

50+ Sunday School Class

All Saints Presbyterian Church
Austin, TX

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Influential Leaders in Church History

All Saints Presbyterian Church, Austin, TX
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Summer 2020

Taught by Rev. Craig Chapman

Influential Leaders in Church History

Class Schedule – Summer 2020

New Series – Influential Leaders in Church History

- May 31 – 1: *Athanasius*
- June 7 – 2: *Augustine*
- June 14 – 3: *Thomas Aquinas*
- June 21 – 4: *Martin Luther*
- **June 28 – 5: *John Calvin***

Influential Leaders in Church History – June 28 - Calvin

- **Protestantism thru The Reformation**

- 1483-1546 AD – Martin Luther
 - *Founder of Protestantism*
- 1484-1531 AD – Ulrich Zwingli
 - *Founder of Reformed Theology*
- 1509-1564 AD – **John Calvin**
 - *Developer of Reformed Theology*
- 1496-1561 AD – Menno Simons
 - *Radical Reformer*
- 1545-1563 AD – **Council of Trent**
 - *The Roman Reformation*

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- **Branches of The Reformation**
 - 1484-1531 AD – **Ulrich Zwingli**
 - *Founder of Reformed Theology*
 - 1509-1564 AD – **John Calvin**
 - *Developer of Reformed Theology*
 - 1496-1561 AD – **Menno Simons**
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- 1484-1531 AD – Ulrich **Zwingli**
 - *Founder of Reformed Theology*
 - Catholic Priest in Zurich
 - "Back to the Sources" Movement influenced him to read widely, which brought him to Luther's convictions
 - 1520's – he brought reforms to both the church and government in Zurich and northern counties of Switzerland
 - Abolished the Roman Catholic Mass
 - Removed statues from churches
 - Banned indulgences
 - Ended the veneration of Mary and other saints
 - Catholic Church regarded his reforms as outright rebellion
 - 1529 – war broke out between Switzerland's "reformed" northern counties and Roman Catholic southern counties
 - Zwingli was killed in this fighting

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- **Zwingli's Contributions**

- 1522 – articulated *Sola Scriptura* in *The Clarity and Certainty of God's Word*
- 1525 – wrote the 1st Reformed systematic theology entitled *On True & False Religions*
- Defended Infant Baptism
 - It initiates children into the Church's New Covenant Community
 - He rejected the Catholic View that baptism removes the guilt of original sin (unlike Luther)

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- **Zwingli's Contributions**

- A New Understanding on **The Lord's Supper**

- He rejected *Transubstantiation*, like Luther

- He rejected Luther's position of **Consubstantiation** (*Real Presence*)—says Christ's body & blood are “*in, with, and under*” the bread and wine; in other words, the consecrated elements remain bread and wine but also contain the *real* body and blood of Christ.

- He charged both above views as being

- Pagan Cannibalism; and

- Heretical denial of Christ's True Humanity—a human can only be 1 place at 1 time; Christ's Body is in heaven

- **Mere Memorial**—Christ's Body (the Church) *is* present to remember his sacrifice thru material/visible symbols of bread & wine pointing to spiritual/invisible realities

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- **John Calvin**
(1509-1564 AD)
- French theologian & pastor
- 1532 – licensed as a lawyer
- 1534– fled to Basel when French King persecuted “reformers”
- 1536 – *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (age 25!)
- 1541-1564 – ministered in Geneva so as to reform it into a theocracy
- Protestant Training Center...Developer of Reformed Theology



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Calvin's Contributions

- Prolific preacher—averaged 160 sermons per year (3 per week)
- 1559 – last of 5 editions (revisions) of his *Institutes* —became the “textbook” for Reformed Theology ...
- *Sola Scriptura*
Like Luther & Zwingli, he held that God’s Word is the only authority for theology; and so, he rejected natural theology and philosophy because sin has debilitated the human mind.
- *Total Depravity*
Since Adam, all humans are sinful and unable to do anything about it. Sin has invaded every aspect of each human. While humans are not as evil as we possibly could be, the only good we can do comes from God’s grace.

Calvin's Contributions

- ***Sola Gratia ... Sola Fide ... Solus Christus***
Salvation can only come thru God's work of *Grace Alone*, received by *Faith Alone*, in the sacrificial work of *Christ Alone*.
- ***Justification***
“...the main hinge on which religion turns”. Christ's sacrifice substituted/atoned for the punishment for sin due the sinner.
- ***Providence & Election***
God is sovereign over everything such that nothing happens apart from his will, which includes electing some for salvation. This helps the believer trust God, especially in difficult circumstances, and find comfort, hope and proper humility.
- ***Union with Christ***
Christ lives his life out thru the believer, who is utterly dependent on the Holy Spirit's power.

Calvin's Contributions

- *Perseverance of the Saints*

Although united with Christ and with the indwelling Holy Spirit, believers experience a grace-dependent, humbling, lifelong struggle with sin and longing for righteousness.

“There remains in a regenerate man a smoldering cinder of evil, from which desires continually leap forth to allure and spur him to commit sin” (*Institutes*, 3.3.10). His grace enables us to persevere and He perseveres so our salvation is secure.

- *The Lord's Supper*

He rejected the Roman, Lutheran and Zwinglian views for a mediated position—Christ's body and blood is ***really present spiritually*** (not physically) in the consecrated bread and wine as channels of divine grace for those who receive in faith.

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“Calvinism”

... the system of theological doctrine developed by and attributed to Calvin. It's often summarized under the acronym **T-U-L-I-P**:

- **Total Depravity** (see above)
- **Unconditional Election** (see above)
- **Limited Atonement** (unclear whether Calvin held to this)
—Christ's death was *sufficient* for all, but *efficient/effective* for the elect only (thus, “limited” or “particular” atonement)
- **Irresistible Grace**
—A sinner cannot resist God's gracious inner call to salvation.
- **Perseverance of the Saints** (see above)

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- So far we have seen 2 branches of Protestantism
 - **Lutheran**
 - Predominate in Germany & Scandinavia (Sweden, Denmark, Norway)
 - **Reformed** (Zwingli & Calvin)
 - Spread from Switzerland to France, Holland, England, Scotland, and America (thru the Puritans)
- These 2 branches are known as the ***Magisterial Reformation***—church and state (magistrates) should work closely together to carry out God's will on earth (e.g., Calvin's Geneva)
- But, there is a 3rd branch of the Protestant Reformation, comprised of those who thought Luther, Zwingli & Calvin did not go far enough ...

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- The “**Radical Reformation**” wanted to see more thoroughgoing reform, especially in 2 areas ...
 - **Church & State Separation**
 - No association between the church and state
 - Free the church of any state control or entanglement
 - No basis for a state church in the New Testament
 - **Baptism**
 - Magisterial Reformers—rejected Rome’s view of infant baptism as part of salvation. In baptism, one is *included* in the church’s covenant community (like circumcision).
 - Radical Reformers (a/k/a **Anabaptists** or “re-baptizers”)—rejected infant baptism, arguing the church community should only include true believers; thus, baptism is only for believers who profess faith in Christ
 - Roman Catholics & Magisterial Reformers *persecuted* Anabaptists (e.g., death by “prolonged immersion”)

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- 1496-1561 AD – **Menno Simons**
 - *Radical Reformer*
 - Born in Holland. Became a Catholic priest. Studied the Bible.
 - Rejected transubstantiation & infant baptism as not biblical
 - 1536 – aligned himself with Anabaptists and was baptized
 - 1554 – fled persecution for safety in Holstein, Germany
 - Wrote extensively until his death, rejecting church practices as human inventions if not found explicitly in Scripture
 - A life of holiness is more important than theology
—how you live is more important than what you believe
 - Believed the Reformed doctrine of justification as a legal declaration would lead to antinomianism (lawlessness)
 - Embraced pacifism (only wield/bear the sword of the Spirit)
 - Menno’s theology led to the *Mennonites*, Quakers, Baptists, Congregationalists and “free churches” (free from the state)

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The Roman Catholic Counter-Reformation

- 1545-1563 AD – **Council of Trent** (northern Italy)
 - *The Roman Reformation* – beliefs were Clarified & Reformed
 - Clarified—Authority (Scripture & Tradition)...Justification (progressive = sanctification)...Sacraments (7; *ex opera operato*; transubstantiation; holy ordination [not priesthood of all believers])...Purgatory...Indulgences...Relics...Images...Latin Vulgate with Apocrypha...Salvation (although *eternal* payment for sins comes thru confession, *temporal* payment is needed thru penance, indulgences, acts of love, and other “good works”, which are all done by the grace of God)...declared all Protestants to be heretics
 - Reformed—addressed many areas of abuse (e.g., abolished indulgences *to raise money for the Church*, though still offered; decrees for clergy discipline, yet the pope fathered 4)
 - Solidified the divide between Catholics & Protestants

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- Some Concluding Thoughts
 - Though these “Influential Leaders” and their theologies may be erroneous in ways, there’s an amazing harmony of truth and belief in orthodox, “apostolic teaching” since Pentecost, especially given the numerous interpreters and myriad threats against the Faith.
 - This harmony is because it’s God’s Truth. He’s at work protecting it and we can be confident it will not be lost!
 - God has chosen to protect and propagate biblical truth through flawed, imperfect people.
 - This work continues today and, I imagine, the Holy Spirit will continue to *lead us into all truth* throughout eternity, because, ultimately, Truth is a Person—Jesus Christ!

Influential Leaders in Church History – June 28 - Calvin

- Question:
What difference should this make on Monday?

Misunderstanding Vatican II, by RC Sproul (10/24/2012), p. 1/5

<https://www.ligonier.org/blog/misunderstanding-vatican-ii/>

I think Evangelicals and Catholics Together (ECT) and similar efforts to make common cause with Roman Catholics are based on a fundamental misunderstanding of where the Roman Catholic Church is theologically and what it actually teaches. There is no question that the Roman Catholic Church has changed since the sixteenth century. But the changes have not closed the gap between Rome and Protestantism. Indeed, the differences are greater now. For instance, the formally defined proclamation of the infallibility of the pope and all of the Mariology statements have come since the Reformation. Neither has Rome backed down from any of the positions it took in the sixteenth-century debate. In the updated Catechism of the Catholic Church, released in the mid-1990s, the treasury of merit, purgatory, indulgences, justification through the sacraments, and other doctrines were reaffirmed.

I think this misunderstanding has been driven primarily by confusion over the significance of Vatican Council II (1962–65). It was only the second ecumenical council of the Roman Catholic Church since Trent, the other being Vatican Council I (1869–70). So, these councils are rare events, and the church and the world were surprised when Pope John XXIII convened Vatican II.

Misunderstanding Vatican II, by RC Sproul (10/24/2012), p. 2/5

The statements produced by Vatican I referred to Protestants as schismatics and heretics. In marked contrast, the rhetoric of Vatican II was kind, warm, and appeasing. Protestants were called “separated brethren.” John’s passion, which he set forth in a pastoral letter, was that the Lord’s sheepfold would be one. There should be unity under one shepherd, he said, with all Christians returning to Holy Mother Church under the Roman pontiff. John was seen as kind, avuncular, and warm, so people jumped to the conclusion that Rome had changed its theology. However, many overlooked the fact that John ruled out any debate about justification at Vatican II.

The New Theology?

In the same era as Vatican II, there was a major split within the Roman Catholic Church between the Western and Latin wings of the church. Much of the Western wing adopted what was called the *nouvelle théologie*, “the new theology,” which was much more compatible with historical Protestantism than the classical orthodox Latin Roman theology.

Misunderstanding Vatican II, by RC Sproul (10/24/2012), p. 3/5

Incidentally, this rupture shows that the contemporary Roman Catholic communion is not as monolithic as it traditionally has been. Some see this rupture as almost as serious as the Reformation. We can find priests and even bishops who sound Protestant in their views. But it is important to remember that when we analyze the Roman Catholic Church, we are not talking about the American church, the Dutch church, the German church, or the Swiss church. We are talking about the *Roman Catholic Church*. The supreme pontiff of the Roman Catholic Church is not the bishop of New York or Los Angeles. He is not the bishop of Berlin, Heidelberg, or Vienna. He is the bishop of *Rome*. He is the one who, along with church councils, defines the belief system of the Roman Catholic Church.

The new theology made great inroads, particularly in Germany, Holland, and the United States. As a result, Roman Catholic priests in these countries began to sound like Protestants in the things they taught. They said they believed in justification by faith alone. Nevertheless, their beliefs did not reflect the church's official positions.

Misunderstanding Vatican II, by RC Sproul (10/24/2012), p. 4/5

Protestants Heading to Rome

These changes have led many Protestants to join the Roman Catholic Church. I suspect there are vastly greater numbers leaving Rome for evangelicalism than the other way around, but a number of leading evangelicals have embraced Rome, the most high profile of whom was probably Francis Beckwith, who resigned as president of the Evangelical Theological Society in 2007 when he decided to convert to Roman Catholicism.

I think there are several reasons for these conversions. First, those who are going to Rome love the Roman liturgy, seeing it as more transcendent than the informal and contemporary worship practiced in a growing number of evangelical churches. They long for the beauty, the sense of gravity, and the transcendent majesty of classical worship. I think this is the biggest factor pulling evangelicals toward the Roman Catholic Church.

Second, Protestantism seems to be splintered into an infinite number of divisions and troubled by endless disputes and discussions of doctrine, while Rome seems unified and doctrinally settled. This appeals to many who long for unity, peace, and certainty.

Misunderstanding Vatican II, by RC Sproul (10/24/2012), p. 5/5

In the midst of all this, a 2005 book actually asked, “Is the Reformation Over?” and asserted “Things are not the way they used to be.” My response to this idea that the Reformation is over is that the authors did not understand either the Reformation, Protestantism, Roman Catholicism, or all three. The Reformation was simply a commitment to biblical truth, and as long as there are departures from biblical truth, we have to be involved in the task of reformation. So, when people say the Reformation is over, that we no longer need to fight the battles the Reformers fought and that we can make peace with Rome, they reveal a serious lack of understanding of the historical and current issues that divide Protestants and Roman Catholics.

The Indisputable Fact

The indisputable fact is that Rome made a number of strong, clear theological affirmations at the Council of Trent. Because Trent was an ecumenical council, it had all the weight of the infallibility of the church behind it. So, there is a sense in which Rome, in order to maintain her triumphant view of the authority of the church and of tradition, cannot repeal the canons and decrees of the Council of Trent. As recently as the Catechism of the Catholic Church at the end of the twentieth century, it made clear, unambiguous reaffirmations of Trent’s teachings. So, those who argue that these teachings on justification are no longer relevant to the debate between Protestantism and Roman Catholicism are simply ignoring what the church itself teaches. Yes, there are some Roman Catholic priests and scholars who dispute some of the teachings of their communion, but as far as the Roman hierarchy is concerned, the Council of Trent stands immutable on its teaching regarding justification. We cannot ignore what Trent said in evaluating where we stand in relation to the Roman Catholic Church and the ongoing relevance of the Reformation.

Prayer Requests