

TWENTY CENTURIES

A Survey of Church History



RICHARD D. PHILLIPS
SECOND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, GREENVILLE, SC

THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY

THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY



- The Reformation Begins: Martin Luther
- The Early Reformation: Ulrich Zwingli
- Consolidating the Reformation: Bucer and the Early Reformed Confessions
- John Calvin and the Reformation in Geneva
- The Reformation in England and Scotland (next week)

The Reformation Begins: Martin Luther



- **Martin Luther (1483-1546)**

- Enters an Augustinian Monastery 1505. Seeks various Roman Catholic ways of justification.
- Appointed Dr. of Bible at University of Wittenburg, 1512.
- Aroused by Johann Tetzel's selling of indulgences, posts *95 Theses* in 1517. Widely spread throughout Europe in 1518-19.
- In response to his prominence, Luther wrote *The Babylonian Captivity of the Church*, *To the German Nobility*, and *The Freedom of the Christian*. Key issues are papal vs. Scriptural authority, abuses of the priesthood, errors of sacramental theology, and justification through faith alone.
- Summoned before the Emperor and cardinals at the Diet of Worms, Luther takes his stand on Scripture (1521).



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

The Reformation Begins: Martin Luther



- Martin Luther (1483-1546), cont.
 - After being “kidnapped” by his prince, Elector Frederick of Saxony, Luther retreats to the Wartburg, to translate the Bible into German. German lords declare for the Reformation.
 - Authored *The Bondage of the Will* in 1524, denying free will and arguing for predestination and sovereign grace.
 - Originally sought to reform the Roman Catholic Church, ultimately rejected papal authority and was excommunicated in 1521.
 - In response to anarchical forces, Luther opposed those who rejected the church, who sought authority outside the Bible (i.e. the Zwickau Prophets), and who rejected the authority of the state (German Peasants’ Revolt)
 - Starting in 1525, began organizing Reformation church in Germany. Opposed clerical celibacy, reformed the sacraments, and promoted widespread Christian education.

The Early Reformation



- **Ulrich Zwingli (1484-1531)**

- Learned Bible scholar in Zurich, who came under the influence of Erasmus and began questioning papal teachings.
- In 1517, began preaching the Bible (Gospel of Matthew) week-by-week. The result was a recovery of the gospel.
- Though with a lower profile than Luther, set up a Reformation church in Zurich focused on sola scriptura and sola fide.
- Opposed (and persecuted) Anabaptist spin-offs, which denied the church and its doctrine of baptism.
- Differed with Luther on the doctrine of the presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper (*consubstantiation* vs. *Zwinglianism*).
 - ✦ Marburg colloquy: Luther, "*hoc est corpus meum!*"
- Died as a chaplain in battle against a Roman Catholic army, having been abandoned by Luther and the German princes.



Consolidating the Reformation



- **Martin Bucer (1491-1551)**

- Dominican monk influenced by Luther. Was excommunicated and fled to Strassbourg, where he led a reformation (1523).
- Successful debater with Roman Catholics
- Reorganized the church and its worship along Reformation (biblical) lines.
- Sought to restore union between Luther and Zwingli (1525-30). Continually labored for unity among Reformers.

“If you immediately condemn anyone who doesn't quite believe the same as you do as forsaken by Christ's Spirit, and consider anyone to be the enemy of truth who holds something false to be true, who, pray tell, can you still consider a brother? I for one have never met two people who believed exactly the same thing. This holds true in theology as well.”

The Reformation Confessions



- **The Heidelberg Catechism**

- Authored by Zacharias Ursinus and Caspar Olevianus (1563).
- 52 Questions & Answers to cover the gamut of doctrine and piety. Set a schedule for yearly preaching and teaching
- “Marked by a moderate but lucid expression of Reformed theology and a warm evangelical spirit, [it gained] acceptance across the Reformed world.” (Nick Needham).

Q1: What is your only comfort in life and death

Answer: “That I with body and soul, both in life and death, am not my own, but belong to my faithful Saviour Jersus Christ; who with His precious blood, has fully satisfied for all my sins, and delivered me from all the power of the devil; and so preserves me that without the will of my heavenly Father, not a hair can fall from my head; yes, that all things must be subservient to my salvation, and therefore, by His Holy Spirit, He also assures me of eternal life, and makes me sincerely willing and ready, henceforth, to live for Him.

The Reformation Confessions



- **The Augsburg Confession (1530).**
 - Written by Philipp Melanchthon in consultation with Luther to provide the Emperor a summary of the Reformation teachings.
 - Adopted by the German princes and provided unity to the early Reformation churches. A solid starting point for future work.

On Justification: “People cannot be justified in God’s sight by their own strength, worthiness, or works, but are justified freely through Christ by faith, when they believe that they are accepted into grace and their sins forgiven through Christ, who made atonement for our sins by His death. God reckons this faith for righteousness in His sight. (Art. 4).

The Reformation Confessions



- **The Belgic Confession (1561).**
 - Written by Guido de Bres, a defence of the Reformed faith in the Netherlands.
 - Would serve as a buttress against a growing Arminianism towards the end of the century.

On Eternal Election: “We believe that all the posterity of Adam being thus fallen into perdition and ruin, by the sin of our first parents, God then did manifest himself such as he is; that is to say, merciful and just: Merciful, since he delivers and preserves from this perdition all, whom he, in his eternal and unchangeable counsel of mere goodness, has elected in Christ Jesus our Lord, without any respect to their works: Just, in leaving others in the fall and perdition wherein they have involved themselves. ”

John Calvin & the Reformation in Geneva



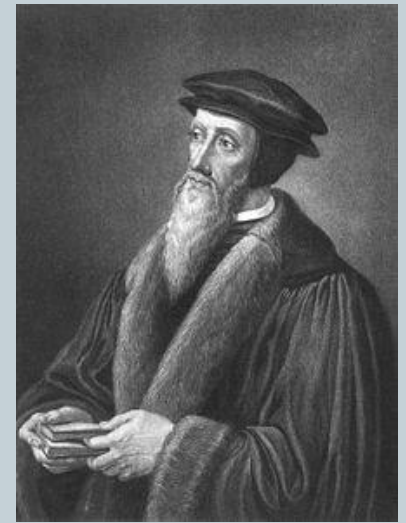
- **John Calvin (1509-1564)**
 - Converted to the Reformation while a law student in Paris. Fled persecution (1530).
 - Wrote first version of *The Institutes of the Christian Religion* to defend “evangelical” doctrine in France (1536). While travelling to Italy for quiet scholarship, was identified in Geneva and “persuaded” to remain as preacher
 - Preached and reformed worship. Expelled from Geneva over church authority (1538) and moved to Strassbourg with Bucer, preaching daily.
 - Defended the Reformation in *Letter to Cardinal Sadoletto*, was recalled to Geneva (1541).
 - Thoroughly reformed Genevan churches:
 - ✦ Presbyterian polity, with four offices (teacher, doctor, elder, deacon)
 - ✦ Regulative principle of worship (vs. Lutheran normative principle).
 - ✦ Preached twice weekly and 3 times during the week (60+ minutes).
 - Geneva became a “new Jerusalem” spreading Reformation to the world.

John Calvin & the Reformation in Geneva



- Calvin's Legacy

- Gospel churches with zeal for missions.
- Geneva's Academy promoted education of ministers
- The *Affair of the Libertines* highlighted church discipline
- Servetus affair highlighted support of church-state partnership.
- The "Calvin Project" – *Institutes of the Christian Religion* + *Calvin's Commentaries*
- Emphasized industry, education, and ministries of mercy.



John Calvin & the Reformation in Geneva



- Calvin's Pastoral Zeal and Love

- On returning to Geneva:

- ✦ “Why could you not have said at the cross? For it would have been far preferable to perish once for all than to be tormented again in that place of torture. . . . [But] I am well aware, however, that it is God with whom I have to do. . . Therefore I submit my will and my affections, subdued and held fast, to the obedience of God.”

- To the “Five Prisoners of Lyons”:

- ✦ “I beseech our good Lord that He would be pleased to make you feel in every way the worth of His protection of His own, to fill you with His Holy Spirit, who gives you prudence and virtue, and brings you peace, joy, and contentment; and may the name of our Lord Jesus be glorified by you to the edification of His Church!”

