

Combined Fellowship: Church History

BPCWA COMBINED FELLOWSHIP (17th Sept 2013)

CHURCH HISTORY SERIES 4

CHURCH					
ANCIENT		MEDIEVAL		MODERN	
300-600		600-1550		1550-Present	
Infant	Adolescent	Roman	Reformation	Denominational	Ecumenical
30-325	325-600	600-1300	1300-1550	1550-1789	1789-present

Introduction

- Calls for reforming the teachings and practices of the church began in 15th C and earlier, and came to a climax with Luther's 95 Theses in 1517.
- Threat of Protestant successes spurred the Roman church's efforts to set her house in order, counterattacking at numerous points to regain areas lost or in danger of being lost to Protestants

Key Outcomes of the Reformation

1. God's Word became available to the common people
2. God's Word was preached expositively and faithfully
3. God's Word replaced the authority of the pope, traditions, and teachings of the RC church
4. Return to biblical model of priesthood of all believers instead of monastery monks & RC priests
5. Return to biblical church model of church government through plurality of elders
6. Justification by faith alone
7. 5 solas: "Sola Scriptura" (Scripture Alone); "Sola Gratia" (Grace Alone); "Sola Fide" (Faith Alone); "Solus Christus" (Christ Alone); and "Soli Deo Gloria" (To God Alone Be Glory).

COUNTER REFORMATION¹

- The Counter attack of the Roman Catholic Church
- Spain became the national leader because nationalism and religion united the attempt to unify and consolidate the state so that the Muslim Moors and Jews could be driven out.
- The Counter Reformation by the Roman Catholic Church took three key fronts to counter their loss of power and people to the Reformation:
 - Infiltration (1540 Holy Order - Jesuits)
 - Inquisition (1542 Roman Inquisition),
 - Indoctrination (1545 Council of Trent)

INQUISITION

- First setup in Spain in 1480, developed under the leadership of Thomas Torquemada (1420-98) to exterminate heretics
- Spanish Inquisition was established in the reign of Ferdinand and Isabella by papal sanction (1478), reaching its height in 1483. Its zeal to exterminate Moors, Jews, and heretics committed such fearful excesses that even popes protested against the abuse of power.
- Idea for Roman Inquisition was borrowed by Paul III.
- Originated in the struggle against the Albigenses in southern France in early 13th C.

¹ Earle Cairns, *Christianity Through the Centuries*, pp 267-377.

Combined Fellowship: Church History

- Established infamous ecclesiastico-political courts of Inquisition. These courts found the torture the most effective means of punishing and exterminating heresy, inventing new forms of refined cruelty worse than those of the persecutors of heathen Rome.
- But it was under Cardinal Caraffa's zealous influence, the Roman Inquisition was proclaimed by a papal bull of Paul III in 1542 as an instrument to deal with heresy anywhere. Only abolished in 1854.
- In Tuscany and Lombardy, Pope Innocent IV ordered civil magistrates to extort from heretics through torture a confession of their own guilt and a betrayal of their accomplices.
- Accused were presumed guilty till proved innocent; the prisoner was kept in ignorance of the exact charges against him, they were never confronted with their accusers; they could be made to testify against themselves; tortured to extract a confession. Fraud and guile was freely used to overcome the resolution of the prisoner whose mind was carefully weakened by solitude, suffering, hunger, and terror.
- If sentenced, they were punished by loss of property, imprisonment, or burning at the stake, unless they confessed and recanted.
- Punishments were carried out by secular authorities under the watchful eye of the inquisitors.
- It was only until the revolution of opinion in the 18th C that the Inquisition and its cruel punishments were swept out of existence.

From the archives of a Spanish priest and general secretary of the Inquisition at Madrid:

- Under Torquemada's leadership from 1478-98, 8,800 were burned alive, 6,500 in effigy, 90,004 were punished with different kinds of penance
- Under the 2nd general inquisitor, the Dominican Diego Deza from 1499 to 1506, 1664 were burned alive, 821 in effigy, 32,456 punished.
- Under the 3rd inquisitor, the Archbishop of Toledo, from 1507-1517, 2536 were burned alive, 1368 in effigy.
- Under Ximenez, about 2,000 died
- Inquisition had the express sanction of Pope Sixtus IV, was controlled by the Dominican order and by cardinals.

INDOCTRINATION

- Rome acted to affirm their doctrines while refuting the Protestant Reformation doctrines.
- Moral reforms to squelch reformers' complaints, but not doctrinal.
- The RCC continues to affirm more resolutely their teachings today without change.
- Hence councils provided external facade reforms to improve their image, but affirmed internal doctrinal position of the Roman Church

Council of Trent (1545-1563)

- Paul III (who authorized the Jesuit order and setup the Roman Inquisition) issued papal bull of 1544 that called for the Council of Trent.
- Met under direction of several popes and theological guidance of Jesuits
- Met in 3 major sessions; Council's decrees confirmed by Pope Pius IV in 1564.
- It was not permitted to state its superiority to the pope.
- Emphasized and solidified power of pope over the Holy Roman emperor and within the church hierarchy
- 1st series of sessions between 1545-47 concerned doctrinal questions.
 - Final authority for the faith was Biblical Canonical Scriptures + Apocrypha in the Vulgate edition of Jerome + Church tradition
 - Man was justified by faith plus subsequent works rather than by faith only

Combined Fellowship: Church History

- 7 sacraments (Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist, Penance, Anointing of the Sick, Holy Orders, and Matrimony²) were reaffirmed by the council, and decrees concerning reform of ecclesiastical abuses were formulated
- 2nd series of sessions between 1562-63 reaffirmed dogma of transubstantiation and formulated further reforms
- Final sessions between 1562-63 concerned discussions concerning other sacraments, rules concerning marriage, decrees concerning purgatory, and various matters of reform.
- All Roman Catholic clergy and teachers were required to subscribe to it as well as converts to that faith from Protestantism. Subscribing means to swear “true obedience” to the pope.
- Transformed medieval theology into an authoritative dogma binding on all the faithful. Made reconciliation with Protestantism impossible because it made tradition equal with Scripture.
- Opened seminaries to train ministers, provided for Roman Catechism of 1566, and adopted an authoritative version of the Bible, the Vulgate.
- **"If anyone does not accept as sacred and canonical the aforesaid books in their entirety and with all their parts, as they have been accustomed to be read in the Catholic Church and as they are contained in the old Latin Vulgate Edition, and knowingly and deliberately rejects the aforesaid traditions, let him be anathema..."** (Council of Trent, 4th Session, April 8, 1546, "Decree Concerning the Canonical Scriptures")
- Ranks with Nicaea and Vatican II as the greatest councils of the church.
- Provided a system of dogma for faithful Jesuit educators and missionaries.

Roman Catholic Council of Trent (Transubstantiation)

- The Council of Trent teaches that Christ is **“truly, really, and substantially contained”³ in Holy Communion. His presence is not momentarily nor simply signified, but wholly and permanently real under each of the consecrated species of bread and wine.**⁴
- Also, the RC church affirms that “the true body and blood of our Lord, together with his soul and divinity, exist under the species of bread and wine. His body exists under the species of bread and his blood under the species of wine, according to the import of his words.”⁵
- Christ is present in the sacrifice of the Mass... “the same now offering, through the ministry of priests, who formerly offered himself on the cross”⁶. The Lord’s Supper is an actual re-enactment of the act of sacrifice of Christ on the cross.

Protestant Beliefs

1. Lutherans (Consubstantiation)

During the sacrament, the fundamental "substance" of the body and blood of Christ are present alongside the substance of the bread and wine, which remain present. Luther illustrated consubstantiation by the analogy of iron put into fire: Iron and fire are united in red-hot iron; yet the two substances remain unchanged.⁷

2. Presbyterians (Sacrament – a Means of Grace)

- Perpetual ordinances instituted by Christ for spiritual nourishment.

² Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1113

³ Council of Trent, Session XIII [October 11, 1551], *Canones de ss. Eucharistiae sacramento*, can. I (DS 1651; TCT 728).

⁴ Cf. Council of Trent, Session XIII [October 11, 1551], *Decretum de ss. Eucharistiae sacramento*, cap. IV, *De transubstantione* [DS 1642; TCT 722].

⁵ Council of Trent, Session XXII, Doctrine on the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, c. 2.

⁶ Council of Trent, Session XXII, Doctrine on the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, c. 2.

⁷ Martin Luther, *The Babylonian Captivity*, LW 36.32.

Combined Fellowship: Church History

- “The Lord’s Supper is a sacrament wherein the worthy receivers are, not after a corporal and carnal matter, but by faith, made partakers of His body and blood, with all His benefits, to their spiritual nourishment, and growth in grace”⁸
- A means of grace toward re-consecration and devotion to Christ who died for the believer... The reason why we believe that the Lord’s Supper is more than just symbolic is the severe punishment imposed by the LORD upon the person who partakes of the elements unworthily.⁹

3. Baptists (Symbolic)

- A merely symbolic nature of the Lord's Supper¹⁰, “a divinely appointed testimony from the believer’s heart to God respecting his trust in Christ’s efficacious death”¹¹
- “Do not confer either grace or holiness as proclaimed by several denominations... Reformed view also goes further than required or implied by Scripture.”¹²
- “There is among Baptists alone a Scriptural observance of the Lord's Supper.”¹³

4. Some examples of the RCC position on justification by faith for salvation¹⁴ These are still unchanged and still held as the doctrinal position of the RCC today:

1. CANON 9: "If any one saith, that by faith alone the impious is justified; in such wise as to mean, that nothing else is required to co-operate in order to the obtaining the grace of Justification, and that it is not in any way necessary, that he be prepared and disposed by the movement of his own will; let him be anathema."

- "Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin," (Rom. 3:20).
- "Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus," (Rom. 3:24).
- "Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law," (Rom. 3:28).
- "For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness," (Rom. 4:3).
- "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ," (Rom. 5:1).
- "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God," (Eph. 2:8).
- "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost," (Titus 3:5).

2. CANON 12: "If any one shall say that justifying faith is nothing else than confidence in the divine mercy pardoning sins for Christ's sake, or that it is that confidence alone by which we are justified ... let him be accursed"

- "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name," (John 1:12).

⁸ Westminster Confession of Faith, Questions 96, 97. Note 1 Cor 11:26-32. If it were a mere symbol than why should there be such a serious pronouncement which include death? Calvin is right to emphasize it were more than mere symbolic.

⁹ Dr S.H.Tow, *Basic Bible Knowledge*, (Singapore: Calvary Pandan B-P Church, n.d.), 143.

¹⁰ "Distinctives" of Kids4Truth. <http://kids4truth.com/About/Distinctives.aspx>. Accessed 26th September, 2013

¹¹ Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 7 (Kregel Publications, Grand Rapids, MI, Eight Volumes, 1993), 229.\

¹² H.D. Williams, *The Ordinances of the Church*.

<http://theoldpathpublications.com/PDFs/Ordinances%20Of%20The%20Church.pdf>. Accessed 26th September, 2013.

¹³ Oscar Gibson, "Chap 3 Baptists and the Lord's Supper," in *Baptists and Beliefs*.

<http://theoldpathpublications.com/PDFs/Ordinances%20Of%20The%20Church.pdf>. Accessed 26th September, 2013.

¹⁴ <http://carm.org/council-trent-canons-justification>

Combined Fellowship: Church History

- "Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law," (Rom. 3:28).
 - "For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness," (Rom. 4:3).
 - "Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. 26For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; 27Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the peoples: for this he did once, when he offered up himself," (Heb. 7:25-27).
 - "For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day," (2 Tim. 1:12).
3. Canon 14: "If any one saith, that man is truly absolved from his sins and justified, because that he assuredly believed himself absolved and justified; or, that no one is truly justified but he who believes himself justified; and that, by this faith alone, absolution and justification are effected; let him be anathema."
- "For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness," (Rom. 4:3).
 - "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ," (Rom. 5:1).
 - Canon 23: "If any one saith, that a man once justified can sin no more, nor lose grace, and that therefore he that falls and sins was never truly justified; or, on the other hand, that he is able, during his whole life, to avoid all sins, even those that are venial,- except by a special privilege from God, as the Church holds in regard of the Blessed Virgin; let him be anathema."
 - "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him," (John 3:36).
 - "And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day," (John 6:40).
 - "And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand," (John 10:28).
 - "That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord," (Rom. 5:21).
 - "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us," (1 John 2:19).
 - "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God," (1 John 5:13).
5. Canon 24: "If any one saith, that the justice received is not preserved and also increased before God through good works; but that the said works are merely the fruits and signs of Justification obtained, but not a cause of the increase thereof; let him be anathema."
- "O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you? 2This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? 3Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?" (Gal. 3:1-3).
 - "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. 2Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. 3For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law," (Gal. 5:1-3).
6. Canon 30: "If any one saith, that, after the grace of Justification has been received, to every penitent sinner the guilt is remitted, and the debt of eternal punishment is blotted out in such wise, that there

Combined Fellowship: Church History

remains not any debt of temporal punishment to be discharged either in this world, or in the next in Purgatory, before the entrance to the kingdom of heaven can be opened (to him); let him be anathema."

- "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ," (Rom. 5:1).
- "And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; 14Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross," (Col. 2:13-14).

INFILTRATION

Jesuits (Society of Jesus)

- Most effective weapon of positive propaganda for the Church of Rome, emphasising preaching by well-educated monks as a means to win men back from Protestantism.
- Pope Paul III officially approved the Society of Jesus in 1540, led by Ignatius of Loyola (1491-1556), to fight heresy, especially Protestantism.
- The Roman Catholic Church commissioned the Jesuits the specific task of bringing Protestantism back to the "Mother Church." Their approach was not only through the Inquisition and torture, but also through theology and deception as well.
- Slavish obedience to furthering the position of the Roman church.
- "Red berets" of the Roman church.
- Their methods were without scruples, teaching that it is permitted to do evil if good may come.
- "The end justifies the means." This maxim is often attributed to the Jesuits.
- Rule 13 for them is Rule 13 of Ignatius's Rules for Thinking with the Church said: "...if [the Church] shall have defined anything to be black which to our eyes appears to be white, we ought in like manner to pronounce it to be black."
- Infiltrated government offices, seminaries, churches, etc to be "one of them" to get information and destroy
- Founded by Ignatius of Layola. He was born into a wealthy noble Basque family, and was brilliant and visionary, but also uncompromisingly and severely fanatical.
- Members were called Jesuits, and they took a special vow of obedience to the pope as well as to their general.
- Under the general were provincials in charge of districts. Loyola required absolute blind obedience to the pope in addition to purity, poverty, and chastity.
- Main functions were education, fighting heresy, and foreign missions. Controlled the most important educational institutions of the Roman church.
- One of the strategies to retake England was to set up colleges on the continent such as Douay and Rome where large "numbers of English youth were educated in the principles of popery; after which they returned as missionaries to their countrymen¹⁵."
- Became most significant force in combating Protestant ideas, swaying areas such as Netherlands, Poland, Bohemia, and Moravia back to Roman Catholicism
- Catholic theologians assumed the task of refuting Protestant leaders in oral debates and written rebuttals
- Society grew from 7 in 1540 to 15,000 by 1630 and over 36,000 at its peak in 1964.
- Strong missionary endeavours in pagan lands, especially India, Vietnam, China, Japan, Brazil, Ethiopia, and Congo. Grew rapidly during the 16th and 17th C, founding missionaries, schools, colleges, and seminaries around Europe.

¹⁵ Benjamin Brook, *Memoir of the Life and Writings of Thomas Cartwright*, (London: John Snow, 1845), 255.

Combined Fellowship: Church History

- By the 17th C, more than 500 Jesuit schools established across Europe. They grew in reputation as educators, giving rise to the saying “Give me a child of seven, and I will show you the man.”
- Francis Xavier (1498-1552), one of the original companions of Ignatius, was a noted missionary to India and Japan and Matteo Ricci, establishing numerous missions in China, baptizing many thousands in the Roman faith.
- In these struggles, the very efficiency of the Jesuits made them soulless; their ethical relativism made them justify any means to accomplish what seemed to be good ends.
- Enlisted rulers of the state in their fight against heresy, leading to undue interference in politics.
- The Jesuits have had a dark history of intrigue and sedition. That is why they were expelled from Portugal (1759), France (1764), Spain (1767), Naples (1767), and Russia (1820). Jesuit priests have been known throughout history as the most wicked political arm of the Roman Catholic Church.¹⁶

The Catholics and the Bible

- Spanish Cardinal Ximenez revived the study of Scriptures among clergy trained at the University of Alcala, first to have the Greek New Testament printed. Also led in the publication of the *Complutensian Polyglot* in 1520. This work gave the text of the Bible in the original languages as well as in the Latin of the Vulgate.
- To counteract the Protestants’ dissemination of ideas through printing of books, the Roman church developed the Index, a list of books that the faithful were not permitted to read.
- Knowing the role the Received Text had in damaging the Romanist cause and giving authority to the Protestant cause, Erasmus was declared a Pelagian and an impious heretic. Books of Erasmus and some Protestant editions of the Bible appeared on the list
- Jerome’s Latin Vulgate was declared to be the only authentic Bible.
- In 1546 the Catholic Council of Trent reconfirmed the canon of Augustine, dating to the second and third centuries, declaring "He is also to be anathema who does not receive these entire books, with all their parts, as they have been accustomed to be read in the Catholic Church, and are found in the ancient editions of the Latin Vulgate, as sacred and canonical." This means the Apocrypha books are considered as God's Holy Word.
- Special Congregation of the Index, created in 1571, was charged by the pope with the task of keeping the list up to date. Index kept many Roman Catholics from reading Protestant literature, and Inquisition forced many to recant their Protestant views. Index was only abolished in 1966.
- To try and influence the English people back to Rome, the Jesuits prepared an English New Testament translation in 1582 based upon the Vulgate. They sent this to England and secretly distributed them.
- “The English Papists in the seminary at Rheims perceiving that they could no longer blindfold the laity from the scriptures, resolved to fit them with false spectacles; and set forth the Rhemish translation in opposition to the Protestant versions.”¹⁷
- “The principal object of the Rhemish translators was not only to circulate their doctrines through the country, but also to depreciate as much as possible the English translations ... The Rhemish translators found great fault with all the protestant versions, as containing partial and false translations, and wilful and heretical corruptions, according to “erroneous men’s fancies” but this translation was intended as a substitute, and to put away those which they called “impure versions”¹⁸”.

¹⁶ Robert Caringola, *Seventy Weeks: The Historical Alternative* (Abundant Life Ministries Reformed Press, 1991): 31.

¹⁷ Cited in William Fulke, *Confutation of the Rhemish Testament*, (New York: Leavitt, Lord & Co., published in 1619 reprinted 1834), preface essay by edit.

¹⁸ Benjamin Brook, *Memoir of Life of Cartwright*, 256-7.

Combined Fellowship: Church History

- Queen Elizabeth, concerned of the threat to English unity by the Jesuit Bible, sent to Beza for assistance to refute the perversion of the Received Text.
- At Beza's recommendation, she turned to Thomas Cartwright.
- "Mr Cartwright defended the holy Scriptures against the accusation of corruption, and maintained that the Old and New Testaments written in the original languages were preserved uncorrupted. They constituted the word of God, whose works are all perfect, then must his word continue unimpaired, and since it was written for our instruction, admonition, and consolation... it must perform these friendly offices for the church of God to the end of the world. If the authority of the authentic copies in Hebrew, Chaldee, and Greek were lost, or given up, or corrupted, or the sense changed, there would be no high court of appeal to put an end to disputes; so that the exhortation to have recourse to the law, the prophets, and the New Testament would be of very little effect."¹⁹
- Speaking of the Jesuit translation, Puritan William Fulke writes "They leave the pure fountain of the original verity to follow the crooked stream of their barbarous Latin translation, and which beside other manifest corruptions, is pestered with many annotations both false and undutiful, by which they seek to infect the minds of credulous readers with heretical and superstitious opinions."²⁰
- Because of the power of the Authorised Version and Cartwright's rebuttal of the Jesuit Bible, it did not meet with much success. Protestants were acutely aware of the perversions of the Alexandrian manuscripts and refused them while uniting under the Received Text as the pure Word of God.
- Failing with the Latin text for translation, the devil will change this strategy and now attack with a corrupt Westcott and Hort Greek text instead.
- Meanwhile, the Council of Trent declared anyone holding Protestant positions to be "anathema".

After the Inquisition and Indoctrination, the Infiltration continued

- The Romish Council of Regensburg (1541) attempted to restore religious unity on the basis of the Augsburg Confession (1530) and the Apology (1531), and Lutheran Melancthon began to compromise.
- 3 centuries later, the devil changed his strategy from Latin to Greek.

Centuries later, the Counter-Reformation continues

Lutherans & Catholics

- Official agreement between the Vatican and the Lutheran World Federation in 1999, called "The Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification." The church allowed that anathemas the Council of Trent delivered in the mid-1500s do not apply to Protestants who agree with the joint declaration.
- Vatican 2 - Protestants are no longer called heretics but estranged brethren, " So we humbly beg pardon of God and of our separated brethren, just as we forgive them that trespass against us."²¹

Evangelicals and Catholics (Evangelical and Catholics Together – ECT)

- Mar 1994: Prominent Evangelicals and Catholics signed a historic document entitled 'Evangelicals and Catholics Together: The Christian Mission in the Third Millennium'.
- The signatories of this ecumenical document were described as 'Participants' (including Campus Crusade for Christ, and as those who 'Endorsed' it; among the latter was Dr J I Packer who has subsequently emerged as its most prominent defender from the evangelical side.
- Evangelicals involved included Pat Robertson, JI Packer, Charles Colson, Bill Bright etc. Billy Graham commended this ecumenical effort as a progress for Christianity.

¹⁹ Benjamin Brook, *Memoir of Life of Cartwright*, 274-5.

²⁰ William Fulke, *Confutation of the Rhemish Testament*, (New York: Leavitt, Lord, 1834), 156.

²¹ Quotations from the Council's decree on ecumenism, *Unitatis Redintegratio* of 21 November 1964, and Pope John Paul II's encyclical, *Ut Unum Sint* of 25 May 1995.

Combined Fellowship: Church History

- This document seeks to downplay the doctrinal differences while seeking unity and peace around common beliefs.
- It declares the unity of the two participating groups, emphasizes their common faith, allows for doctrinal differences, but states that the two nevertheless have a common mission. A fatal flaw in the document is its assumption that a common mission is possible in spite of the doctrinal differences.
- The co-operation which ECT proposes is not one of churches; the model is rather that of individuals belonging to a parachurch agency for the accomplishment of specific purposes.
- How could there be unity when the heart and soul of the Roman church has not changed in its doctrines on Transubstantiation, salvation by works, veneration of saints and Mary and relics, indulgences, penance?
- What has changed that allows the progress of this ECT document?
- Only answer is Protestantism has changed and taken in by the ongoing Counter Reformation.

Modern para-organisations and Bible Study groups

- Alpha course: Bible Study course, promoted as “share your thoughts and explore the meaning of life” and is run and conducted by Methodists, Baptists as well as Roman Catholics. ALPHA means
 - A Anyone can come
 - L Learning and laughter
 - P Pasta
 - H Helping one another
 - A Ask anything

This course is ecumenical, liberal and new evangelical in doctrinal position. It promotes unity at the cost of doctrinal truth, contrary to the spirit of the Reformation

HOW TO STAY TRUE

Knowing the Theology of Reformation

- Know the Biblical doctrines that keeps you discerning, catechize your family
- Reformed in preaching (expositional, exegetical, sound in doctrine not gimmicks), in church (militant, uphold the TR, no compromise), in living (zeal to God's glory, evangelise, denounce worldliness, willing to die for the Truth),
- There is so much unanimity among the Reformers, so much harmony in the confessions of the Reformed churches, as to entitle us to speak of the *theology of the Reformation*, as conveying a pretty distinct idea of a particular system of doctrine upon the leading articles of the Christian faith. This theology was sound and scriptural, as compared to what had previously prevailed in the church of Rome. Deviations which Protestants have since made from it have been in the main retrogressions from truth to error.²²
- We shall speak of the theology of the Reformation and Calvinism as substantially identical, not meaning by Calvinism the personal opinions of Calvin, but the leading features of the Calvinistic system of theology, as distinguished from the Arminian and Socinian systems. In this sense Calvinism may be fairly called the theology of the Reformation, as it was certainly, though with different degrees of accuracy and fullness, maintained by the great body of the Reformers, and professed in most of the Confessions of the Reformed churches.²³
- It is generally conceded that the Reformers restored the church to a large measure of apostolic purity and simplicity with respect to worship and government. In this, as well as in theology, more strictly so called, Calvin ... stamped his impress most distinctly upon the church of that and of every subsequent

²² William Cunningham, *The Reformers, and the Theology of the Reformation*, (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1862), 7.

²³ *Ibid.*, 14.

Combined Fellowship: Church History

period. ... That the leading features of what is usually called Presbyterian church government, are indicated with sufficient clearness in the New Testament, as permanently binding upon the church.²⁴

- (The great sixteenth century Protestant reformers) stressed a robust federal, or covenant theology... Perhaps the best way to understand the foundational truths that united these different reformers is to read through the various creeds and confessions that were composed in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The “three forms of unity,” consisting of the Heidelberg Catechism²⁵, the Belgic Confession of Faith²⁶, and the Canons of Dort²⁷, provide perhaps the clearest explanation of the common faith of the first reformers. Also, the Westminster Standards, including the Westminster Confession of Faith²⁸ and the shorter and longer catechisms, were a landmark seventeenth century work codifying the doctrines of the Reformation.

CONCLUSION

Why must we remember the Reformation?

1. Because it made God’s Word the sole authority of faith and practices
2. Because it gave man the true way of salvation – by grace through faith
3. Because it made clear that Christ is our only mediator
4. Because it returned us to the right church government
5. Because it gave us the right and true understanding of the 2 Biblical Sacraments (instead of 7)
6. Because the Counter-Reformation is still ongoing and we must protect the truth for our next generation’s sake
7. Because Satan and the RC church has not changed

Reformation Sundays are needful yearly reminders to our generation and generations to come. It is not about digging up the past, but it is ensuring that we remember the past history, that we may not repeat it, so that we will continue to “should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints” (Jude 1:3). The way forward is not compromise for peace but preaching the Truth that man may know the living and true God and be saved.

Unless we remain alert and militant, we will allow the ongoing but subtle Counter Reformation rob us of God's Truth again...

My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children. Hosea 4:6

²⁴ Ibid., 27-8.

²⁵ Celebrating its 450th Anniversary, it was written in 1563, originated in one of the few pockets of Calvinistic faith in the Lutheran and Catholic territories of Germany. Conceived as a teaching instrument to promote religious unity, the catechism soon became a guide for preaching and is popular even among Reformed churches till today.

²⁶ Written in the southern Lowlands, now known as Belgium, it was composed in 1561. Served as a means of instruction of Reformed believers and became an expression of the faith of a people enduring suffering for Christ’s sake, thus with profoundly personal elements in the articles such as “We believe and confess...” or “We all believe with the heart and confess with the mouth...”. Adopted by several National Synods in the 16th C, eventually adopted by Synod of Dort after careful revisions.

²⁷ The Canons of Dort come from an international synod of Reformed people held in Dordrecht, Netherlands, in 1618-19.

²⁸ In 1643, one hundred and twenty-one Puritan clergymen met in Westminster Abbey for the purpose of drafting official documents that would serve to reform the Church of England. The Westminster Confession of Faith, an extended, systematic summary of Reformed doctrine, was one of these documents. It remains one of the standard texts of the Church of Scotland and in Presbyterian churches across the world.