

DAYSRING DAYBOOK

Monthly Newsletter of Dayspring Presbyterian Church, 11445-40 Ave, Edmonton, AB, CAN, T6J 0R4

November 2017

REFORMATION NOW

Out of love for the truth and from desire to elucidate it, the Reverend W. Scott McAndless, Bachelor of Arts and Theology, Master of Divinity and ordinary preacher at Hespeler, intends to defend the following statements and to dispute on them in that place. Therefore he asks that those who cannot be present and dispute with him orally shall do so in their absence by letter. In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.

1. What if we actually took Jesus at his word and acted as if we believed that the infants we baptise have a better grasp of what the kingdom of God is actually about than we do?
2. What if we didn't speak sternly to children, or to anyone really, just because they had a different idea of what it means to live out their trust in Jesus than we do?
3. What if we actually believed in the grace of God so much that we actually treated everyone like a genuine sister or brother without regard to their ideas, their background, status, gender, sexual orientation or intellect.
4. What if we actually decided that the Good News about Jesus Christ and the people that that news is for were more important than keeping up the institutional traditions and trappings of the church?
5. What if we actually cared more about the question of to whom does the kingdom of God belong than we care about the state of an old door.

Scott is the minister of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Hespeler, Ontario. This reflection, reprinted here with permission, was originally posted in the PCC's Facebook Discussion Group at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/2346973826/>.



The Rev Scott McAndless



QUOTE OF THE MONTH

The fewer the words, the better the prayer.
- Martin Luther.

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Martin Luther

Martin Luther His Life and Legacy

Five hundred years ago, on October 31, 1517 (All Hallows' Eve Day*), Martin Luther, an Augustinian monk and University Professor, posted a listing of 95 theses (or statements) to the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg. There was a practice to hang a notice of disputes to the door of the Castle Church, but notices were usually posted after a reaction from the Bishops. Luther evidently did not do this as he only wanted to clear up some misunderstandings.

Luther did write a letter to his superiors on October 31, 1517, in which he denounced the sale of indulgences and other practices he considered contrary to the scriptures. With his letter, he included the 95 theses which were to be the basis for a discussion on some of the basic tenets of Catholicism.

Luther was called to defend the 95 statements at the Imperial Diet. His aim was to reform the church and not to bring about a schism. The outcome: Luther was dismissed and excommunicated. He was given safe passage to Wartburg and exiled there. In 1522, he returned to Wittenberg and in 1524 married Katharine von Bora. In 1534 he published the complete Bible in German. What was not intended did happen: the reformation was unstoppable during Luther's life and continued after his death throughout Germany and then to Switzerland, England, Denmark and Sweden. This movement was aided by music and books written by Luther, and with his supporters travelling beyond Germany.

Luther died in Eisleben in 1546, having accomplished an unintended re-form with a split in the Holy Catholic Church into Protestant and Roman Catholic branches.

*All Hallows' Eve was the day before All Saints' Day, a significant day in the Christian calendar to honor all saints, known and unknown.

Marilyn A. Carr

Sources: The Hutchinson Encyclopedia 1995, Wikipedia, and Luther Network.

The Reformation: Giving Our Everyday Life a New Meaning

If you ask most people with only a passing knowledge of Christianity to explain the differences between Roman Catholicism and Protestantism, they'll probably mention communion. *Catholics believe the bread and wine literally turn into the body and blood of Jesus Christ, while for Protestants the ritual is merely symbolic.* Something like that? Martin Luther would have been horrified.

The man credited with kickstarting the Protestant Reformation 500 years ago ... very much believed in the 'real presence' of Christ's body and blood when Christians take communion. Among other things, Luther took issue with the Catholic church's particular doctrine of transubstantiation, an attempt to square the miracle with Aristotelian metaphysics, but he certainly did not question the miracle itself. The Swiss reformer Ulrich Zwingli did suggest communion was more commemorative than 'effective', an idea that rubbed off on the hot-and-cold English Reformation. But even John Calvin, the most intellectually thorough reformer, maintained that the bread and wine were visible signs of Christ's spiritual presence, not props in an empty ritual.

To modern ears, of course, 'spiritually present' sounds a lot like 'not really present'. Something that is not literally true is just not true. For the reformers, however, the spiritual was very real – and Christ's spiritual presence was therefore no less miraculous than the gorier Catholic version. But the details mattered, because religion was not only a matter of life and death; it was more important than that. It was about eternity.

... This is an excerpt from an article by **Dolan Cummings** and is used with permission. The full article can be found at <http://www.spiked-online.com/spiked-review/article/the-reformation-a-secular-enchantment/20462>.

FROM OUR MINISTER: Do I 'have' to?

More regularly than we would ever imagine, it happens in life that we find ourselves intent on wanting to qualify to reach a certain standard of being right with God.

Martin Luther experienced this. The church system he grew up in dictated that there were certain things you **ought** to do, actually **have** to do. He said things to himself that we, and especially young people say, such as: "Do I **have** to go to church? Do I **have** to go to Sunday school? Do I **have** to help my neighbour? Do I **have** to share what's mine? Do I **have** to pray?" Do you hear a **how-do-I-qualify** theology? It is in each one of us.

To answer kids' questions, I'd say, "No. You are a Christian. You **don't have to**, you **get** to. You **get** to go to worship to hear that your sins are forgiven. You **get** to help your neighbour by being the hands of Christ. You **get** to pray to a God who longs to listen. You **don't have to**, you **get to**. That is the freedom you have in Jesus who came down to you."

We're actually similar to the child who sees all the wonderful things their parents are doing for them and they experience that life is beautiful for them. Then the child says to their parent, "What can I do for you? I want to do something...!" The child is overflowing with gratitude and totally keen on responding. Then they **get to**.

The question, thus, is not what you **have** to do. The question now is what do you **get** to do for the sake of the kingdom.

God has come to live with us and to love us, through God's Son Jesus Christ.



Heinrich

Remembering the Reformation Looking Forward

The story is often told that Martin Luther was reading the book of Romans, and that at Chapter 1, verse 17, he consistently got tangled up in the word "righteousness." Luther himself says:

For a long time I went astray [in the monastery] and didn't know what I was about. To be sure, I knew something, but I didn't know what it was until I came to the text in Romans 1 [:17], 'He who through faith is righteous shall live.' That text helped me. I learned to distinguish between the righteousness of the law and the righteousness of the gospel. I lacked nothing before this except that I made no distinction between the law and the gospel. I regarded both as the same thing and held that there was no difference between Christ and Moses except the times in which they lived and their degrees of perfection. But when I discovered the proper distinction—namely, that the law is one thing and the gospel is another—I made myself free." (Luther's Works, Volume 54, P442).

Jesus is quoting Deuteronomy and Leviticus, the law, when he tells us to "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' 38 This is the first and greatest commandment. 39 And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' 40 All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments." (Matthew 22:37-40) Yet how this is interpreted in the gospel is remarkably different than how it was used in the law.

Our righteousness is not at all based on whether or not we follow the rules, for we are all painfully aware of how short we come up; we're all sinners. In the eyes of the law, we can't ever be righteous. This is what tortured Luther for years, causing him to fast for days on end, beat himself, sleep outside in the cold, and sit with his confessor for hours and hours at a time. He was desperately trying to be righteous and falling short, always aware of his sinful nature.

It was only once Luther recognized the truth and heart-wrenching beauty of the gospel, that "while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us," that he understood that the love of God doesn't hang on what we can do or not do as humans, but stands instead on grace: God's love is freely and abundantly given to us despite our inability to earn it.

When Luther and Calvin, Knox and Wesley, and many other courageous men and women, stood fast in their belief that God's grace is all-sufficient, the world changed: literacy was encouraged, public education became a reality, and social programs were created. For the Reformers, the love of God and neighbor became the standard by which all of life's activities and actions were chosen, undergirded with the blessed assurance that even in our weakest moments, Jesus is for us. When we no longer have to obsessively worry about saving our own souls, we are freed up for service to God and each other. (p.4)

Remembering the Reformation—Looking Forward (from p. 3)

There are those who say that inevitably public education, literacy, and social programs would have developed purely as a natural result of the progress of humankind, independent of the influence of the Reformers. I am unconvinced that this is so. I believe that the Holy Spirit inspired the understanding of these chosen disciples, and that the world as we know it was forever changed by their passionate witness to a new interpretation of the gospel.

- Sola Fide, by faith alone.
- Sola Scriptura, by Scripture alone.
- Solus Christus, through Christ alone.
- Sola Gratia, by grace alone.
- Soli Deo Gloria, glory to God alone.

So what does all this mean for us, five hundred years later? Today, Jesus reminds us what our response is to our salvation: to love God wholeheartedly, to serve God joyously, and to see God in the face of our neighbor. May it be so.

The Rev. **Janet Taylor**, Westmount Presbyterian Church, Edmonton, and Braeside Presbyterian Church, St. Alberta
Source: **Website of the Presbytery of Edmonton-Lakeland**
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Luther's Final Prayer

O, my heavenly Father, alone God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, God of all consolation, I thank You for revealing to me Your dear Son, Jesus Christ, in whom I believe, whom I have preached and confessed, whom I have loved and praised. ... I pray You, Lord Jesus Christ, take pity on my little soul. O, heavenly Father, if I must now leave this body and be torn away from this life, I know yet for sure that I shall live with You forever and that no one can tear me away from Your hands

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DayBook Deadlines

3rd Sunday of September,
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2nd Sunday of December,
January, February,
March, April, and May

SESSION

Moderator: Heinrich Grosskopf

Session Clerk: Darlene Eerkes

Deputy Clerk: Iris Routledge

Roll Clerk: Jim Jeatt

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Jane de Caen	Nick Nation
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Peter Eerkes	Fortin
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