

The Reformation

Context, Characters

Controversies, Consequences

Class 12: Legacies of the Reformation

Interpreting the Reformation

- [The Protestant Reformation] “occurred in a context of total social and economic change. Indeed, the age that is called the Reformation witnessed the shattering not just of the religious status quo but also of the secular aspects of society. The Reorganization of medieval Europe that resulted produced the fabric of life as we know it today.” Eugene Blake
- The Reformation is *the indigenization of Christianity in Northern Europe*.
- The Protestant Reformation launched the *Dangerous Idea* that each individual has the right and responsibility to interpret the Bible for themselves. - Alister McGrath

Interpreting the Reformation II

- [The Reformation] is a story of fragmentation. . . . European Christians rethought what it meant to be a Christian, what a Christian place of worship should look like, what the relationship between things made by human hands and worship was to be, and how God was to be present in a world in which his presence was no longer taken for granted, in a world in which God might be absent in this place, in this community, in that place, among those Europeans.” Lee Palmer Wandel

Interpreting the Reformation III

- “The Reformation was a turning point with great significance for universal history . . . This significance has been described in terms of desacralization and deritualization, which in the critique of institutions and hierarchies provided space for individual self-determination, the internalization of discipline and the ‘civilizing process.’” – Carter Lindberg
- “The study of the Reformation still awaits a Moses who can lead it through the sea of contemporary polemics between social and intellectual historians and into a historiography both mindful and tolerant of all the forces that shape historical experience.” - Steven Ozment

Opening Table Question

- After looking at the Reformation itself, the multiple rippling reformations, and the Catholic Reformation, how has your understanding of this time period and its significance changed?

Lessons Learned

- Spiritual Hunger

- Matthew 5:6: Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness for they will be filled.
- Luther, Zwingli, Calvin, Savonarola, Theresa of Avila

- Spiritual Accountability

- Luke 6:45: The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart. For out of the overflow of his heart, his mouth speaks.
- Popes, emperors, monks, princes, clergy, laity.

Lessons Learned II

- Spiritual Responsibility
 - John 21:17: ...Peter said, “Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you.” Jesus said, “Feed my sheep.”
 - 95 Theses, Institutes for Christian Religion, The Way of Perfection

Questions to Ask Ourselves

- Spiritual Hunger

- Are we thirsting and hungering for God's righteousness in our lives and in our world?
- Matthew 6:20-21: Store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

- Spiritual Accountability

- Are we surrounding ourselves with people who can keep us accountable? Are we helping to keep people accountable when and if God reveals we ought to?
- Mark 4:22: For whatever is hidden is meant to be disclosed, and whatever is concealed is meant to be brought out into the open. If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear.

Questions to Ask Ourselves II

- Spiritual Responsibility
 - Are we being responsible to do what He wants For His Kingdom when He calls?
 - John 17:17: Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, for I have sent them into the world.

Discussion Question

- After looking at the Reformation itself, the multiple rippling reformations, and the Counter-Reformation, do you see any negative legacies coming out of that time period?
- If so, what and why do you think it's or they are negative?

God's Perspective on Faithfulness

- Desire for Faithfulness with regard to Spiritual Hunger, Spiritual Accountability and Spiritual Responsibility
 - Deut. 6:5: Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.
 - Josh. 24:15b: ...choose for yourselves whom you will serve....
 - John 17:3: Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.
 - 1 Thess. 3:13: May he strengthen your hearts so that you will be blameless and holy in the presence of our God and Father when our Lord Jesus comes with all his holy ones.

God's Perspective on Salvation

- Both Grace and Works

- The Tension:

- James 2:21-22: *Was not Abraham considered righteous for what he did when he offered his son on the altar? You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did.*
- Phil. 2:12-13: *Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed — not only in my presence but now much more in my absence — continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to His good purpose.*

- God's Word:

- Romans 1:17: For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written, "The righteous will live by faith."
- *Matt. 25:31-46*: The sheep and the goats

God's Word on Unity

- Romans 15:5-6: May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you a spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus, so that with one heart and mouth you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- Ephesians 4:3: Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit – just as you were called to one hope when you were called – one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.
- James 4:1: What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you?
- 1Peter 1:22: Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for your brothers, love one another deeply from the heart.

Jesus' Own Words on Unity

- John 17:20-23: My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me that they may be one as we are one: I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.
 - Whom does Jesus want to be unified or as one?
 - Why?
 - In light of the previous texts and Jesus' words what are we to do with the fact that for the most part, Christians are not one?

Pope Francis I's Word on Unity

- Read the following excerpts from Francis I's first major statement *Hope of the Gospel (Evangelii Gaudium)*.
- Do you see this document indicating a path for the future reform of the church?
- Does this give you hope for greater unity between Catholics and Protestants?
- Are there aspects of the statement that concern you?

On the Perils of Historical Lessons

- History offers more **parables** than **lessons**.
- The difficulty of Historical Time Travel:
 - We can't recover the first century church.
 - We can't recover the Reformation church.
 - We can only be faithful to God's call on our lives today.
- What reform or reforms might God be calling for in the world or church today?

Confessionalization

- From unitary Christendom to diverse traditions – tied to the political power of secular states
 - Roman Catholic
 - Lutheran
 - Calvinist – “Reformed”
- Theologians in each camp developed increasingly rigid defenses of the faith against alternative traditions.
- Without a shared vision for society both toleration and self discipline were pushed to maintain discipline

Political Transformations

- The Problem of Pluralism – How do you live in a society where religious uniformity is no longer assumed?
- Compel Conformity? But at what cost?
- Develop a “chosen nation” syndrome?
- Assert the right of individual conscience?
- Use the pulpit as a challenge to political tyranny? – Preachers should, “unmask *hidden* injustice, thus saving the souls of duped Christians and opening the eyes of secular authorities for their mandate to establish *civil* justice.” (Lutheran view)
- Promote ideas of civil equality and democracy?
- Support tolerance of dissenting views?

Reunions

- Leuenberg Concord (1973) brought unity between Lutheran, Reformed, and United Churches in Europe
- *Common Calling* (1997) Declaration of full communion between Evangelical Lutheran, Presbyterian (USA), Reformed Church in America and the United Church of Christ.
- 1965-1999 Lutheran – Catholic Commission on Unity signed Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification – with significant controversy on both sides.
- Both John Paul II and Benedict XVI issued plenary indulgences.

Stanley Hauerwas

“I believe we may be living at a time when we are watching Protestantism - at least the kind of Protestantism we have in America - come to an end. It is dying of its own success. Protestantism became identified with the republican presumption in liberty as an end reinforced by belief in the common sense of the individual. As a result, Protestant churches in America lost the ability to maintain the disciplines necessary to sustain a people capable of being an alternative to the world. . .

Stanley Hauerwas II

More Americans may go to church than their counterparts in Europe, but the churches to which they go do little to challenge the secular presumptions that form their lives or the lives of the churches to which they go. . . The church's primary function, therefore, is to legitimate and sustain the presumption that America represents what all people would want to be if they had the benefit of American education and money.

Let me try to put this in a different register. America is the exemplification of what I call the project of modernity. That project is the attempt to produce a people who believe that they should have no story except the story that they choose when they had no story. That is what Americans mean by 'freedom.'”

<http://www.abc.net.au/religion/articles/2013/07/02/3794561.htm>

Application

“We are obviously far removed from the sixteenth century, but also remarkably close to some of the same issues. We too live in a culture rooted in a piety of achievement no less debilitating for all that it is secular instead of religious. The modern concern for the salvation of the economy is no less consuming than the medieval concern for the economy of salvation; and contemporary cathedrals of capitalism and other ideologies require no fewer ‘good works’ of personal sacrifice than those of the Middle Ages. Study of the distant world of the Reformations thus provides that horizon which offers a perspective on the present.” Lindberg