



Turning Points

The Beginnings of Protestantism

Welcome!

*Please help yourself to coffee and snacks
and fill in a name tag.*

**Take some time to read our
primary source document for the
morning.**



Opening Group Discussion

- How can we know when God is speaking to us, either individually or as a community?

Martin Luther

- Born in 1483 in Eisleben in Northern Germany, son of a copper smelter
- Tumultuous relationship with parents
- Young relationship with the Church
 - Altar boy, church choir
- Educated at University of Erfurt
 - “Rome” of Germany/Contrast town life
 - Musician
 - BA and Masters toward Law degree

Martin Luther



Significant Events in His Life

- 1505
 - Black Plague
 - Death of closest and other friends
 - Thunderstorm experience
 - “Faced death”
 - Vows to become a monk (St. Anna)
 - Choice between earthly and heavenly Father
 - *“How was he to know that one monk in the family would bring him more fame and shame than a thousand advocates.”*

His Monastic Life

- Augustinian Monk
 - Ascetic, austere life
 - Did it to a Luther-an fullest
 - “...if ever a monk got to heaven by his sheer monkery, it was I.”
 - Believe he would never “live up”
 - Confession
- Business/Worldly Ambassador
 - Monastery “businesses”
 - 1510 visit to Rome
 - Buy “time out” of purgatory (tour of saints)

Turning Points

- 1511 Sent to Wittenburg
 - Johann von Staupitz, study of Scriptures, university teacher, Luther-an fullest
 - Romans 1:17: *“At last... I gave heed to the context of the words, namely... ‘He who through faith is righteous shall live.’ Here I felt that I was altogether born again and had entered paradise itself....”*
- Pope Leo X and Paper indulgences (printing press)
 - Tetzel: *As soon as the coin into the box rings, a soul from purgatory springs.*
 - No longer need confession, penance and the mass

Indulgences



Luther's 95 Theses

- What repetition do you note in the content of Luther's "propositions"?
 - What theology is Luther endorsing?
 - What is Luther ultimately challenging?

Luther's 95 Theses

- Important Note:
 - In Latin to Archbishop Albrecht of Mainz
 - Thought Albrecht didn't know about Tetzel
 - Sent onward to Rome



The German Reformation

- Religion, Politics, and Money
 - Pope's concern: Money
 - Completing St. Peter's Basilica
 - Dominican concern: Religious rivalry
 - Dominican curial jurisdiction: Augustinians
 - Prierias, *Dialogue*: Pope "Head" and "can't err"
 - German concern: Political power
 - Frederick of Saxony, candidate for Holy Roman Emperor, supported Luther
 - Power struggle: Empire, France and papacy: Immense holdings if Charles elected

Frederick of Saxony



Luther's Shift

- From Indulgences to Papacy
 - *“I am quite sure that the Church will never be reformed unless we remove... scholastic theology, philosophy and logic as they are studied today, and put something else in their place.”*
 - Realizes can't reform indulgences without addressing church's self-understanding and theology first
 - Prolific writing between 1517 and 1521
 - Theology of grace; pope as anti-Christ

1521 Diet of Worms

- *“It is through living, indeed through dying and being damned that one becomes a theologian, not through understanding, reading or speculation.”*
 - Not a hearing; a demand to recant
 - Excommunicated from the church
 - Outlawed by the state
- Outcome
 - Year at Frederick’s Wartburg Castle disguised as a knight
 - Translated New Testament into German
 - Printed in 1522; Readable and accessible
 - From Hebrew and Greek texts, not Latin Vulgate
 - Not word for word; sense for sense
 - Universal education: everyone able to read God’s word



*"Unless I am convinced
by proofs from Scriptures
or by plain and clear
reasons and arguments,
I can and will not retract,
for it is neither safe nor
wise to do anything against
conscience. Here I stand.
I can do no other. God
help me. Amen!"*

Martin Luther
(1483-1547)

The Other Side

- Emperor Charles V (21)
 - King of Spain, Holy Roman Emperor (akin to Charlemagne)
 - descended from “most Christian” monarchs of Germany, Spain, Austria and Burgundy who had “remained faithful sons of the church”
 - “It is certain that a single friar errs in his opinion which is against all of Christendom and according to which all of Christianity will be and will always have in error both in the past thousand years and in the present.”
 - “...be a great shame...if suspicion of heresy or decrease of the Christian religion should through our negligence dwell after us in the hear of men and our successors to our perpetual dishonor.”

New “Lutheran” Church

- Changes
 - No Office of Bishop: Pastors instead
 - No celibacy requirement (Luther marries Katherine von Bora, a former nun)
 - No Latin liturgy: German instead
 - Communion includes bread and wine to laity
 - Preaching and teaching more important than the mass
- Unchanged: View of Sacraments

Ripples

- Catholics and Protestants
- Relationship between civil and ecclesiastical power
- Authority of individual conscience and authority and tradition
- Multiple “Reformations”: Karlstadt, Zwingli, Anabaptists, Calvin
- Johann Sebastian Bach, Soren Kierkegaard, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, John Bunyan, John Wesley, Charles Wesley

Serendipity?

- What does it take or what is needed for one person to so change the religious world?
 - Luther's experiences affected his religious "shifts" in thinking
 - Political powers furthered Luther's ability to act
 - Religious climate enabled his thoughts to be accepted

So where is God in all this?

- How do we know if we're standing for God's truth or simply furthering our own thinking?
 - Was Luther humble and being led by God's Spirit or was he arrogant and unyielding?
- Do we consider how our politics and experiences may direct our faith, its practices, and theology?
 - What might have happened if Luther hadn't had the experiences he had and/or the politics of the day weren't on his side?