

# The “Solas” of the Reformation: “Reformed, and Always Reforming” Reformation Day Celebration 2006

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Reformata Semper Reformanda!

Introduction

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Cambridge Declaration

KCPC’s own Reformation, and continually reforming

## 1. Sola Scriptura- “Scripture Alone”

### SOLA SCRIPTURA

We reaffirm the inerrant Scripture to be the sole source of written divine revelation, which alone can bind the conscience. The Bible alone teaches all that is necessary for our salvation from sin and is the standard by which all Christian behavior must be measured.

We deny that any creed, council or individual may bind a Christian's conscience, that the Holy Spirit speaks independently of or contrary to what is set forth in the Bible, or that personal spiritual experience can ever be a vehicle of revelation.

- A. *Formal Cause* of Reformation
- B. Foundational Authority for Doctrine and Practice in the Christian Life- 2 Tim. 3:16-17
  - i. Perfect and Sufficient- “All we need for life and godliness (2 Peter 1:3-4; 2 Tim. 3:15).
  - ii. Inspired by God- “God breathed out” (2 Tim. 3:16).
  - iii. Infallible- Infallibility is the inability to err. Infallibility entails inerrancy which is the actual absence of error.
  - iv. Authoritative- God speaks to his people (Heb. 3-4; 12:18-29)
- C. Explicit and Implicit- “Good and Necessary Deduction”

WCF 1.6 The whole counsel of God, concerning all things necessary for His own glory, man's salvation, faith and life, is either expressly set down in Scripture, or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced

from Scripture: unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelations of the Spirit, or traditions of men.(1) Nevertheless, we acknowledge the inward illumination of the Spirit of God to be necessary for the saving understanding of such things as are revealed in the word;(2) and that there are some circumstances concerning the worship of God, and government of the Church, common to human actions and societies, which are to be ordered by the light of nature, and Christian prudence, according to the general rules of the word, which are always to be observed.(3)

D. **What Should the People of God Hear Preached?** 1

Corinthians 2:1-5 (Corinthians had exchanged preaching with Greek ideas/worldly cultural ideas and concepts because of its perceived weakness and folly):

<sup>ESV</sup> **1 Corinthians 2:1** And I, when I came to you, brothers, did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom. <sup>2</sup> For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. <sup>3</sup> And I was with you in weakness and in fear and much trembling, <sup>4</sup> and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, <sup>5</sup> that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.

***Do we still believe that the gospel is the “power of God for salvation?” As Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 1:***

***For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.***

E. Tradition and Scripture in the Reformation

i. Four views of Tradition in History of the Church

1. Tradition 1- Reformation:

- a. Scripture is sole source of authority but the scripture was to be interpreted in and by the church, in accordance with the ancient rule of faith, as summarized in the Christian creed.
- b. Sole source of revelation is scripture alone. A call back to the earlier reading of Scripture by the Reformers (first three centuries of Church interpretation and many during the Medieval church still held to Tradition 1).

2. Tradition 2- Scripture and tradition are dual sources of authority.
  3. Tradition 3- Magisterium in Rome declares Scripture and tradition, so Magisterium (late middle ages) became sole source ultimately of divine revelation.
  4. Tradition 0- The fear of Roman Catholics in the Reformation, the realized fear in modern evangelicalism.
- ii. Tradition is good, but always submitted to Scripture- 2 Thess. 2:15
  - iii. “Solo” Scriptura vs. “Sola” Scriptura
  - iv. Tradition 0 and Tradition 1
    1. Tradition 0: Individualism and the Bible meaning what the individual thinks or says it means (schisms, divisions, and relativism-pluralism).
      - a. “Radical Reformers” who separated from the Church leaders of the Reformation (Luther and Calvin) said every individual had the unfettered right to interpret Scripture in whatever manner seemed right to him or her.”
      - b. Liberals, Unitarians, Universalists, and Evangelicals in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century believed in “Tradition 0” or a “religion of, by, and for the people.”
      - c. The Liberal slogan was: “Bible alone”, “No creed but the Bible”, and “the Bible is our only acknowledged creed book.” (A. B. Grosh, Simeon Howard, Alexander Campbell, Noah Worcester; quoted in Mathison, *Sola Scriptura*).
    2. Tradition 1: Scripture is our sole and only source of revelation from God, but these scriptures must be interpreted, taught correctly

consistent with the apostolic faith and passed down (unity through productive conflict, creeds, confessions).

3. Tradition 0 read and interprets scripture without the Church; Tradition 1 reads and interprets scripture with the Church (“together with all the saints”-Eph. 3:18).

F. Law and Gospel: In preaching and teaching

- i. Law: Perfect Righteousness (perfection expected from God- - not just giving oneself to the Spirit, or surrendering all, but perfection!)
- ii. Gospel: Holds out a perfect substitute in Christ- - that’s good news!
- iii. Indicative –Imperative –Indicative

**2. Sola Fide- “Faith Alone”- The Church Stands or Falls on this “Sola”**

**SOLA FIDE**

We reaffirm that justification is by grace alone through faith alone because of Christ alone. In justification Christ's righteousness is imputed to us as the only possible satisfaction of God's perfect justice.

We deny that justification rests on any merit to be found in us, or upon the grounds of an infusion of Christ's righteousness in us, or that an institution claiming to be a church that denies or condemns sola fide can be recognized as a legitimate church.

- A. *Material Cause* of Reformation- The only gospel or “the truth of the gospel” revealed in Scripture alone which is the sole authority given to us by God.
- B. Righteousness of Christ received by faith- Romans 4
- C. **Declared righteous/Imputation**- - not made righteous (distinction between justification and sanctification).
- D. Righteousness of Christ *plus nothing*.
  - i. *Alien Righteousness*

E. Faith is the instrument by which we take hold of the righteousness of Christ (Eph. 2)

F. Faith *plus nothing*...

*In a time when the majority of evangelicals have turned to a new paradigm in preaching, one absent of any doctrines that offend, we need to understand this important doctrine!*

*Christianity Today* (February 19, 1990): Describes the evangelical megashift. This megashift includes a “new-model” evangelicalism that is critical of preaching that is concerned with divine wrath, original and personal sin, a vicarious atonement, and **forensic justification**. Insufficiently “relational” and sensitive to the experiences of contemporary men and women, the classical evangelical paradigm, we are told, tends to offend unnecessarily. One evangelical named Ray Anderson wrote:

“If our sin is viewed as causing the death of Jesus on the cross, then we ourselves become victims of a ‘psychological battering’ produced by the cross. When I am led to feel that the pain and torment of Jesus’ death on the cross is due to my sin, I inflict upon myself spiritual and psychological torment.”

### 3. **Sola Gratia- “Grace Alone”**

#### SOLA GRATIA

We reaffirm that in salvation we are rescued from God's wrath by his grace alone. It is the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit that brings us to Christ by releasing us from our bondage to sin and raising us from spiritual death to spiritual life.

We deny that salvation is in any sense a human work. Human methods, techniques or strategies by themselves cannot accomplish this transformation. Faith is not produced by our unregenerated human nature.

A. Has sin really tainted the mind (faith/reason) and will (ability to act) or are we just unhappy, unfulfilled, and needy?

i. Low view of sin- Pelagianism, Semi-Pelagianism

**“We are sinners because we sin.”**

ii. Biblical view of sin- Augustinianism

**“We sin because we are sinners.”**

iii. Augustinian Original Sin

B. No cooperation with man, but God’s work alone in salvation-  
Eph. 2:6-10; John 1:11-13; Romans 9:11-21 (Read: v. 16)

i. **Monergism vs. Synergism**: Read Romans 11:6-  
Antithesis that we must confront as Christians in our  
evangelical culture today!

1. **Monergism in Justification**-Salvation

<sup>ESV</sup> **Ephesians 2:6-9**: and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, <sup>7</sup> so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. <sup>8</sup> For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, <sup>9</sup> not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

<sup>ESV</sup> **John 1:11-13**: He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. <sup>12</sup> But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, <sup>13</sup> who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

<sup>ESV</sup> **Romans 9:11-16**: though they were not yet born and had done nothing either good or bad- in order that God's purpose of election might continue, not because of works but because of his call- <sup>12</sup> she was told, "The older will serve the younger." <sup>13</sup> As it is written, "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated." <sup>14</sup> What shall we say then? Is there injustice on God's part? By no means! <sup>15</sup> For he says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion." <sup>16</sup> So then it depends not on human will or exertion, but on God, who has mercy.

2. **Synergism in Sanctification**

<sup>ESV</sup> **Philippians 2:12-13:** Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling,<sup>13</sup> for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

- ii. **Example of Charles Finney's Synergistic Understanding of Regeneration** (Finney is arguably the greatest historical-theological influence on evangelicalism today, theologically and methodologically; there is a large display at the Billy Graham Center testifying to Finney's influence on Graham, and Finney has been extremely influential in the conservative evangelicals who are particularly focused on social improvement and politics):

"...Regeneration consists in the sinner changing his ultimate choice, intention, preference; or in changing from selfishness to love or benevolence," as moved by the moral influence of Christ's example" (pg. 224)...  
"Original or constitutional sinfulness, physical regeneration, and all their kindred and resulting dogmas, are alike subversive of the gospel, and repulsive to the human intelligence" (pg. 236)- Quoted from Horton, *Sola Gratia*, from Finney's *Systematic Theology*.

Finney speaks of Justification in this way: "But for sinners to be forensically pronounced just, is impossible and absurd....As we shall see, there are many conditions, while there is but one ground, of the justification of sinners....As has already been said, there can be no justification in a legal or forensic sense, but upon the ground of universal, perfect, and uninterrupted obedience to the law. This is of course denied by those who hold that gospel justification, or the justification of penitent sinners, is of the nature of a forensic or judicial justification. They hold to the legal maxim that what a man does by another he does by himself, and therefore the law regards Christ's obedience as ours, on the ground that he obeyed for us. (pg. 320-22, *Finney's Systematic Theology*).

### C. Regeneration *precedes* Faith

- D. If one believes in Semi-Pelagian, synergistic cooperating with God, then eventually the preaching will change from **preaching Christ, to preaching conversion.**

#### **4. Solus Christus- “Christ Alone”**

##### **SOLUS CHRISTUS**

We reaffirm that our salvation is accomplished by the mediatorial work of the historical Christ alone. His sinless life and substitutionary atonement alone are sufficient for our justification and reconciliation to the Father.

We deny that the gospel is preached if Christ's substitutionary work is not declared and faith in Christ and his work is not solicited.

- A. Only Mediator- 1 Tim. 2:5
- B. Only way to God- John 14:6
- C. Only Savior and Substitute for Sins
- D. Only Person Preached from OT and NT

- i. All of Scripture points to Christ: Luke 24:44-49
- ii. Christ is mankind's only hope:

<sup>ESV</sup> **John 17:3** And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.

#### **5. Soli Deo Gloria- “To God be the Glory Alone”**

##### **SOLI DEO GLORIA**

We reaffirm that because salvation is of God and has been accomplished by God, it is for God's glory and that we must glorify him always. We must live our entire lives before the face of God, under the authority of God and for his glory alone.

We deny that we can properly glorify God if our worship is confused with entertainment, if we neglect either Law or Gospel in our preaching, or if self-improvement, self-esteem or self-fulfillment are allowed to become alternatives to the gospel.



<sup>ESV</sup> **Ephesians 1:3-6:** Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places,<sup>4</sup> even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love<sup>5</sup> he predestined us for adoption through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will,<sup>6</sup> to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved.

- A. **God-Centered Worship**- Colossians 3:16-17
- B. **God-Centered Living** (*Coram Deo*)- 1 Corinthians 10:31/Romans 14:23 (a practical consideration of living *Coram Deo*)
- C. **God-Centered Calling**- Romans 11:33-36