

One Lord, One Baptism, One Body, One Spirit

The Roman Catholic Church and non-Catholic Christian Churches

Papal Mass in Rome

Protestant Worship

Presbyterian

Congregational

Eastern Orthodox

Snake Handling in Appalachia

Variations on a Theme

- There are many variations on the common theme of Jesus Christ
- Difficult to compare the RC Church with all of them – there are great differences between them
- Jesus Christ is the unifying thread through them all
- Mainline churches of the Reformation
- Mormon Church, Jehovah's Witnesses, Seventh Day Adventists are outside of this tradition and do not claim to be part of it – they view themselves as reestablished churches and the recipients of new revelations

The Division of Christendom

- 500 year anniversary of Reformation - 1517
- The event – Luther's 95 theses
- What it is and what it isn't
- Many reformations throughout Church history – early church and in Middle Ages – a Church always in need of reform (semper reformanda)
- But conditions were different in the 16th century

16th century – A Perfect Storm

- Renaissance and rise of literacy; humanistic studies
- Study of Scripture and history
- Rising hopes for reform in the face of corruption, wealth, and power abuse of late medieval church
- The printing press – the internet of their day!
- Luther's pamphlets and sermons printed and distributed by thousands
- Movement spread like wildfire

Martin Luther

- Augustinian priest/monk/Bible scholar
- Outrage over the sale of indulgences
- When the coin falls into the box, the soul springs from purgatory!
- He rightly objected that the grace of God was not for sale
- Called for a complete restructuring of the Church
- Church must not come between the believer and God

- Priesthood of all believers
- The real issue: how are we justified in the sight of God – how are we saved?

New Reading of New Testament

- For Luther, portions of Galatians and Romans formed the ‘canon within the canon’
- Romans 1:16-17 “For I am not ashamed of the gospel; it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed through faith for faith; as it is written, ‘The one who is righteous will live by faith.’”
- Galatians 2:15-21 ‘a person is justified not by the works of the Law but through faith in Jesus Christ’
- It is not through works of the Law that one is saved but through faith
- There is no human action that can accomplish our salvation except for faith in Jesus Christ
- Extreme view of human condition: through Original Sin, humans are totally incapable of conforming to God’s will – totally corrupted
- Imputed grace – covered over by the cloak of Christ “simul justus et peccator” – no actual transformation takes place

Timeline

- 1521 – Luther summoned before the Diet of Worms and excommunicated
- Sheltered by Frederick, Elector of Saxony
- Translated Bible into German – standard for language
- 1524 – revolt of peasants
- 1555 Peace of Augsburg
- 1648 – Treaty of Westphalia, ending Thirty-Years War – ‘cuius regio, eius religio’ – the religion of a land was the prerogative of the ruler

Lutheran Sacraments

- **Baptism**
- **Eucharist**
- Penance (general or before priest; usually general) – not observed in all Lutheran bodies
- Non-sacramental rites:
 - Confirmation
 - Matrimony
 - Anointing
 - Holy Orders – not same as RC

Reformation in Switzerland

- 1484-1531
- Preached reform in Switzerland ; called for simplified liturgy, married clergy, no images in worship
- Met with Luther but could not agree with him on real presence in the Eucharist
- Eucharist symbolic
- Killed in battle with Catholic cantons in 1531

Reform Tradition John Calvin (1509-1564)

- Invited in 1541 to put his doctrines into practice in Geneva
- Political form of theology - Great experiment in Geneva – theocracy
- Geneva refuge for dissidents

- Form of reformation Christianity prevalent in France (Huguenots)
- Netherlands – Dutch Reformed Church
- Scotland – John Knox
- Known for chief written work, “Institutes of the Christian Religion”
- Many biblical commentaries

Five Points of Traditional Calvinism - TULIP

- Total depravity
- Unconditional election
- Limited atonement
- Irresistible grace
- Perseverance of the saints
- Many forms of Reformed Theology; some modern theological streams are much more nuanced
- Predestination and double predestination
- Absolute sovereignty of God

Some Points of Commonality

- The centrality of Jesus Christ and his life, death, and resurrection is the common thread running through nearly all Christian denominations
- For most, baptism important, although there are differences concerning what baptism means
- The Eucharist is observed in various forms and interpretations in most mainline Christian churches; less so among evangelical churches
- Closest to RC view of Eucharist: Eastern Orthodox, Anglican, Lutheran

Veneration of the Saints

- In Protestantism, there are no mediators between the believer and Christ
- RC church – pray through, not to the saints (although that distinction is lost on many!)
- Relationship – the church includes those who have gone before; we pray for one another here, why not there?
- In Protestant churches, all believers are saints (note Paul’s address in 1 Corinthians – to the saints in Corinth. One is sanctified by being in Christ)

Mary

- RC Church – Mother of God; Queen of Heaven; mother of Church
- Veneration rejected by most Protestant Churches – partially in reaction to exaggerated forms of RC devotion. Nothing must detract from Christ
- Some devotion in the Anglican Church – Our Lady of Walsingham – venerated by Catholics and Anglicans
- Luther – statue of Mary by on his table till the end of his life
- Fierce devotion to Mary in Eastern Orthodox Church – the birth of Marian theology

The End Things

- Nearly all non-Catholic churches reject purgatory
- Upon death, the soul is judged and is assigned to either heaven or hell
- As such, prayers for the dead are not useful
- One’s faith will determine where one goes, especially in more evangelically inclined churches
- Eastern Orthodox: purgative – curative – not punishment

Scripture and Tradition

- Sola scriptura – scripture alone central to Luther and other churches of the reformation
- RC church – scripture and tradition important
- (note same tension in Jewish traditions)
- Modern studies have tended to lessen that tension in mainline churches
- Scripture itself is part of tradition
- What do we mean by inspiration?
- Catholics and mainline Protestant churches both use the tools of modern Biblical scholarship – these tend to bring us closer – non-polemical use of the Bible

The Journey Towards Unity – Healing of the Christian Church

- Ecumenical movement – Protestants first, Catholics after Vatican II
- Dialogue commissions
- 1999 – Catholics and Lutherans sign agreement on justification: “Together we confess: by grace alone, in faith in Christ’s saving work and not because of any merit on our part, we are accepted by God and receive the Holy Spirit, who renews our hearts while equipping us and calling us to good works.”
- Both sides right; both sides wrong
- Good works are a response to God’s grace
- Rescinded mutual condemnations

On the Way – Catholics and Lutherans

- (RNS) “Nearly 500 years after Martin Luther nailed his 95 theses to the Castle Church door, the largest Lutheran denomination in the U.S. has approved a declaration recognizing “there are no longer church-dividing issues” on many points with the Roman Catholic Church.”
- “Most notably, the “Declaration on the Way” includes 32 “Statements of Agreement” where Lutherans and Catholics no longer have church-dividing differences on issues of church, ministry and the Eucharist. Those statements previously had been affirmed by the U. S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs.”
- Pope Francis suggested that the future might be open to Lutherans receiving communion.....not reality yet

One Baptism

- After about six years of dialogue, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, the Reformed Church in America, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the Christian Reformed Church in North America, and the United Church of Christ signed a document recognizing each other's liturgical rites of baptism.
- "Together we affirm that, by the sacrament of Baptism, a person is truly incorporated into the body of Christ (I Corinthians 12:13 and 27; Ephesians 1:22-23), the church. Baptism establishes the bond of unity existing among all who are part of Christ's body and is therefore the sacramental basis for our efforts to move towards visible unity,"
- Anglican – Catholic Dialogue – agreement on many matters
- Obstacles: ordination of women; same sex marriage

Peaks and Valleys

- 1996 – gathering at Assisi – all religions, Christian and non-Christian to pray for peace
- Preserve religious integrity of participants: The pope stated that the participants were not gathering “to pray together,” but gathering “to be together to pray.”
- Not reductionist – each in own tradition
- Solidarity; deep desire of human hearts

- Great success
- Also great opposition; John Paul II was and still is called an apostate and idolater among fringe groups; criticized by others
- Ecumenism is frightening and threatening to some
- Evident in the Language of *Dominus Iesus* (2000)
- Ecclesial bodies not churches
- Subsists (Lumen Gentium)
- Restated in gentler terms the concept of *Extra ecclesiam non salus est*
- Action of hardline faction in Vatican

East and West

- RC Church and Eastern Orthodoxy
- 7 ecumenical councils
- Excommunication of 1054
- First among equals “primus inter pares” their view of pope
- Question of authority – churches are autocephalous – each nation has its own orthodox church and patriarch
- Filioque – source of disunity
- Eastern orders are valid – apostolic succession
- Centered on liturgy; elaborate and long; all theological elements present
- 1964 Paul VI and Athenagoras meet in Jerusalem – excommunications rescinded
- Pope Francis quoted the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew in his document on care for our common home, *Laudato Si*

What Do We Have in Common?

- Worship of God the Father
- Commitment to Jesus Christ
- Importance of a loving and supportive community
- Obeying the commandments of God
- Spirituality – growing in holiness
- Concern for justice
- Responsibility for overcoming bigotry and misunderstanding
- Care of the poor and marginalized

How Are We One?

- There is really no such thing as a liberal or conservative
- There is no such thing as a ‘good’ Christian and a ‘bad’ Christian
- There are only those who are open to the Spirit of God and those who are not; those who choose to love and those who do not
- Both types can be found in every group
- The following individuals were open to the Spirit of God and they chose to love.....look what they accomplished
- This is the only true unity

Brother Roger (1915-2005)

- ecumenism; youth; reconciliation; peace
 - “Christ is communion...He did not come to earth to start one more religion, but to

offer to all a communion in God... 'Communion' is one of the most beautiful names of the Church."

- *"Human beings are sometimes severe. God, for His part, comes to clothe us in compassion. He weaves our lives, like a beautiful garment, with the threads of His forgiveness. He buries our past in the heart of Christ and He had already taken care of our future"*
- *"A simple prayer, is like a soft sighing, like a child's prayer, keeps us alert. Has not God revealed to those who are little, to Christ's poor, what the powerful of this world have so much trouble understanding?"*

Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906-1945)

- Radical discipleship; justice; grace
 - *A god who let us prove his existence would be an idol.*
 - *The ultimate test of a moral society is the kind of world that it leaves to its children.*
 - *One act of obedience is better than one hundred sermons.*

Thomas Merton (1915-1968)

- spirituality; ecumenism; peace
 - *"By reading the scriptures I am so renewed that all nature seems renewed around me and with me. The sky seems to be a pure, a cooler blue, the trees a deeper green. The whole world is charged with the glory of God and I feel fire and music under my feet."*
 - *"We are not at peace with others because we are not at peace with ourselves, and we are not at peace with ourselves because we are not at peace with God."*
 - *"Peace demands the most heroic labor and the most difficult sacrifice. It demands greater heroism than war. It demands greater fidelity to the truth and a much more perfect purity of conscience."*
 - *The whole idea of compassion is based on a keen awareness of the interdependence of all these living beings, which are all part of one another, and all involved in one another.*

Dorothy Day (1897-1980)

- radical care for the poor; pacifism
 - *"Don't call me a saint. I don't want to be dismissed so easily."*
 - *"I have long since come to believe that people never mean half of what they say, and that it is best to disregard their talk and judge only their actions."*
 - *"We have all known the long loneliness, and we have found that the answer is community."*
 - *"The Gospel takes away our right forever, to discriminate between the deserving and the undeserving poor."*
 - *"I firmly believe that our salvation depends on the poor."*
 - *"Love casts out fear, but we have to get over the fear in order to get close enough to love them."*

Martin Luther King (1929-1968)

- racial justice and equality; prophetic preaching, and reconciliation
- *"Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate;*

only love can do that.”

- *“The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy.”*
- *“Faith is taking the first step even when you don't see the whole staircase.”*
- *“I refuse to accept the view that mankind is so tragically bound to the starless midnight of racism and war that the bright daybreak of peace and brotherhood can never become a reality... I believe that unarmed truth and unconditional love will have the final word.”*
- *“I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character.”*
- *“I have decided to stick with love. Hate is too great a burden to bear.”*
- *“Life's most persistent and urgent question is, 'What are you doing for others?'"*

Credits

- <http://www.dts.edu/hendrickscenter/blog/7-key-differences-between-protestant-and-catholic-doctrine-del-rosario-mikel/>
- <http://insightintochristianity.blogspot.ca/2013/08/christian-history-general.html>
- <http://macaulay.cuny.edu/eportfolios/drabik10website/tools/religion-flow-chart/>
- <https://www.ncronline.org/news/vatican/reformation-reconsidered>
- <http://christianityinview.com/comparison.html>
- <http://www.christianpost.com/news/catholic-protestant-churches-sign-historic-baptism-agreement-89172/#3pbDkYe1GjkaQhtE.99>
- <https://pres-outlook.org/2016/08/u-s-lutherans-approve-document-recognizing-agreement-catholic-church/>