando (1493–1563) and others to pass a more Protestant-acceptable theory of double justification. While Trent seems to make a doctrinal reform by excluding the Ockhamist Semi-Pelagian view of conversion, it still insists on a synergistic understanding at a minimum.<sup>37</sup> “[A]ctual justification in adults take its origin from a predisposing grace . . . with no existing merits on their side. . . . [T]hus, those who have been turned away from God by sins are disposed by God’s grace inciting and helping them, to turn towards their own justification by giving free assent to and co-operating with this same grace.” The council goes on to clarify that justification is a “process,” whereby one not only

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<sup>33</sup>For a comprehensive Lutheran review of the council in light of Jesuit commentators, see Martin Chemnitz, *Examination of the Council of Trent* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1971–86).

<sup>34</sup>*Decrees*, 2:663–65.

<sup>35</sup>*Decrees*, 2:665–67.

<sup>36</sup>*Decrees*, 2:667–70.

<sup>37</sup>Martin Chemnitz shows that this exclusion is unfounded based on some contradictions in the logic of the canons, etc. See *Examination*, 1:547–64.

receives “the forgiveness of sins,” but also one “is grafted” into Christ as well as “infused” with “faith, hope, and love.” “[F]aith is the first state of human salvation, the foundation and root of all justification . . . .” Insisting that the commandments are not impossible for the justified and graced person to keep, the council maintains that good works are more than “the effects and signs of justification obtained.” In contrast, Trent insists that authentic good works, which can only be facilitated by grace, have meritorious value in completing justification and ultimate salvation. “[B]y the good deeds done by him through the merits of Jesus Christ (of whom he is a member), [the justified person] does . . . truly merit an increase in grace, eternal life, and (so long as he dies in grace) the obtaining of his own eternal life . . . .” Lest there be any doubt about the council’s final position on justification by faith alone, it adds:

If anyone says that the sinner is justified by faith alone, meaning thereby that no other co-operation is required for him to obtain the grace of justification, and that in no sense is it necessary for him to make preparation and be disposed by a movement of his own will: let him be anathema . . . . If anyone says that people are justified either solely by attribution [*imputatione*] of Christ’s justice, or by the forgiveness of sins alone, to the exclusion of the grace and the charity which is poured forth in their hearts by the holy Spirit and abides in them; or even that the grace by which we are justified is only the good-will of God: let him be anathema. If anyone says that the faith which justifies is nothing else but trust in divine mercy, which pardons sins because of Christ; or that it is this trust alone that justifies: let him be anathema.<sup>38</sup>

This session’s reform decrees penalized the clergy for unjust absences (non-residence) beyond six months from their dioceses, an abuse that the practical needs of the papal curia had long facilitated. In addition, bishops could no longer hold multiple bishoprics (pluralism).<sup>39</sup>

Session VII enumerated the seven sacraments. The council confirmed that the sacraments granted grace “by the work per-

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<sup>38</sup> *Decrees*, 2:671–81.

<sup>39</sup> *Decrees*, 2:681–83.

formed” (*ex opera operato*).<sup>40</sup> Session XIII stated that the Holy Eucharist is a “propitious sacrament.” Transubstantiation is the proper explication of Christ’s sacramental presence. The Eucharist should be adored even outside of the Divine Service.<sup>41</sup> Session XIV insisted that sacrament of penance requires contrition, confession (of all mortal sin especially), and satisfaction, albeit Trent seems to suggest attrition may suffice. Absolution was (or was like) a judicial act, limited to priests and in reserved cases to bishops, etc.<sup>42</sup> Despite attempts to allow the reception of the Eucharist in both kinds in certain dioceses or to Protestant converts, session XXI maintained, “laity and clergy, who are not consecrating, are under no divine command” to receive both species. The church has the authority to make communicating in one kind “its rule, which . . . is not to be freely changed without the church’s authority.”<sup>43</sup> In order to distance itself from “resacrifice,” session XXII affirmed that the mass makes present or “re[-]presented” (*repraesentaretur*) Christ’s once for all sacrifice to the Father that secured eternal redemption. It is “truly a propitiatory sacrifice” for the living and dead. “For it is one and same victim [Christ] here offering himself by the ministry of his priests, who then offered himself on the cross: it is only the matter of offering that is different.” This session further defended: the antiquity and orthodoxy of its “venerable eucharistic prayer” (*sacrum canonem*), private masses, and the celebration of the mass in Latin, albeit priests were also encouraged to provide vernacular explanations of the service during the mass.<sup>44</sup> This session’s reform decrees agreed to a number of articles on the proper conduct of the clergy.<sup>45</sup>

Session XXIII maintained that a hierarchically ordered ministry was Biblical founded. On the basis of 2 Timothy 1:6–7, it affirmed that bishops bestowed on priests an indelible character though

<sup>40</sup> *Decrees*, 2:684–89.

<sup>41</sup> *Decrees*, 2:693–98.

<sup>42</sup> *Decrees*, 2:703–13.

<sup>43</sup> *Decrees*, 2:726–28. On April 16, 1564, the pope acted on a Tridentine proposal and permitted communion in both kinds under certain conditions in specific German and Habsburg territories.

<sup>44</sup> *Decrees*, 2:732–37.

<sup>45</sup> *Decrees*, 2:737–41.

ordination which granted the faculties necessary to effect the sacraments. “The holy council further declares that . . . bishops in particular belong to this hierarchal order and (as the apostles says) have been made by the holy Spirit *rulers of the church of God*; and that they are higher than priests and are able to confer the sacrament of confirmation, to ordain the ministers of the church . . . .”<sup>46</sup> After repeated attempts throughout the council to declare episcopal residency a divine law (*ius divinum*), this session’s reform decree compromised: “All to whom the care of souls has been entrusted are subject to the divine command (*praecepto*) to know their sheep . . . .” Diocesan colleges, moreover, were now mandated for improving priestly formation.<sup>47</sup> Session XXIV prohibited another marriage of even the innocent party after an infidelity had occurred. It prohibited clerics from entering the state of holy matrimony and still deemed celibate life to be a greater calling.<sup>48</sup> This session’s reform decrees required that bishops convene synods every year and that bishops conduct regular visitations.<sup>49</sup> Sessions XXV affirmed the orthodoxy of purgatory, intercession of the saints, as well as the veneration saints and adoration of God through relics and icons.<sup>50</sup> This session’s reform decrees focused on reforms of the regular clergy and cathedral chapters. The remarks on indulgences and fasting regulations were glossed over due to time constraints.

Ironically, the rise of Protestantism inadvertently brought about a Papalization of the church (i.e., it strengthened the power of the papacy). Roman Catholics inevitably had to galvanize around it.<sup>51</sup> The council took significant steps to distance itself from Protestantism, to define Roman Catholicism, and to reform abuses that would shape the church for centuries to come. In fact, the Cardinal Archbishop of Milan Carlo Borromeo (1538–84) would be celebrated as the model of the pastoral reforming bishop

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<sup>46</sup> *Decrees*, 2:742–44.

<sup>47</sup> *Decrees*, 2:744–53.

<sup>48</sup> *Decrees*, 2:753–59.

<sup>49</sup> *Decrees*, 2:759–74.

<sup>50</sup> *Decrees*, 2:774–76.

<sup>51</sup> John W. O’Malley, *Catholic History for Today’s Church: How Our Past Illuminates Our Present* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015), 7–14.

that the council sought to foster.<sup>52</sup> Nevertheless, Trent did not affirm an episcopal share in guidance of the universal church, it entrusted the reform of the papacy to the curia, and it left the papal claims asserted by Lateran V unquestioned. The council even had the pope ratify its decrees and canons on January 26, 1564.<sup>53</sup> To be sure, Trent was only appropriated in varying degrees in different Roman Catholic lands.<sup>54</sup> That said, the subsequent papal promulgation of a revised *Index of Forbidden Books* (1564), the *Tridentine Creed* (1564), *Roman Catechism* (1566), *Roman Breviary* (1568), and *Roman Missal* 1570, and the Sixto-Clementine Vulgate (1592) helped forge a unified vision of a Papal Catholicism that was unknown to the Medieval Latin Church.<sup>55</sup> In point of fact, the *Roman Catechism* may only be the second or third catechism (after Jesuit Peter Canisius's [1521–97] 1555 *Summa Doctrinae Christianae* and 1556 *Catechismus Minor*, from which it borrows) to treat the papacy, a topic that is not even discussed by Trent.

. . . So has he [Christ] placed over his Church, which he governs by his invisible spirit, a man to be his vicar, and the minister of his power: a visible Church requires a visible head, and, therefore, does the Saviour appoint Peter head and pastor of all the faithful, when, in most ample terms, he commits to his care the feeding of all his sheep; desiring that he, who was to succeed him, should be invested with the very same power of ruling and governing the entire Church.<sup>56</sup>

This essay will now chart the evolution of Roman Catholic theology and practice into the present. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the Jesuits helped develop Tridentine Catholicism in new and sometimes controversial ways, but the fissure it created in Christendom would soon temper the remark-

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<sup>52</sup>R. Po-Chia Hsia, *The World of Catholic Renewal 1540–1770*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 111–26.

<sup>53</sup>Denzinger, *Compendium*, (no. 1847–50), 431–33.

<sup>54</sup>See Marc R. Foster, *Catholic Germany from the Reformation to the Enlightenment* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).

<sup>55</sup>Denzinger, *Compendium*, (no. 1851–80), 433–37. See also *Decrees*, 2:796–99.

<sup>56</sup>*The Catechism of the Council of Trent: Published by Command of Pope Pius the Fifth*, trans. J. Donovan (Baltimore: James Myres, 1833), 96–97. Later editions list this as pt. I, chap. X, q. 9.

able advance of Early Modern Catholicism. Roman Catholic theologians like Michael Baius (1513–89) and Cornelius Jansen (1585–1638) maintained that Trent and the Jesuits had veered too far away from the soteriology of St. Augustine to counter Protestantism.<sup>57</sup> Following the death of the latter, a Jansenist movement thrived, which called for a more Augustinian Catholicism until it was squashed in 1713.<sup>58</sup> The Society of Jesus's Semi-Pelagian heightening of free will's role in salvation (Molinism), most famously articulated by Luis de Molina (1535–1600), brought the new order into loggerheads with other Catholics, especially the Dominicans. This was only compounded by the society's approach to moral theology (attrition and probablism) and the syncretistic practices of Jesuit missionary to China, Matteo Ricci (1552–1610).<sup>59</sup> The society ultimately advanced its theology, but its interference in politics (as confessors to the great catholic houses) led to the temporary suppression of the order in 1773.<sup>60</sup>

Just as a divided Christendom was being perceived as a crisis of truth, Roman Catholicism found itself refuting its own version of Pietism (called Quietism).<sup>61</sup> Far more threatening was the Radical Enlightenment's attempt to resolve the crisis by grounding truth on pure reason rather than a seemingly hermeneutically fraught Bible and tradition. Long thought to be completely hostile to the Enlightenment, some Roman Catholics synthesized their faith with the new thinking in moderate or radical ways. Oratorian priest Richard Simon (1638–1712) pioneered historical criticism. The medicine professor Jean Astruc (1684–1766) laid the foundations for the documentary hypothesis. Vincentian priest Antoine-Adrian Lamourette (1742–94) made the case for tolerating non-Catholic faiths, limiting the rights of

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<sup>57</sup>William Doyle, *Jansenism: Catholic Resistance to Authority from the Reformation to the French Revolution* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999).

<sup>58</sup>Denzinger, *Compendium*, (no. 1901–80, 1999–2007, 2010–12, 2301–2332, 2390–2510), 437–47, 455–57, 489–92, 497–507.

<sup>59</sup>John W. O'Malley, *The Jesuits: A History from Ignatius to the Present* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2014).

<sup>60</sup>Denzinger, *Compendium*, (no. 1997, 2008, 2021–2195, 2290–92, 2564–65), 453–54, 456–57, 459–79, 488–89, 520.

<sup>61</sup>Denzinger, *Compendium*, (no. 2181–2269, 2351–74), 476–86, 493–96.

the clergy, and storming the Bastille.<sup>62</sup> Meanwhile, Gallicanism, Febronianism, and Josephinism all challenged the authority of the papacy in eighteenth century France and the Holy Roman Empire. Such movements met papal condemnation because they sought to limit papal power over national churches and instead asserted the power of the bishops and civil magistrates.<sup>63</sup> Finally, the French Revolution's (1789–99) policy of dechristianization became so radical that it secularized church property. It executed (or exiled) priests (and religious) for refusing to take an oath of loyalty to the 1790 *Civil Constitution of the Clergy*. The revolution banned monastic vows, introduced the Cult of Reason, converted churches into temples of reason, and blotted out Sunday or any other vestiges of Christianity from public life. For this reason, Napoleon's (1769–1821) Concordat of 1801 was a godsend. Even though it restored a much more limited church than that of the *Ancien Régime*, it provided a new model for papal and civil relations that would allow for a new flowering of the Church of Rome.

The juggernaut of progress ran though the nineteenth and early twentieth century colliding into everything in its path.<sup>64</sup> The technological advances of the industrial revolution created a profound shift in the way people lived out their daily lives—a shift that sometimes had deeply dehumanizing effects. Social upheaval sparked calls for liberal democratic reforms. These, in turn, drove the 1848 revolutions that set Europe ablaze. Immanuel Kant's (1724–1804) Copernican Revolution of the Mind completely reoriented the way philosophers and theologians would do their thinking in the modern world. Karl Marx's (1818–83) *Communist Manifesto* (1848) synthesized the radical spirit on the socio-economic, political, and religio-philosophical fringes of the day. While Marx's proletariat vision could not yet overturn the

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<sup>62</sup>Ulrich L. Lehner, *The Catholic Enlightenment: The Forgotten History of a Global Movement* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016); Jeffrey D. Burson and Ulrich L. Lehner, eds., *Enlightenment and Catholicism in Europe: A Translational History* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 2014); Ulrich L. Lehner and Michael Printy, eds., *A Companion to the Catholic Enlightenment in Europe* (Leiden: Brill, 2010).

<sup>63</sup>Denzinger, *Compendium*, (no. 2281–85, 2592–97, 2590–2706), 487–88, 525–56.

<sup>64</sup>For an overview of modern Catholicism, see *Religion Past and Present: Encyclopedia of Religion and Theology*, 4th ed., s.v. "Catholicism."

monarchies of Europe, constitutional protections (e.g. freedom of the press, universal male suffrage, trade associations, etc.) came about and the bourgeoisie flourished.<sup>65</sup> Some Roman Catholics like Hugues Félicité Robert de Lamennais's (1782–1854), the father of the Liberal Catholicism, pushed the papacy to harmonize the Catholic faith with the new politics of the times only to experience papal repudiation. Liberal Catholicism wanted to bring the democratic values of the French Revolution into concord with Roman Catholicism.<sup>66</sup> Other Roman Catholics like the Tübingen School sought to reconcile their faith with Kant and the German Idealists. Those that wrestled with the new foundation for theology in the structures of the human mind were once again met with condemnation.<sup>67</sup>

A revival of Ultramontanism from the Latin “beyond the mountains” defined the church of this age. This long-running movement condemned modernistic errors and asserted the authority of the papacy (beyond the Alps) as the anchor of Christian society.<sup>68</sup> The instability of the times fomented a rise in priests and females entering religious life. New orders arose that focused on mission in Africa and Asia. The laity found expression as well in new catholic associations, like Catholic Action, which resisted the rising tide of anti-clericalism. Between 1830 and 1933, a series of papal approved Marian apparitions occurred in Paris, France (1830), La Salette, France (1846), Lourdes, France (1858), Pontmain, France (1871), Knock, Ireland (1879), Fátima, Portugal (1917), Beauraing, Belgium (1932–33), and Banneux, Belgium (1933) that challenged the rising denial of the supernatural. Meanwhile the longest reigning pope in history, Pius IX (1792–1878), built a sort of theological bunker on top of this foundation to defend Catholicism from the errors of modernity. On December 8, 1854, he crowned the Marian apparitions with

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<sup>65</sup>Peter J. Casarella, “Modernity and Post-Modernity,” in *The Blackwell Companion to Catholicism*, ed. James L. Buckley, Frederick Christian Bauerschmidt, and Trent Pomplun (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2007), 81–95.

<sup>66</sup>Denzinger, *Compendium*, (no. 2730–32), 561–62.

<sup>67</sup>Denzinger, *Compendium*, (no. 2738–40, 2751–56, 2765–69, 2828–45), 562–63, 565–66, 567–68, 577–80.

<sup>68</sup>Lawrence S. Cunningham, *An Introduction to Catholicism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 195–218.



a papal solemnization of the dogma of the immaculate conception of Mary.<sup>69</sup> Ten years later to the day, he issued the *Syllabus of Errors* (1864), which condemned eighty errors on the topics of pantheism, naturalism, absolute rationalism, moderate rationalism, indifferentism, latitudinarianism, church and her rights, civil society, natural and Christian ethics, Christian marriage, civil power of the Roman pontiff, and liberalism.<sup>70</sup> He then opened the first council in about three hundred years, Vatican I (1869–1870).<sup>71</sup> There, the pope was declared infallible whenever he speaks *ex cathedra*. This was a direct refutation of the civil power's ever-increasing attempts to control their churches. However, it also caused the famous dissention of Munich theology professor Ignaz von Döllinger (1799–1890), resulting in the formation of the Old Catholic Church. Just when papal power claims appeared to have reached a new zenith, Pope Pius IX, reminiscent of Boniface VIII (1235–1303), had to adjourn the council prematurely. Victor Emmanuel II (1820–78) invaded the Papal States and annexed them into a new united Italy.<sup>72</sup> Pius IX and his successors subsequently refused to accept the annexation and insisted that they were prisoners in the Vatican.

Pope Leo XIII (1810–1903) continued the conservative tradition of his predecessor, but set it on a Neo-Thomistic footing that shaped Catholic thought (e.g. Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange [1877–1964], Jacques Maritain [1882–1973], and Étienne Gilson [1884–78]) right up to Vatican II.<sup>73</sup> In the encyclical *Aeterni patris* (1879), he made Thomism the normative system for the propagation of the catholic worldview.<sup>74</sup> He laid the foundation for Catholic social thought in *Rerum novarum* (1891), which centered in the principles of the dignity of the human person, the common good, and subsidiarity.<sup>75</sup> Leo XIII is also known as the first pope to teach Mary

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<sup>69</sup>Denzinger, *Compendium*, (no. 2800–2804), 573–75.

<sup>70</sup>Denzinger, *Compendium*, (no. 2901–2980), 590–98.

<sup>71</sup>For an overview of Vatican I, see *Theologische Realenzyklopädie*, s.v. “Vatikanum I und II”; *The New Catholic Encyclopedia*, 2nd ed., s.v., “Vatican Council I.”

<sup>72</sup>*Decrees*, 2:802–16.

<sup>73</sup>Gerald A. McCool, *From Unity to Pluralism: The Internal Evolution of Thomism* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1989).

<sup>74</sup>Denzinger, *Compendium*, (no. 3135–40), 624–26.

<sup>75</sup>Denzinger, *Compendium*, (no. 3265–71), 650–52.

as the “mediatrix of grace.”<sup>76</sup> Nevertheless, he foreshadowed the theological developments to come when he incardinated famous convert John Henry Newman (1801–90), the controversial theorist of the development of doctrine. The conservative vision of Catholicism would breathe its last breath in Pius X’s (1835–1920) antimodernist oath (1910), which would be repudiated in 1967.<sup>77</sup>

The World Wars signaled a new Catholic willingness to engage with modernity that would crescendo in the Second Vatican Council. Pius XI (1857–1939) came out of the Vatican and accepted the Lateran Treaty (1929). It recognized the sovereignty and autonomy of both the Vatican City and Italy. Pope Pius XII (1876–1958) is more often remembered for choosing the evil of fascism (over that of communism) than his protection of the Roman Jews. No less important are his encyclicals, like *Humani generis*, that are critical of the French “New Theology” (*Nouvelle Théologie*) of Henri de Lubac (1896–1991) and his “return to the sources” (*ressourcement*), but which also appropriate elements of this new theology.<sup>78</sup> His 1942 encyclical *Mystici corporis* put forth a more organic view of the church as the mystical body rather than the church as canonical institutional.<sup>79</sup> Pius XII opened the door wide to higher criticism in the encyclical *Divino afflante Spiritu* (1943).<sup>80</sup> His 1947 *Mediator Dei* embraced the Belgian and German Liturgical Movement.<sup>81</sup> He made the assumption of Mary dogma in 1950.<sup>82</sup>

It was an unassuming Pope John XXIII (1881–1963), who surprised everyone when he called the Second Vatican Council (1962–65).<sup>83</sup> The council would prove to be a momentous event that captured the attention of the world. Vatican II’s purpose

<sup>76</sup>Denzinger, *Compendium*, (no. 3274–75), 653–54.

<sup>77</sup>Denzinger, *Compendium*, (no. 3537–50), 710–12.

<sup>78</sup>Denzinger, *Compendium*, (no. 3875–99), 799–808.

<sup>79</sup>Denzinger, *Compendium*, (no. 3880–22), 770–78.

<sup>80</sup>Denzinger, *Compendium*, (no. 3825–31), 779–83.

<sup>81</sup>Denzinger, *Compendium*, (no. 3840–55), 785–91.

<sup>82</sup>Denzinger, *Compendium*, (no. 3900–3904), 808–9.

<sup>83</sup>For an overview of Vatican II, see *Religion Past and Present: Encyclopedia of Religion and Theology*, 4th ed., s.v. “Vatican II”; *Theologische Realenzyklopädie*, s.v. “Vatikanum I und II”; *The New Catholic Encyclopedia*, 2nd ed., s.v., “Vatican Council II.”

was threefold: “the better internal ordering of the church, unity among Christians, and the promotion of peace throughout the world.”<sup>84</sup> The council functioned with twin hermeneutics, albeit the council fathers often favored one or the other: The first, “return to the sources” (*ressourcement*), focused on appropriating the received ancient tradition. The second, “bringing up to date” (*aggiornamento*), focused henceforth on engaging the culture as authentically as possible. A little over three thousand council fathers participated. The previously suspect theologians of the French “New Theology” profoundly shaped the council. Nearly all the theological titans of the age were involved in the council except Bernard Lonergan (1904–84) and Hans Urs von Balthasar (1905–88). Those in attendance included Marie-Dominique Chenu (1895–90), Henri de Lubac, Yves Congar (1904–95), Karl Rahner (1904–84), Jean Daniélou (1905–74), Edward Schillebeeckx (1914–2009), Karol Wojtyła (1920–2005), Joseph Ratzinger (1927–), and Hans Küng (1928–).<sup>85</sup> Rome also invited observers from churches not in communion with it.

The seventeen sessions of the council unfolded in four phases, each lasting about ten weeks. The council enacted four constitutions: *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (Sacrosanctum Concilium)*, *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (Lumen gentium)*, *Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation (Dei verbum)*, and the *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the World Today (Gaudium et Spes)*. There were nine decrees: *Decree on Mass Media (Inter mirifica)*, *Decree on the Eastern Catholic Churches (Orientalium Ecclesiarum)*, *Decree on Ecumenism (Unitatis redintegratio)*, *Decree on the Pastoral Office of Bishops in the Church (Christus Dominus)*, *Decree on the Sensitive Renewal of Religious Life (Perfectae caritatis)*, *Decree on Priestly Formation (Optatam totius)*, *Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity (Apostolicam actuositatem)*, *Decree on the Missionary Activity of the Church (Ad gentes)*, and the *Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests (Presbyterorum ordinis)*. Last there were three declarations: the *Declaration on Christian Education (Gravissimum educationis)*, *Declaration on the Church’s Relation to Non-Christian Religions*

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<sup>84</sup> *Decrees*, 2:817.

<sup>85</sup> Fergus Kerr, *Twentieth-Century Catholic Theologians: From Neoscholasticism to Nuptial Mysticism* (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2007).

(*Nostra aetate*), and the *Declaration on Religious Freedom (Dignitatis humanae)*.<sup>86</sup> The decrees had a new pastoral tone instead of the canonical verbiage of previous councils.<sup>87</sup> Since the work of the council is so extensive, it is best to summarize its themes as follows:

1. A reversal of the tendency to enclose the Church in some kind of spiritual and intellectual fortress. The pastoral constitution on the Church in the modern world (*Gaudium et spes*) was not only addressed to all persons of good will but charged the Church itself to take its place in the needs and aspirations of all humanity.
2. A ringing endorsement of the idea of ecumenical and interreligious engagement and, where possible, cooperation. The declaration *Nostra aetate* was the premier document among others that fostered that idea.
3. A radical reform of the liturgy including an openness to a vernacular liturgy and the adaption of the liturgy to the cultural needs of the worldwide Church.
4. A reversal of the older notion that the Church should be privileged in social society and an affirmation of the right of religious liberty.
5. A partial attempt to balance the rights and duties of the bishops in relation to the papacy so as to right an imbalance between papal and episcopal authority that developed after the proclamation of papal infallibility at the First Vatican Council.
6. A demand that the antiquated customs and usages in religious life be examined in the light of the original intensions of their founders and an *aggiornamento* in light of the current pastoral needs.
7. A description of the Church to right the undue emphasis on Church as a rigid hierarchy by underscoring the common membership of all baptized persons as part of the pilgrim people of God.<sup>88</sup>

Pope Paul VI brought the council to its conclusion. As the papal interpreter of Vatican II, his attempt to work within its hermeneutical framework is demonstrated in his controversial encyclical *Humanae vitae* (1968), which opposed artificial contraception, and his promulgation of the 1969 *Roman Missal*, which actualized vernacular liturgical reforms.

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<sup>86</sup> *Decrees*, 2:817–1135.

<sup>87</sup> John W. O'Malley, *What Happened at Vatican II* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010).

<sup>88</sup> Cunningham, *An Introduction*, 212–13.

The election of polish Karol Wojtyła as Pope John Paul II caught everyone off guard. He was the first non-Italian elected since the sixteenth century. Now known as John Paul the Great, his trials under Nazism and communism, philosophical personalism, and mystical bent, not to mention his photogenic know-how, pastoral disposition, and travel to meet the faithful around the world made him uniquely suited to lead Catholics into the twenty-first century. John Paul II was regard to be a theological conservative, who took an active interest in Catholic social thought, even contributing to the collapse of the iron curtain. Still he sought to cultivate better relations with the Eastern Orthodox, Protestants, as well as other world religions.<sup>89</sup>

One of his first acts was to expand *Humanae Vitae* into a full Catholic anthropology by means of a series of lectures (1978–84). These lectures called the *Theology of the Body*, which especially reflected on Christian sexuality, worked from the premise that the human body is a visible sign of the invisible God. In 1983, he promulgated the *Code of Canon Law* in order to bring the canons into conformity with the Vatican II. John Paul II issued the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* in 1992. Entrusting it to his conservative right hand, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, it was the first universal catechism since Trent, and it served as a corrective to the proliferation of many zealously modern national catechisms. Yet on none other than October 31, 1999, representatives of John Paul II and the Lutheran World Federation signed the *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification*. Rather than being an authentic common confession of justification though, this document suggested that the ecclesiastical divide between Lutherans and Catholics is now more rooted in the different theological grammars (or language) in which each side has encased its respective formulations of justification than a genuine doctrinal divide. For this reason, the Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference, the International Lutheran Council, and some significant Lutheran World Federation theologians have rightly rejected it.

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<sup>89</sup>George Weigel, *Witness to Hope: The Biography of Pope John Paul II* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2001); George Weigel, *The End and the Beginning: Pope John Paul II—The Victory of Freedom, the Last Years, the Legacy* (New York: Image Books, 2010).

Weighing in on the papacies of Benedict XVI and Francis I still seems more like journalism than history. Suffice it to say that if Benedict XVI represents a turn towards *ressourcement*, then Francis I represents a swinging of the pendulum back towards *aggiornamento*. The former Joseph Ratzinger, Benedict XVI, did more than maintain his predecessor's opposition to clerical marriage, female priests, and birth control. He has also encouraged the celebration of the Latin Mass and took a more hardline stance against Islam. In contrast, the former Jorge Bergoglio, Francis I, is the first Jesuit and man from the New World to sit upon the papal throne. No less prone to controversy than Benedict XVI, if not more, Francis I's nebulous language about LGBT issues, the environment, capitalism, and the communing of the divorced have been openly disputed even by the cardinals.<sup>90</sup>

Now that this essay has come full circle, it is ready to address the questions that first prompted it. Is Lutheranism still relevant today? Has Roman Catholicism distanced itself from the Council of Trent? One would have to conclude that the assimilation of Classical Liberal Protestant tenants or at least those of Protestant Neo-Orthodoxy have marked the evolution of Roman Catholicism. It has come to accept modern philosophical presuppositions, Biblical criticism, theistic evolution, female extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion, ecumenism, dialogue with non-Christian religions, and the possibility of salvation for non-Christians that reach out to God. In truth, Roman Catholicism has also accepted some elements of Classical Lutheranism, such as: vernacular worship, communion in two kinds, the priesthood of all believers, as well as vocation. No doubt, church historians have deepened their respective tradition's understanding of the other as well. But the sum and substance of Trent remains in effect the same. In some ways, like contemporary positions on the Papacy and Mariology, Trent has even been amplified. For this reason, Lutheranism remains as relevant as ever on the eve of this long anticipated Reformationtide.

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<sup>90</sup>Edward Pentin, "Full Text and Explanatory Notes of Cardinals' Questions on 'Amoris Laetitia,'" *National Catholic Register*, November 14, 2016, accessed January 2, 2017, <http://www.ncregister.com/blog/edward-pentin/full-text-and-explanatory-notes-of-cardinals-questions-on-amoris-laetitia>.

## Appendix

## HISTORIOGRAPHY OF EARLY MODERN CATHOLICISM

Scholarship has long been divided over what to call Early Modern Catholicism. The Latin term “reformation” (*reformatio*) originally referred chiefly to personal transformation or renewal in the patristic era (Romans 12:2, Vulgate). It was expanded in the time of the Gregorian Reform (1073–85) to include the institutional reform of the church via faithful adherence to the canons, and in the Late Middle Ages, reformation was very much the talk of the day.<sup>91</sup> By 1688, Lutherans had so well appropriated the term for themselves that the Saxon statesman, Veit Ludwig von Seckendorff (1626–92), helped make it the normative historiographical description of Luther’s movement in his history of Lutheranism.<sup>92</sup> Roman Catholics past and present have long disputed the merits of defining Luther’s movement as the “Reformation,” but the historian’s use of this term to describe the Protestant movement continued until its meaning was expanded in the last two centuries.<sup>93</sup> Current historical parlance prefers the plural “Reformations” to “Reformation,” emphasizing the uniqueness of not only the Lutheran Reformation and Reformed (Anglican) Reformation, but also the Roman Catholic Reformation.<sup>94</sup>

Early Modern Lutherans were likewise opposed to ceding the term “catholic” to the Roman Church because it could neither be theologically nor historically identified with the church of Matthew 16:18. Instead, the German Lutheran lawyer Johann Stephan Pütter (1725–1807) introduced the term “Counter-Reformations” (*Gegenreformationen*) in the 1760s to describe the recatholiza-

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<sup>91</sup>The subsequent discussion of the historiography of Early Modern Catholicism is indebted to the seminal work of John W. O’Malley. See his *Trent and All That: Renaming Catholicism in the Early Modern Era* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000).

<sup>92</sup>Veit Ludwig von Seckendorff, *Commentarius Historicus Et Apologeticus De Lutheranismis Sive De Reformatione Religionis ductu D. Martini Lutheri . . . ostensa* (Frankfurt a. M.: Johann Gleditsch, 1688).

<sup>93</sup>See John Bossy, *Christianity in the West 1400–1700* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987).

<sup>94</sup>Carter Lindberg, *The European Reformations*, 2nd ed. (Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010).

tion of Lutheran territories in the empire through political, military, and diplomatic means between the Augsburg Interim (1548) and the Thirty Years' War (1618–48).<sup>95</sup> The father of modern historical study, Leopold von Ranke (1795–1886), standardized the singular use of the term “Counter-Reformation” both as a description of the period following the Reformation (1517–55) and as a comprehensive description of the Roman Catholicism of that period.<sup>96</sup> Still he was well aware of the reforms that did occur in Catholicism as his well-measured *Roman Popes of the Last Four Centuries* attests.

In contradistinction, the Lutheran historian Wilhelm Maurenbrecher (1838–92) proposed the term “Catholic Reformation” (*katholische Reformation*) to better articulate the reform efforts in the Late Medieval Latin Church.<sup>97</sup> This term along with a host of others like “Tridentine Era,” “Baroque Catholicism,” etc. would be capitalized upon by early twentieth-century Roman Catholic church historians. Still, it took the famed Catholic historian Hubert Jedin (1900–1980) to make “Catholic Reformation and Counter-Reformation” normative in 1946. He used the former to describe the reforms initiated in the Late Middle Ages, the Council of Trent, and thereafter. He used the latter to describe all the efforts Roman Catholics used to defend themselves.<sup>98</sup>

In 1977, Roman Catholic historian Wolfgang Reinhard (1937–) complimented Heinz Schilling's (1942–) conception of “Lutheran Confessionalization” and “Reformed Confessionalization” with parallel concept of “Catholic Confessionalization.” This largely socio-political thesis has gained credence, especially outside of church history scholarship. It overcame Max Weber's (1864–1920) notion that Roman Catholicism was most backward of the three great Western confessions and argued that

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<sup>95</sup>Johann Stephan Pütter, *Die augsburgische Confession . . . wird* (Göttingen: Wittwe Vandenhoeck, 1776), 10.

<sup>96</sup>Leopold von Ranke, *Deutsche Geschichte im Zeitalter der Reformation* (Berlin: Duncker und Humblot, 1842–47), 5:501.

<sup>97</sup>Wilhelm Maurenbrecher, *Geschichte der katholischen Reformation* (Nördlingen: C. H. Beck, 1880).

<sup>98</sup>Hubert Jedin, *Katholische Reformation oder Gegenreformation? Ein Versuch zur Klärung der Begriffe nebst einer Jubiläumsbetrachtung über das Trienter Konzil* (Lucerne: Josef Stocker, 1946).



Catholicism was just as much an agent of modernization as the other confessions.<sup>99</sup>

Most recently, the American Jesuit church historian John W. O'Malley (1927–) has argued that “Early Modern Catholicism” is the best description of this period.

Although bland and less specific than the four names [Counter Reformation, Catholic Reform or Catholic Reformation, Tridentine Reform and Tridentine Age, and Confessional Age or Confessional Catholicism] we have discussed, it welcomes them under its umbrella, where they can, when properly defined, provide more precision on certain issues . . . . Early Modern Catholicism suggests both change and continuity without pronouncing on which predominates . . . . This term seems more amenable to the results of “history from below” than the four just discussed . . . . [I]t allows that even after Trent Catholic religious identity might have found its genesis more in the traditional practices and the close-knit kinships of local communities than in passive acceptance of hierarchy and of ecclesial disciplining, increasingly important though these were . . . . Early Modern Catholicism thus provides room to move back a step from Europe to include in our purview Marie de l'Incarnation in Quebec, José de Acosta in Peru, and Matteo Ricci in Beijing . . . . “Early Modern Catholicism” as a more open term, has more space for the new roles played by Catholic women, lay and religious.<sup>100</sup>

This conception of the Early Modern Catholicism has established itself among scholars today as evident in the most recent editions of *Reformation and Early Modern Europe: A Guide to Research*.<sup>101</sup> Even though this thesis does not clearly stress the fact that global Roman Catholicism is still essentially a Roman or papal church, O'Malley's conception of “Early Modern Catholicism” does not truncate the Roman Catholicism of this period like other descriptions tend to do.

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<sup>99</sup>Wolfgang Reinhard, “Gegenreformation als Modernisierung,” *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 68 (1977): 226–52.

<sup>100</sup>O'Malley, *Trent and All That*, 140–43.

<sup>101</sup>Robert Bireley, “Early Modern Catholicism,” in *Reformation and Early Modern Europe: A Guide to Research*, ed. David M. Whitford (Kirkville: Truman State University Press, 2008), 57–79.

# Sermon for the Opening Service

Pastor Jonas Schröter

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ. Listen to God's Word from Psalm 2, selected verses:

*<sup>1</sup>Why do the nations conspire and the peoples plot in vain?  
<sup>2</sup>The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers gather together against the LORD and against his Anointed One.  
<sup>4</sup>The One enthroned in heaven laughs; the Lord scoffs at them. . . . <sup>6</sup>"I have installed my King on Zion, my holy hill."  
<sup>7</sup>I will proclaim the decree of the LORD: He said to me, "You are my Son; today I have begotten you" . . . <sup>11</sup>Serve the LORD with fear and rejoice with trembling. <sup>12</sup>. . . Blessed are all who take refuge in him.*

Dear friends in Christ!

## 1. The nations rage

Forty years ago a boy ran through the streets of Grimma. Today we have gathered to celebrate the 500th anniversary of the Reformation.

Back then the boy lived in a divided world.

In school he learned the communist ideology: "There is no God! Religion is the opium of the people." At home in his Lutheran family he learned to know Jesus as his Savior.

In school and in the media the Marxist teaching of the state was the law of the land: "We have a scientific world view, which is superior to all other religions and beliefs." But at home his parents still held to the truth that the Bible is God's word through which God shows us the way to life.

In school it was taught that the problems of the world could be solved if you did away with property. At home he learned that the root of all problems of this world is found in the sin of man, and that we find the only rescue in the blood of Jesus Christ, which washes us clean of all unrighteousness.

In school it was claimed, with a ring of truth to it, that the church is superfluous and will soon be forgotten. There was no doubt

that force would be used if churches would not disappear on their own. At home the fear was how long worship services could be held and if Lutherans would soon have to deal with open persecution.

What had been revealed in Psalm 2 was taking place again:

*<sup>2</sup>The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers gather together against the LORD and against his Anointed One. <sup>3</sup>“Let us break their chains,” they say, “and throw off their fetters.”*

The devil makes the gospel out to be an unbearable weight that one must throw off. How silly! God offered his Son as a sacrifice for the world. And the world thinks it needs to “throw off their fetters”.

The opposition to the message of the Bible that the Lutheran family experienced here 40 years ago was by far not the only attack on the message of “sola gratia.” We could go through church history from the ban against Luther to the Smalkald War and the 30 Years’ War.

Later on, when reason began to prevail over faith, the war against “the Lord and his Anointed” was no longer fought with swords and cannons. God’s word itself was called into question through Biblical Criticism. Subsequently any foundation for sure faith was taken away.

In the face of the growing influence of this faithless theology, Lutherans streamed to America or established free churches. Many of you can probably recall from your own experience the pure rage of the nations and the subtle opposition of the powerful people of this world.

## **2. The Lord reigns**

In the neatly divided world of the boy, whom I told you about, there was an inconsistency. The streets of the city had been renamed long ago after great communists. There was Karl Marx Street and Lenin Street. But the street here behind the Cloister Church bore the name “Paul Gerhard Street.”

*That also must have been one of the communists,* thought the boy, until to his surprise he found the name Paul Gerhard in the old

hymnal among the hymns that he had sung on Sunday in worship. What was Paul Gerhard doing on the street sign?

So apparently they weren't all that successful—those who fought for a world without God. Even at that time God was king and he ruled.

What does he say when the kings and authorities signal the attack against our faith in Jesus our Lord? In Psalm 2, two responses of God are mentioned to the persecution of the message of God's grace.

First, ***God laughs*** over the attacks on his kingdom.

*<sup>4</sup>The One enthroned in heaven laughs; the Lord scoffs at them.*

*<sup>5</sup>Then he rebukes them in his anger and terrifies them in his wrath,*

How far have they come—those who wanted to fight our Savior and the message of his grace? Today we do not even speak about those who wanted to build a new world here. They have failed miserably.

Other enemies of the gospel have stormed and raged for longer periods of time. Yet one thing stands firm: To fight against the living God is pointless. God will speak in his anger and in his wrath finally he will destroy them. Yet that is not the only way God speaks.

Second, ***God establishes the king of grace***.

*<sup>6</sup>"I have installed my King on Zion, my holy hill."*

*<sup>7</sup>I will proclaim the decree of the LORD: He said to me, "You are my Son; today I have become your Father."*

God has installed a king who builds an eternal kingdom against all opposition. What armies does he send out to secure his power? With what weapons does he fight? The Lord's *decree* is to fight with the weapons of humiliation and suffering. This king humbles himself.

The Son of God goes to death on the cross. God has decided to lay the sins of the world on his Son. He should bear the punishment and mankind should be reconciled to God.

### 3. We are to preach this powerful message

The incredible message of God's grace in Jesus Christ—that is the weapon with which God builds his kingdom in this world. For centuries during the Middle Ages this message was hidden and obscured by human ideas of serving the Lord. Those responsible in the church wanted to build God's kingdom with the sword and with the fear of God's wrath. But 500 years ago the power with which God builds his church was rediscovered: The message of grace alone.

#### **The power of “grace alone” was the power behind the Reformation.**

500 years ago thorough Bible scholars rediscovered the message of the gospel. 500 years ago bold confessors began to defend and to make known this teaching against all opponents.

What could a mere monk do against the overwhelming power of a church which had for such a long time belonged to the enemies of Christ? They would quickly burn him at the stake, one would have thought.

But no, his message lasted longer—to this point, 500 years.

It was not his message.

It was the message of the king whom God installed on his holy Mount Zion. It was the words of God's grace. This message of the grace of God in Jesus Christ helped the Reformation to victory. Yes, this king rules with his grace.

#### **The power of “grace alone” was the power behind the early church.**

What could mere fishermen do—fishermen who stayed hidden after the crucifixion of their master? They conquered the world with the message of God, who humbled himself to death on the cross.

It wasn't their message. It wasn't their power. It was the power of the message of the grace of God, who alone saves. That's the way God builds his kingdom of grace.

#### **The power of “grace alone” is the power behind your service in the church.**

What can you do in your country, in your culture, which serves other gods? What can you do about the opponents who appear

OPENING SERVICE

before your congregation against the Lord and his Anointed? What will make your preaching appealing to modern ears? Will deep learning help or wisdom of psychologists and counselors or flattering words? Maybe people will listen, but it will not build the kingdom of God.

Preach the word of reconciliation. Make known the God of grace who in Jesus Christ seeks and saves sinners. Preach the message of grace alone.

All of you here are witnesses of God's grace. Forty years ago it would have completely unthinkable to have a convention like this in this place.

But God's King has changed things. The boy from back then works today as a pastor in a country with complete freedom of speech and religion.

I am that boy.

It's such a strong proof of God's grace that we are here together to celebrate 500 years of Reformation, 500 years of the message of free salvation in Jesus Christ.

All of you who are gathered here today for this conference are living proof of the grace of God, who protects his gospel and has allowed the message of the Bible to spread far and wide through the centuries and over the continents.

During these days together, we have every reason to praise God and to thank him in the way the conclusion to Psalm 2 describes:

*<sup>11</sup> Serve the LORD with fear and rejoice with trembling.*

*<sup>12</sup> . . . Blessed are all who take refuge in him.*

And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.

## Sermon for the Closing Service

Pastor Martin Wilde

The Lord Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress.

Listen to Gods word from Romans 3:

*Romans 3:22-24 (NIV) <sup>22</sup>This righteousness is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference (between Jew and Gentile), <sup>23</sup>for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, <sup>24</sup>and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.*

Dear brothers and sisters in faith, dear members of the Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference, when I look around I see you all have it, you all brought it along, nobody left it where he slept: Your head (on your shoulders). Of course, without your head you could not be here sitting on your chair. Without your head you could not stand, you could not sit, you could not live. You stand or fall depending on whether you have your head on your shoulders or not.

What is true of our body, also applies to our spiritual life and welfare. There is the head article, the chief article by which the congregation stands or falls—as Martin Luther writes in the Smalcald articles: “The Hauptartikel”. We find this article expressed throughout the whole Bible of the Old and New Testament. We just heard some Verses from the Apostle Paul from his letter to the Romans talking about this head/ chief article. And we can summarize:

### **God grants us the Head-Article**

- **The Article of Justification**
- **The Article of standing and falling**

### **God grants us the Head-Article**

- **The Article of Justification**

This main and head article doesn't go into our head. We cannot grasp it with our natural human mind. This head article is the foolishness of the cross. *For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.* 1 Cor 1,18 *Has not God made foolish the wisdom of*

*the world?* 1 Cor 1,20 The head is Christ himself who gave his life for us on the cross for all of our sins. Who said: “It is finished.”

What makes man hesitant to accept the head article as head and most important begins with what is addressed by the following words. *There is no difference between Jew and Gentile, <sup>23</sup>for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.* Oh, we like to make the difference: Either: I am not as bad as this person or these people, these sinners. Of course they really need Christ’s forgiveness for what they have done. But I am not as bad. I don’t need Christ and his forgiveness as badly as others do. OR we make the difference in the way we think of ourselves: I am too bad. I have sinned too much. I have done too many things wrong. The others are good and nice Christian people, all these likable fellows I have met here, they might say and know: “Yes, God loves me and forgives me and blesses me so much.” But not me, I am not as good. -We might emphasize the difference between us and others but God doesn’t. *There is no difference for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.*

To be a sinner, to be apart and separated from the holy God, to only deserve his damnation and his wrath for eternity—is such a tragedy and disaster that is much worse than somebody losing his head. Yes to lose your head is bad but to be a sinner in the presence of the holy almighty God with all the consequences is worse.

There is no difference between you and others and others and you. Not today and also not in the past *for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.* So the question Luther asked 500 years ago is not less important to you as it was to him: How do I get a gracious God?

And what a blessing(!) What a great answer(!) What a marvelous promise(!) we find in God’s Word: *There is no difference between Jew and Gentile, <sup>23</sup>for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, <sup>24</sup>and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.*

Yes, here it stands. Here it is said. God says it; promises it: We are redeemed. Washed clean. Justified. By Jesus Christ. Not on our own. Because there is no difference. By Jesus Christ, by him alone.



We talk about justification as a forensic act, a forensic justification. You are justified not by what you are or what you have done or not done. But you are justified because the judge, the Holy God himself said and passed his sentence: You are justified because Jesus died for our sin and was raised from the dead.

This sounds pretty theoretical. However it is not just a grey theory. This is life. This is your life. This is God's love put into practice. The head article guaranties you and expresses in an unique way: God loves you. God loves you so much, that he gave his one and only son for you. And nothing, not even your sin, can separate you from the love of God your heavenly father. There is no difference between us -what you are, what you did or not, where you come from either from Amerika, Asia, Africa, Australia or Europe or from wherever.

The Article of justification is the central article, the most important article, the head article. The devil wants to take away the article starting with a mindset that thinks: It is not the head it is more like the little toe of the foot. But no, it is the head article. That we can also recognize by what stands and falls with it.

### **God grants us the Head-Article**

- **The Article of Justification**
- **The Article of standing and falling**

Up north in Germany, there is a story/legend of a pirate named Störtebecker. Störtebeker and his crew were captured and sentenced to death by beheading. Störtebeker asked the mayor of Hamburg to release as many of his companions as he could walk past after being beheaded. When he was beheaded he walked past eleven of his men before the executioner tripped him with an outstretched foot. That's a legend, however you can't go far without your head.

You might run like a Christian. You might keep the traditions well, you might be a good singer, you might even help people, being engaged in social projects. You might even work for a church institution. But you cannot go very far without your head. Yes, you cannot go at all in a way and manner God wants you to go empowered and motivated by the head—the head article of justification. The head article is the article the church

stands and falls on—the congregation of believers and also each single believer as you and me.

On this earth, and as we stand with our outward appearance before other people, we might go and run for a while maybe as long as we live on this earth. But what is the life on this earth compared with eternity. Not even as long as Störtebecker stumbled until he fell without his head.

We all head to eternity. Think of this CELC-Date. It was far away when we started planning. 5 years ago a man said to me: 2017 that is still very far, we don't have to worry about it yet. Yes, but now it is here. Now the CELC-meeting is happening. And we could not stop this date from coming. It was just there. And it was good to prepare in advance.

So God tells us and so we confess in the Apostolic Creed: Christ will come to Judge the living and the dead. Don't think: that doesn't apply to me. That is so far from now, I don't have to think about it. Also that date comes—unresistable.

But what then when you stand before God? What if you even are going to die tonight? What if God would ask you: Why should I let you into my eternal glory? You couldn't tell God any good you have done, why he should let you in, and not damn you to hell. There is only: They all, and I *have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God*. You will fall without (your) head, without being justified by Jesus Christ. The only thing that you can rely on is: Jesus. What he has done. This is the head article to believe in. And God will say: Yes come in—this Jesus is my dear Son. I made (him) the door for your eternal home.

When I am about to die: I will let these words be my comfort: *There is no difference between Jew and Gentile, <sup>23</sup>for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, <sup>24</sup>and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus*. This is the head article I am going to live and to die by. The head article is the article the church stands or falls on. All believers, also you as a believer, the whole church, is comforted and saved by this article and has the certainty of salvation—in German: “Heilsgewissheit”.

But it is not only on the last day this article lets us stand or fall; also every day when we stand in prayer before God. Will he

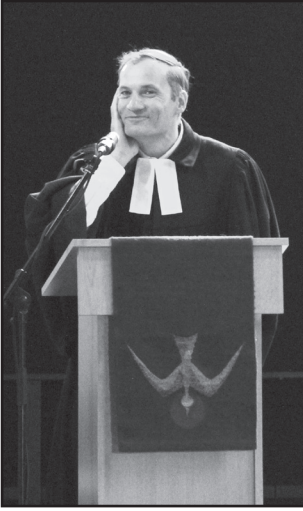
answer our prayer? Will he listen to me as a loving father to his dear child? May I stand justified in his sight? Think of the two men the Pharisee and Tax Collector. The Pharisee didn't comprehend the head article—the article of justification. *But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, 'God, have mercy on me, a sinner. I tell you, (Jesus said,) that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God.* Believing in God's grace, in the head article we stand justified knowing that God hears us—also when we pray for our CELC-sister churches worldwide.

And what holds us, and lets us stand when we get through hardships and troubles? Personally—church wise—CELC wise. What if the wind of hardships comes and you feel and see no evidence for God's love—only the opposite—you feel punished and damned. Did God let you down? No. The head article assures you: *There is no damnation for those who are in Jesus Christ.* (Rom 8:1)

What a countless blessing, dear brothers and sisters of the CELC, that this head article is clear among us. As clear as the Bible tells us, as clear as Martin Luther could discover anew 500 years ago, as clear as it is expressed in the Lutheran Confessions. What a blessing, that God has kept us from:—Synergism—a wrong Bible Criticism, putting reason over God's word—from a Pluralism, a rotten compromising—or moralizing preaching the fruits without root and tree, the man without a head.

What a joy to celebrate our unity of the head article in this worship service, where we are quite a number of people. Back home, your church might be tiny, very small compared to others. But if we stand or fall doesn't depend on our numbers. It depends on the head article—that it is clearly declared and taught and believed among us. Because the holy almighty God himself has grant us this Article. He himself promised to keep and to hold his church—you and me—by this article—that we not fall but stand. And so he will do. Amen.

To our God and Father be glory for ever and ever. Amen.



Pastor Martin Wilde  
preached for  
the closing service



The closing service



The closing service



Those attending the Closing Service enjoyed brass accompaniment and an ELFK choir.





Dr. Timothy Schmeling delivered his essay on the Catholic Reformation



Women attending the convention also met for Bible study and discussion.



Filming the reading of the 95 Theses



Delegates toured the ruins of Nimbschen cloister,  
where Katie Luther was a nun



Delegates and guests communing at the closing service



Convention sessions were held in the aula  
of the St. Augustin academy building





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Milwaukee, Wisconsin

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