From Conflict to Communion:
Reformation in an Ecumenical Age
Martin Luther: New Perspectives and Historical Sketch

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Agenda

• Welcome
• Introductions
• Opening Prayer
• Review of Protestant Reformation Events
• What has happened in the last 50 years to change the commemorations.
• Challenges for the 2017 Commemoration
• Closing Prayer
God our Father, your Son Jesus prayed that his followers might be one. Make all Christians one with Him as He is one with you, so that in peace and concord we may carry to the world the message of your love, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.
Protestant Reformation: Crash Course YouTube Video

- Reformation History Video
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C4d_7dOC-GQ
• 1440- Printing press invented
• 1453- Turks capture Constantinople
• 1456- Gutenberg prints the Bible (in Latin)
• 1492- Columbus makes first voyage to America
• 1495- Leonardo da Vinci paints The Last Supper
• 1508- Michelangelo paints Sistine Chapel
• 1519- Herman Cortes enters the Aztec capital
• 1522- Spaniards circumnavigate the globe
• 1529- Turks lay siege to Vienna
• 1543- Copernicus writes earth revolves around sun
Timeline - Early Reformation Events

- 1054 – Great Schism – split between Roman Catholic Church and the Eastern Byzantine Church in Constantinople; disagreement on authority and territory
- 1458 – Spanish Inquisition begins
- 1330–1564 – Early church reformers: Wycliff, Hus, Zwingli, Tyndale, Luther, Calvin, Erasmus, Henry VIII, More, Cranmer – many were killed for their ideas on reform
- 1483–1536 – Martin Luther – becomes Augustinian monk after surviving a violent thunderstorm; becomes a German professor of theology
Reformation Timeline – 95 Theses and Indulgences

• October 31, 1517 – Luther posted his 95 theses, mostly concerning the sale of Indulgences, on the Wittenberg church door

• 1517 – Indulgence – paper that was sold and that promised remission of temporal punishment due to sins whose guilt had already been forgiven

• 1517 – Indulgences – common saying was “As soon as the coin in the coffer rings, the soul from purgatory springs”

• 1517 – Sale of Indulgences – Johann Tetzel, a monk, sells Indulgences which are used to build the Basilica in Rome
Rome’s Response to Luther

- 1518 - Luther’s 95 theses are printed in German and widely distributed; Rome asks Luther to recant and Luther refuses to recant—unless supported by scripture.
- 1520 - Papal Bull gave Luther 60 days to recant or be excommunicated; pope burns Luther’s writings.
- 1520 - Luther does not recant and burns the Papal Bull.
- 1521 - Diet of Worms excommunicates Luther; Luther (kidnapped for safe keeping) stays in Wartburg Castle.
- 1522 - Luther translates New Testament into German, during his stay in Wartburg; NT printed and distributed.
Image of an Indulgence
Reformation Timeline – Political & Social Unrest

- Much property & political authority moved from the church to local rulers of each region
- 1524-1525 – German Peasant’s War – political & social unrest were fostered by extreme interpretations of Luther’s writings; Luther sided with princes; many peasants died
- 1530 – Augsburg Confession – attempted to settle religious conflict; Rome produced “Confutation of Augsburg Confession”
- Peace of Augsburg – 1555 – allowed princes to declare religion of their region
• Catholics & Lutherans tried to find agreement on doctrine of Justification and on the Eucharist but they failed to agree
• 1545 – 1563 - Council of Trent convenes to try to heal the confessional split, and reform the Church
• 1563 - Council of Trent concludes; 39 articles are drafted; Lutherans and Catholics become united to defend against the Ottoman empire
Discussion

• When you think about the term “Reformation”, what thoughts and feelings come to mind? Is the term positive or negative or neutral one for you?

• What problem do you think may have been caused by the broad publication of the 95 Theses, as opposed to confining them to the context of academic theological discussion? Why was the Vatican alarmed by the broad publication of the Theses? How does fear inhibit our ability to hear and understand one another?
Luther and his followers
• Led the translation of the Bible into German.
• Promoted education for all.
• Published a catechism to educate lay people about faith and Christian Life.
• Wrote hymns to promote lay participation in worship.
Luther’s intention was to “reform and not to divide the church”. Discuss some of the positive or negative things about Catholics or Lutherans that you learned in your youth.

What has been your experience of:
• Using the Bible
• Christian education for children and adults
• Use of hymns in church services.
• How do Lutherans/Catholics agree/differ?
Early observations served to cement the division.

- Catholic Church cleaves to “one true church” identity and accused Lutherans of unjustifiable division.

- Lutherans celebrated their continued commitment to reform in often lavish celebrations, tied to a critique of the Catholic Church.
Recent Developments – Catholic

• One outcome of the Vatican Council II was to search for unity among all Christians.

• The Council affirmed that the written word of God, the life of grace; faith, hope and charity are elements of sanctification and truth that also exist outside the Catholic Church.

• New ecumenical understanding of Luther as a witness to the gospel.
Recent Developments – Lutheran

• New appreciation of how the political events of the times contributed to the Reformation movement.

• Dialogue with Catholic theologians helped them to be more aware of commonalities.
Commemoration Today

• Christianity is increasingly global.
• Many Christian churches do not see 16th century conflicts as their own conflicts.
• Traditions handed down from generation to generation focus on their understanding of God and humanity, and the treasury of liturgical forms, hymns, prayers and practices, “forgetting” what had divided the church.
Discussion

• What of that which the Catholics and Lutherans fought about in the 16th century deserves to be preserved?
• How can faith traditions be passed on so that they do not dig new trenches between Christians of different confessions?
• Do you agree that some progress toward unity has been made? Do you think future progress toward full unity is possible? Why?
Closing Prayer

Look with favor on your people, Lord, we pray, and pour out upon them the gifts of your Spirit, that they may grow constantly in love of the truth and devote themselves with zeal to perfect unity among Christians. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.