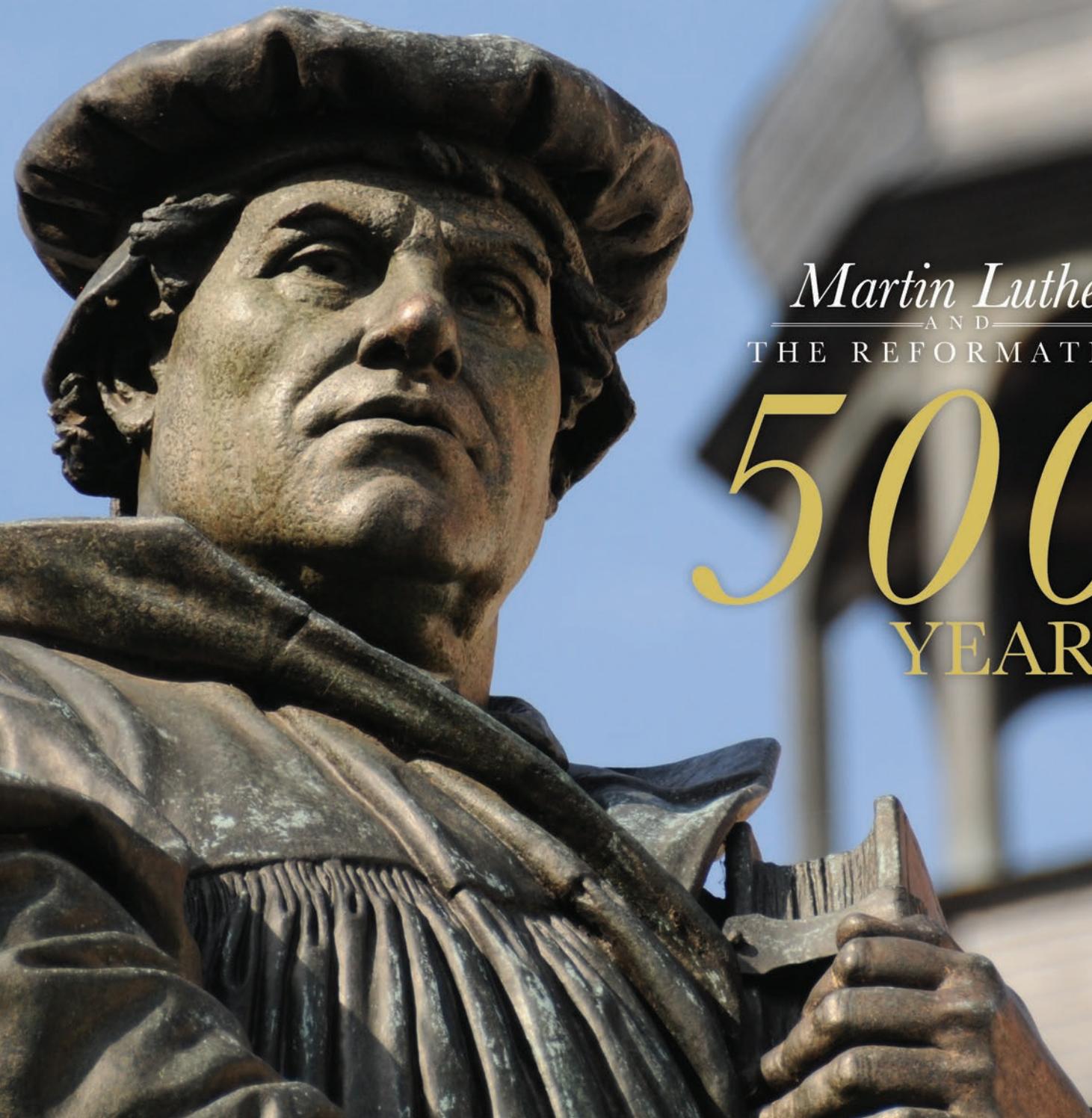


G O D ' S M I S S I O N A R Y
STANDARD



Martin Luther
AND
THE REFORMATION

500
YEARS

AUGUST 2017
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THANK YOU

At the God's Missionary Ministerial in February of 2007, I received a rather shocking surprise. Conference President Harry Plank approached me and asked if I would consider being the editor of the *God's Missionary Standard*. I was flabbergasted. I had zero experience being an editor and up to that point had written very little other than college papers.

With much hesitation, I agreed. Ten years later, I have loved every minute of it. Being editor of the *Standard* has become one of the great joys of my life. Taking an idea from nothing, to publication has been rewarding.

But it is time to step aside. For the past two years, I have felt God leading me to pursue writing a series of books that will teach children how to study the Bible. I tried to do it while continuing to be editor, and it just hasn't worked. So back in February, I informed Conference President Jacob Martin that the August 2017 issue of the *Standard* would be the final issue that I would serve as editor. I will offer guidance to the next editor for the last few issues of 2017 if needed.

To all of you who have offered words of encouragement over these ten years, thank you. The fifty-two writers who have written articles for the *Standard*, thank you. Having Jon Plank as my graphic artist has made the job of being editor so much easier. He took the ready text, and made it beautiful. Paul Bell has proof-read almost every word of the fifty issues that I edited, and that has been so helpful. It has been a high honor of mine to be editor of this great publication.

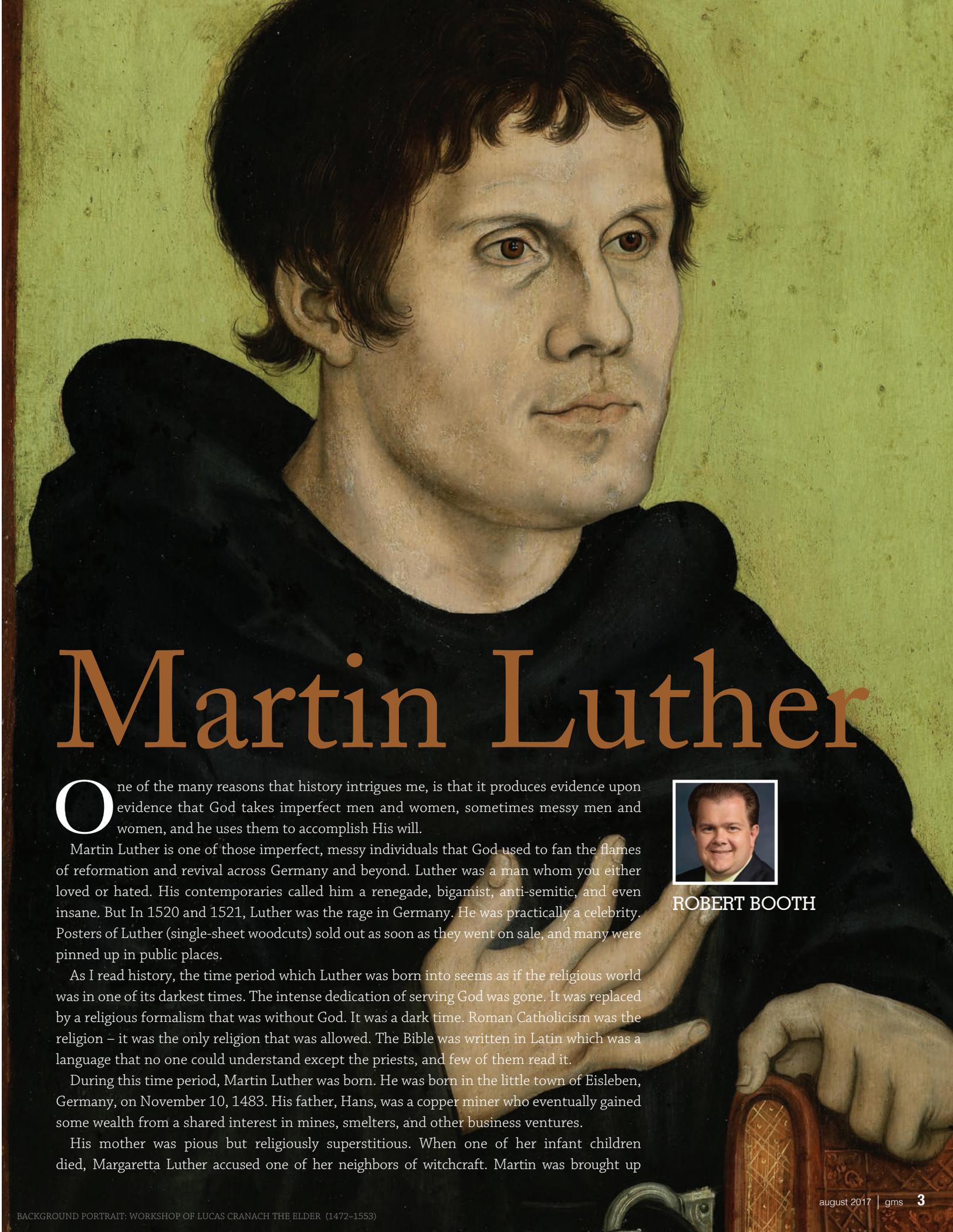
This last issue that I have had the privilege of editing is about the 500th anniversary of the start of the Protestant Reformation. It features some great themes written by excellent writers that I know you will enjoy. While often messy, our history is intrinsically connected to the German Reformation and this issue of the *Standard* pays tribute to that. ☑



ROBERT BOOTH

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Martin Luther

One of the many reasons that history intrigues me, is that it produces evidence upon evidence that God takes imperfect men and women, sometimes messy men and women, and he uses them to accomplish His will.

Martin Luther is one of those imperfect, messy individuals that God used to fan the flames of reformation and revival across Germany and beyond. Luther was a man whom you either loved or hated. His contemporaries called him a renegade, bigamist, anti-semitic, and even insane. But In 1520 and 1521, Luther was the rage in Germany. He was practically a celebrity. Posters of Luther (single-sheet woodcuts) sold out as soon as they went on sale, and many were pinned up in public places.

As I read history, the time period which Luther was born into seems as if the religious world was in one of its darkest times. The intense dedication of serving God was gone. It was replaced by a religious formalism that was without God. It was a dark time. Roman Catholicism was the religion – it was the only religion that was allowed. The Bible was written in Latin which was a language that no one could understand except the priests, and few of them read it.

During this time period, Martin Luther was born. He was born in the little town of Eisleben, Germany, on November 10, 1483. His father, Hans, was a copper miner who eventually gained some wealth from a shared interest in mines, smelters, and other business ventures.

His mother was pious but religiously superstitious. When one of her infant children died, Margareta Luther accused one of her neighbors of witchcraft. Martin was brought up



ROBERT BOOTH

believing that one should wear charms, recite incantations, sprinkle the hearth with holy water, and employ such other resources as the Church provided to ward off their attacks.

Luther's dad wanted Martin to be a lawyer. So he pursued education at Eisenach and then at the University of Erfurt. But Luther's life took an unexpected turn in July 1505, when he was twenty-one. He was caught in a severe thunderstorm and knocked to the ground by a nearby lightning strike. Terrified, he cried out to the Catholic patroness of miners, "Help me, St. Anne, and I will become a monk." Luther survived the storm and made good on his dramatic vow. Two weeks later, he entered the Augustinian monastery in Erfurt. His father was furious over Luther's apparent wasted education, but Luther was determined to follow through on his vow.

In the Augustinian monastery, Luther was driven to find acceptance with God through works. Here are several quotes that he wrote.

"I tortured myself with prayer, fasting, vigils and freezing; the frost alone might have killed me... "

"What else did I seek by doing this but God, who was supposed to note my strict observance of the monastic order and my austere life? "

"I constantly walked in a dream and lived in real idolatry, for I did not believe in Christ:

"I regarded Him only as a severe and terrible Judge portrayed as seated on a rainbow"

In 1507, Luther was ordained to the priesthood. When he celebrated his first Mass, as he held the bread and cup for the first time, he was so awestruck that he nearly fainted. "I was utterly stupefied and terror-stricken," he confessed. "I thought to myself, "Who am I that I should lift up mine eyes or raise my hands to the divine majesty? For I am dust and ashes and full of sin, and I am speaking to the living, eternal and true God"

In 1510, Luther went to Rome, where he witnessed the corruption of the Roman church. He climbed the Holy Stairs, supposedly the same stairs Jesus ascended when He appeared before Pilate. According to legend, the steps had been moved from Jerusalem to Rome, and the priests claimed that God forgave sins for those who climbed the stairs on their knees. Luther did so, and paid money to climb the steps while he said the Lord's Prayer. But somewhere on the steps, he looked back and thought, "Who knows whether this is true?"



Luther Before the Diet of Worms

ANTON VON WERNER (1843-1915)

In 1517, a Dominican itinerant named John Tetzel began to sell indulgences near Wittenberg with the offer of the forgiveness of sins. This practice had been started during the Crusades to raise money for the church. People could purchase from the church a letter that supposedly freed a dead loved one from purgatory. But in this case, the proceeds were intended to help Pope Leo X pay for a new St. Peter's Basilica in Rome that he wanted built. The same St. Peter's Basilica that exists today. This enraged Luther. He determined that there must be a public debate on the matter. So on October 31, 1517, he nailed a list of Ninety-five Theses regarding indulgences to the front door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg.

Here are six samples of Luther's theses:

Thesis 1. When our Lord and Master, Jesus Christ, says "Repent ye," etc., He means that the entire life of the faithful should be a repentance.

Thesis 2. This statement cannot be understood of the sacrament of penance, i.e., of confession and satisfaction, which is administered by the priesthood.

Thesis 27. They preach human folly who pretend that as soon as money in the coffer rings, a soul from purgatory springs.

Thesis 32. Those who suppose that on account of their letters of indulgence they are sure of salvation will be eternally damned along with their teachers.

Thesis 36. Every Christian who truly repents has plenary [full] forgiveness both of punishment and guilt bestowed on him, even without letters of indulgence.



Thesis 82. Why does not the pope empty purgatory for the sake of holy love ... for after all, he does release countless souls for the sake of sordid money contributed for the building of a cathedral?

Nailing such theses to the church door was a common practice in the scholarly debates of the time. Luther hoped to provoke calm discussion among the faculty, not a popular revolution. But a copy fell into the hands of a printer, who saw that the Ninety-five Theses were printed and spread throughout Germany and Europe in a few weeks. Luther became an overnight hero. With that, the Reformation essentially was born.

In the midst of his spiritual struggles, Luther had become obsessed with Romans 1:17: "For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, "The just shall live by faith." Man is not saved by his good works but by trusting the finished work of Christ. Justification by faith alone became the central tenet of the Reformation.

But, justification by faith alone clashed with Rome's teaching of justification by faith and works. So the pope denounced Luther for preaching "dangerous doctrines" and summoned him to Rome.

But Luther refused, so he was called to Leipzig in 1519 for a public debate with John Eck, a Catholic theologian. In this dispute, Luther affirmed that a church council could err, a point that had been made by John Wycliffe and John Hus. Luther went on to say that the authority of the pope was a recent creation and that it contradicted Scripture. By

taking this stand, Luther took on papal authority.

In the summer of 1520, the pope issued an edict. The document began by saying: "Arise, O Lord, and judge Your cause. A wild boar has invaded Your vineyard." With these words, the pope was referring to Luther as an unrestrained animal causing havoc. Over forty of Luther's teachings were deemed to be heretical and Luther had sixty days to repent or suffer excommunication. He responded by publicly burning the papal bull.

The theses that were nailed to the door of Castle Church in Wittenberg, gave way to an assembly room in the city of Worms. The year was 1521, and Luther was summoned to appear before the newly crowned king. The young Holy Roman emperor, Charles V, summoned Luther to appear at the Diet of Worms in Worms, Germany. He was flanked by his advisor who was a representative of the Pope.

When Luther entered the room, he was faced with a table on which were stacked books and pamphlets. He recognized them. They were his writings.

Then came the question. "Luther, you have written, you have preached, but faced with the gravity of this situation, will you recant? Will you take back everything you have said to have acceptance of the court?" Luther asked for an evening to pray. He was granted it. The next day, the miner's son, a simple village priest walked back into the assembly room. And in my imagination, the entire world was waiting his reply. John Eck, the spokesman for Rome said, "I ask you Martin Luther, will you recant?"

Martin Luther replied; "Unless I am convinced by the testimony of the Scriptures or by clear reason, for I do not trust either in the pope or in councils alone, since it is well known that they have often erred and contradicted themselves, I am bound by the Scriptures I have quoted and my conscience is captive to the Word of God. I cannot and I will not recant anything, since it is neither safe nor right to go against conscience. I cannot do otherwise. Here I stand, may God help me, Amen." These defiant words became the Reformation battle cry.

As Luther stood against the wrong that was being taught, so must we stand against evil and wrong. Yes, times are different, it is 500 years since Luther nailed the 95 theses. But God still needs men and women to stand in the face of evil and say, "some things are just not for sale." ❏

"MUSIC IS MORE THAN 'FILLER' OR 'PRELIMINARY TO THE SERMON.'
MUSIC SHOULD PRESENT THE WORD OF GOD WITH POWER AND AUTHORITY."

RANDALL MCELWAIN



Music

AND THE

Reformation

To introduce the music of the Reformation for Music History students, I often contrast two photographs: a Roman Catholic cathedral and a Lutheran church. The focal point of the Catholic church is the altar where the Mass was celebrated; the focal point of the Lutheran church is the pulpit where the Word was preached.

Perceptive students often notice a second focal point in the Lutheran church—the pipe organ at the front of the church. This reminds students of the centrality of music in Reformation churches.

Based on 1 Chronicles 25:1, one author defined a church musician as a person who “preaches with music.” That is how the Reformers saw music. Music is more than “filler” or “preliminary to the sermon.” Music should present the Word of God with power and authority.

There are at least three ways in which the Reformation impacted music. Each of these continues to influence church music today.

Luther taught us the value of hymns for learning Scripture. Read Psalm 46 and then sing Luther’s “A Mighty Fortress.” Luther understood that a great text set to powerful music makes Scripture memorable. Luther’s setting of Psalm 46 has encouraged multitudes of believers in the face of Satan’s attacks.

As Wesleyans, we benefit from this Reformation heritage. Many Wesley hymns are paraphrases of Scripture. Thomas Chisholm based “Great is Thy Faithfulness” on Lamentations

3:23. In many of our greatest hymns, we sing God’s Word set to music.

Luther taught us the value of hymns for learning doctrine. One of Luther’s lesser known hymns (“We All Believe in One True God”) is a poetic setting of the Nicene Creed. Luther knew that hymns help us remember and understand the great doctrines of our faith.

Through our hymnals, we enjoy this same heritage. The Wesleyan hymnal was a textbook of holiness doctrine. Wesley helps us celebrate the joy of knowing we are saved as we sing “And Can It Be.”

*No condemnation now I dread,
Jesus, and all in him, is mine.
Alive in him, my living head,
And clothed in righteousness divine,
Bold I approach th’eternal throne,
And claim the crown, through Christ my own*

A later hymn-writer rejoiced in that same assurance:

*Mercy there was great and grace was free;
Pardon there was multiplied to me;
There my burdened soul found liberty,
At Calvary!*

In a great hymn, Wesley prayed for a pure heart restored in the image of our heavenly Father, a heart of perfect love:

A heart in every thought renewed,

*And full of love divine;
Perfect, and right, and pure, and good -
A copy, Lord, of thine!*

In the same way, a later Methodist hymn-writer prayed:

*O to be like Thee! blessed Redeemer,
This is my constant longing and prayer;
Gladly I'll forfeit all of earth's treasures, Jesus,
Thy perfect likeness to wear.*

Luther taught us the value of congregational singing.

One of Luther's great emphases was the "priesthood of the believer." This doctrine means that we have access to the Father not through a priest, but through the intercession of our Great High Priest who sits at the right hand of the Father.

This doctrine motivated Luther's emphasis on congregational singing. Instead of choirs singing to the congregation, Luther had choirs sing with the congregation. Luther loved choral music, but he insisted that the primary music of the church was sung by the congregation.

Wesleyans inherited this great emphasis. Methodist churches were singing churches. Every Methodist home included two books—a Bible and a hymnbook. A highlight of every Methodist service was the congregational singing.

The Reformation and Church Music Today

We were (and must remain) singing Methodists! As holiness people, we have inherited a rich Reformation heritage. We must not give it up!

Please do not allow empty ditties to replace the great biblical and doctrinal hymns of our tradition. Does this mean that we should sing only old hymns? No! There are many new songs based on Scripture and sound doctrine. Sing them joyfully. But never settle for musical chaff.

Please do not give up our heritage of congregational singing. It is easy to allow a few musicians to replace the congregation as the primary musicians in the service. I have watched congregations

- sit passively while a choir sang all the music;
- sway and clap while a praise team sang songs that few in the congregation understood;
- mumble half-heartedly during congregational singing and then run the aisles during the "special singing."

What had happened? The congregation had forgotten that all who are "marching to Zion" are called to

*Join in a song with sweet accord,
And thus surround the throne.*

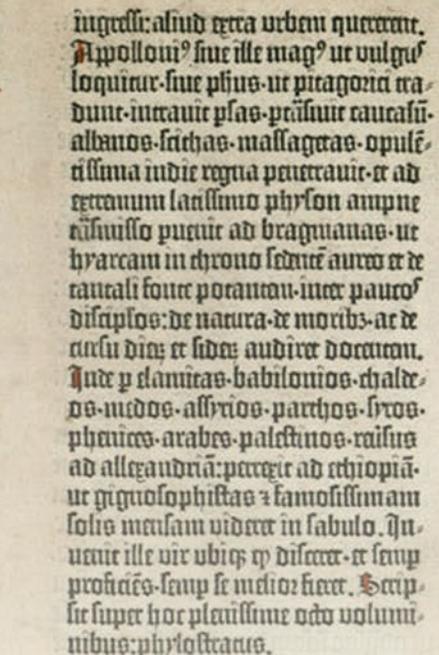
In this anniversary of the Reformation, let us hold to our heritage of great biblical hymns. Like Luther, Watts, Wesley, Crosby, and a host of others, let us "praise Him, praise Him ever in joyful song!" ❏

What is saving faith? An oft-used demonstration illustrates the Latin words Luther used to explain it: notitia, assensus, and fiducia. Imagine I ask my daughter, Hannah (6), to stand. I promise, "If you fall back, I'll catch you." If she falls, I can declare: "This is an illustration of faith." The first element of faith, notitia, is the content believed. Here: "If you fall back I'll catch you." The second element, assensus, is confidence this content is true. If Hannah believes what I said, this is good and necessary. However, it is not yet faith. A line must be crossed to get to faith. That line is fiducia, or commitment. If, as she stands, I ask, "In your heart, have you already fallen? Do you trust me?" and she genuinely has and does - that's faith. It's the personal, inward entrusting of oneself to the promise giver. The promise isn't considered true in general or in theory; there is a personal abandonment to it. Faith is exercised inwardly before it is expressed outwardly.

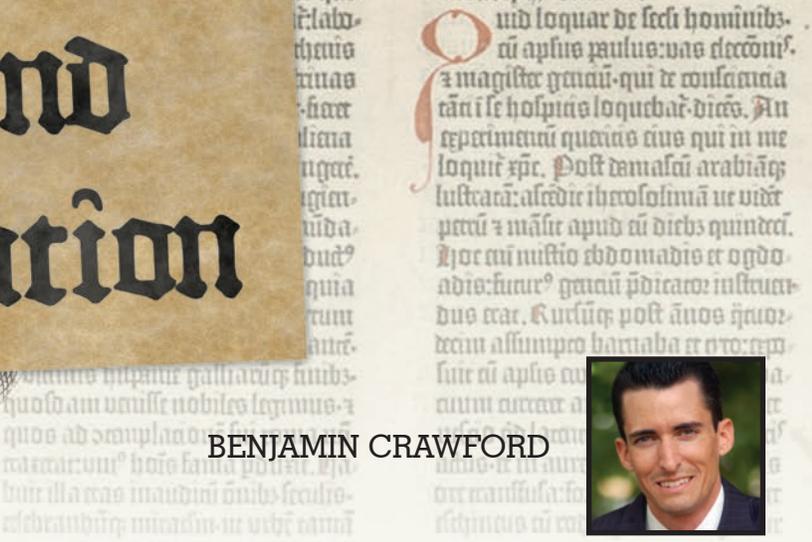
Likewise, a Christian has heard the content of the Gospel, is convinced of its truthfulness, and has committed himself to Christ. James warns: "The devils believe and tremble" (Jam. 2:19). They get the first two parts right! A Christian has gone on to transfer the weight of his trust exclusively upon Christ. The nature of this faith exercised necessitates an expression. To say our hearts have fallen in abandon into God's arms of mercy (faith), while our lives refuse to fall into the arms of His will (obedience), betrays a dead faith. If, after claiming to have inwardly fallen, Hannah refuses to fall outwardly - it proves her claim to be mistaken.

Paul and James cite Abram's starry night experience in their teaching on faith. As Abram gazes up, he believes God's promise of innumerable descendants. Does his faith have content? Yes. Does he have confidence God's promise is true? Yes. Does he inwardly entrust himself into God's hands? Yes! Therefore, God "counted it to him for righteousness" (Gen. 15:6). This righteousness is granted before he has lifted a finger of obedience! On what basis is it granted? Faith! Paul's logic in Romans 4 is that, likewise, a believer is declared righteous by faith. James' logic is that if Abram truly did fall on the inside on that starry night, we must expect to see an outward falling in obedience. Do we? He refers to Abraham's ascent of Mt. Moriah with Isaac. This costly obedience is the expression of the faith.

Justification by faith is central in Paul and Luther's testimonies and doctrine. Wesley would become an alumnus of the same School of Works. Despite high honours, death terrified him. His Self-Righteous Living degree might garner applause in life, but was worthless in death. In a script only God could write, as Wesley listened to Luther's words on Paul, the Spirit opened his eyes to see what they had seen. "While he [Luther] was describing the change which God wrought in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed," he wrote. "I felt I did trust in Christ, and Christ alone for salvation." His heart fell entirely upon Christ! And there, before he took a step of obedience - the gates of paradise opened. He felt the warm embrace of his Father's acceptance. How? By faith. Alone. ❏



Gutenberg and the Reformation



BENJAMIN CRAWFORD

It was recently in Hong Kong, a former colony of the British Empire, for an exhibition commemorating the 500th Anniversary of the Protestant Reformation. Ancient scrolls, medieval manuscripts and early printed books told the story of how the Bible was written and preserved. Historic displays lined the walls, as tens of thousands came in tribute to the global impact of the Book of Books.

Yet amid all the treasures therein displayed, the center of the exhibition hall did not contain the relic of a saint nor the remnant of a scroll...but instead, in that place of honor, stood a plain wooden example of a humble printing press.

In the 1440s, a generation before Columbus set sail to the New World, a man named Johannes Gutenberg was on brink of an exciting invention that would unexpectedly alter the course of human history. That invention, the world's first movable-type press, would enable the spread of the gospel in ways that a previous generation could never have imagined.

Today, the words on this page are taken for granted. We read and write with ease. Through the advent of social media, words

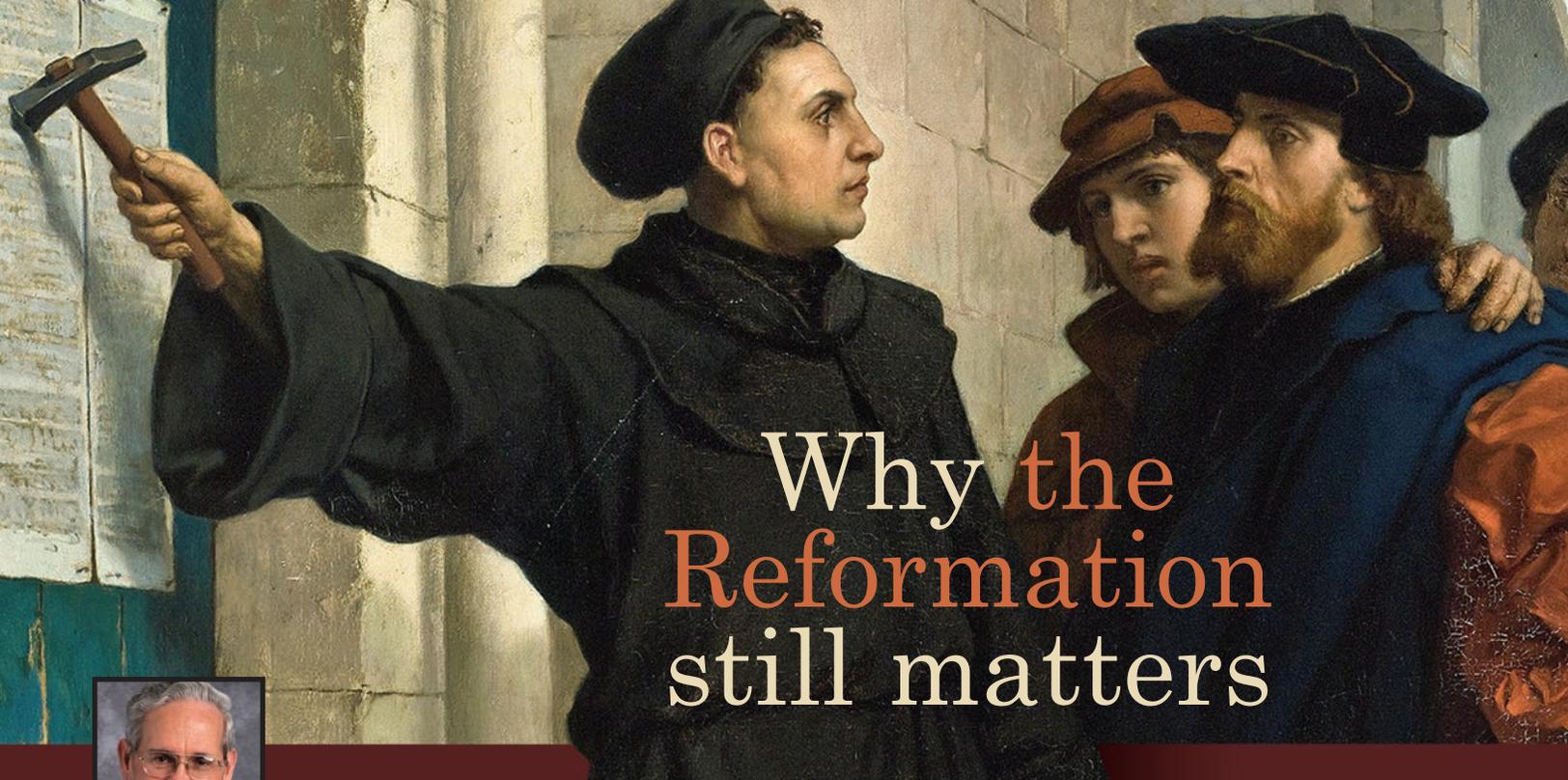
written in a moment may be instantly published and simultaneously hurled around the world.

But prior to Gutenberg, the mass dissemination of any written message was a painstaking and difficult task. The publication of this magazine itself would have been a virtual impossibility. It was necessary for every recorded word to be written by hand...and a large book, such as the Bible, could take as long as two years to produce a single copy.

Born in the German city of Mainz around 1397, Gutenberg developed his printing process while living in Strasbourg. Returning to his hometown, he opened a workshop. And it was there where his first large-scale printing project began - the publication of the Bible in Latin, including both the Old and New Testaments in two large folio volumes.

Known today as the Gutenberg Bible, the "world's first printed book" was completed in 1455.

It is estimated that between 160-180 copies were printed. Around fifty of those copies still exist today, including surviving fragments. Most are the property *continued on page 10*



Why the Reformation still matters

PAINTING BY FERDINAND PAUWELS (1830-1904)



TIMOTHY COOLEY, SR.

Does something that happened 500 years ago have any relevance for today? At the time, the Roman Catholic Church dominated Western Europe and England. The Pope had begun to extend control throughout the New World and into the Far East. But Rome was corrupt and had distorted the truth so terribly that they were misleading people about the way of salvation—and harvesting money from it! Through the maze of many specific objections raised by the Reformers, scholars have identified themes that were central to the Reformation. The Protestant Reformers themselves used the Latin word *sola* to strip away teachings the Roman Catholic Church had added to the Scriptures and to point the way back to what Scripture itself required. *Sola Fide* (only by faith) and *Sola Gratia* (only by grace) were particularly emphasized by the Reformers, but these *solas* were based on the concept of *Sola Scriptura*. Engelder (1916) epitomized the Reformation with these three *solas*. Later, other scholars added separate *solas* to make a total of five, including *Solus Christi* (Christ alone) and *Soli Deo Gloria* (to God alone be glory). Pithy slogans serve as useful watchwords, but they always need more explanation.

The radical word *sola* articulated the uncompromising stand Luther took. He would allow “nothing else than.” He would leave no room for the accretions Rome had plastered over the Biblical truth.

Sola Gratia (only by grace) stressed that salvation is the free gift of God, initiated and carried out by Himself! God does not owe salvation to anyone! No human can merit anything from God—not the saints, not the Virgin Mary, and definitely not any sinner! God alone must bring salvation or everyone would

be damned! No one could do anything toward salvation! Carried too far, this produced a view of predestination in which God chooses the elect regardless of anything they have ever done or would ever do. Scripture indeed teaches that nothing we do can cause or merit our salvation, but Scripture also calls for us to repent and believe. There is a part for humans to play to receive the gift. Wesley balanced this by teaching that God offers salvation freely to all, that we can do nothing in ourselves, but also that God enables humans to choose to respond in faith through prevenient grace. Still Luther’s watchword is fitting; we are saved by grace alone!

Sola Fide summarizes the teaching that we are not saved by works, not even by our own repenting. Our faith does not produce our justification; it does not merit our justification; we simply reach out by faith and receive justification. We are “justified by faith without the deeds of the law” (Romans 3:28). Luther inserted the word “alone” in his translation so that it read “by faith alone.” Boice (2001, p. 35) declared, “The Reformers never tired of saying that ‘justification is by grace alone through faith alone because of Christ alone.’” But how does that square with James 2:24 where we read “that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.” Luther had a hard time with James! Wesley went straight to Galatians 5:6, to teach “faith which worketh by love.” We agree with Chambers (2000, p. 838), who explained, “When I turn to God and by belief accept what God reveals, . . . by the supernatural miracle of God’s grace I stand justified, not because I am sorry for my sin, not because I have repented, but because of what Jesus has done.” Yet Luther went so far in rejecting human works, that he thought even obedience had no part in one’s salvation. He

affirmed that a Christian is at the same time just (righteous) and sinning (simul justus et peccator). We object that separating faith from obedience is unbiblical. We can agree to “faith alone” only as long as we understand that saving faith does not remain alone, but rather brings with it obedience.

Sola Scriptura is the foundation for the other two. This sola locates ultimate authority in the Scriptures, not the Church. The Roman Catholic Church believed that God reveals additional truths to the Church and those insights, known as Tradition, become authoritative, not because they are found in the Bible, but because God revealed them to the Church. For example, they teach people to pray to the Virgin Mary and to pay money to deliver souls from purgatory. Luther taught that Scripture alone is the authority. We believe that Scripture is the basis of our knowledge about God, human nature, and even aspects of the world around us (in whatever Scripture affirms), but we also recognize that we have many centuries of brothers

and sisters who have written down what they understood the Bible to say. Insofar as those interpreters agree with Scripture we respect their insights, but their writings must always be evaluated by the Scripture. While there are certainly Scriptures that are difficult to interpret, Luther believed that even simple people could understand the basic meaning of the Scriptures.

The Reformation still matters because with these three solas we are cast upon the Word of God to show us Christ, to inspire our faith in Christ, and to assure our hearts of salvation by the grace of God showered upon us through Christ! We prioritize Scripture above the Church, yet we still value the understandings bequeathed by our brothers and sisters. We continue to feel the caution not to over-emphasize works until we lose sight of faith and not to deemphasize works until we excuse living in sin. We balance grace as pardon freely given with grace as transforming enablement to live in victory as we cooperate with the Holy Spirit. 📌

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continued from **page 8** of national governments or public institutions, while a select few remain in private hands.

At time of publication, a copy sold for the equivalent of three years wages at a clerk’s salary (interestingly enough, now over five centuries later, I recently examined a single ornate page of the Gutenberg Bible that was for offered for sale at a similar price). Despite its seemingly high cost, the price of a newly printed Gutenberg Bible was merely a fraction of that of a manuscript Bible that had been written by hand.

Were he alive today, Gutenberg would be utterly amazed to see copies of the Bible may now be freely given away.

Nevertheless, it was Gutenberg’s press that would relentlessly drive down the cost of books, multiplying production and giving rise to a new information age. By the year 1500, it is estimated that at least half a million printed books had entered circulation. Literacy levels rose as priced dropped.

By the early years of the Renaissance, book fairs were familiar sights in cities across Europe. And if the power of the pen was mightier than the sword...the power of the press provided the means to marshal a modern army.

In 1517, when a little known priest named Martin Luther nailed his Ninety-Five Theses to a German church door, he had multiple copies to hand out.

In 1525, when William Tyndale published the first printed English New Testament, all the power of the Church of Rome was insufficient to stop its distribution. When the bishop sought to buy and burn every copy of Tyndale’s work, the funds

were merely placed into printing additional copies. And when Tyndale was burned at the stake with copies of the English Bible about him, the printing presses of Europe continued the forward march of that mighty army, until he being dead yet speaketh.

In the King James Bible, the crowning jewel of English Bible translation, the work of William Tyndale is overwhelming reflected throughout the New Testament. Scholars state that over 80% of its text may be said to be “his work.” Thus our common English version provides a direct line to the earliest days of those first sacrificial printings.

The printing press, as designed by Gutenberg, would remain largely unchanged until the nineteenth century. At that time, there was no question that a rugged piece of medieval machinery had literally changed the world. And the influence of the Bible - wisely chosen as the world’s first printed book - only continued to grow.

With over one billion copies in print, the Bible remains the best-selling book of all time. It has been translated into every major language. Copies have been carried to every nation around the globe. And in 1971, a copy of the Bible became the first printed book to make landfall on the surface of the moon.

When setting the letters of his press for the first time, the hands of Johannes Gutenberg were pushing back the darkness. And were he alive today - I believe he would say, “That is a story that should be in print.” 📌

president

March 27- April 02: Burlington, KY - I was blessed to be involved in a special move of God.

April 04: Harrisburg, I met with a pastor of a small church who was sharing his burden for help.

April 05: Selinsgrove, God's Missionary Youth Camp President Matt Maloyed and Vice President Aaron McCarty met with Dan Durkee and myself for a transitional meeting.

April 06: World Mission Board - we talked with Bro. Mobley by phone about Haiti.

P.V.B.I. Missions Convention - "Fulfilling God's Dream" - Bro. Gibson shared one session about God's Dream for the local church. He made this statement: "If we don't invite people into our homes we are missing it."

April 09: Gratz Revival, Rev. Harry Plank and David and Francis Fuller were the guest workers. They all ministered effectively. The fellowship & food after church was great. Thanks Sis. Durkee.

Camp Hill - Rev. Stephen Cassidy preached about "Going a little Further."

April 10: Home Missions Board Meeting - Exciting updates from our Home Missions pastors. God is working with those that will work with Him.

Penn View Founders Dinner. We thank God for all those who are making investments in our school.

April 12: Beavertown - Hobe Sound Bible College choir did a great job ministering in music.

April 13: Penn View and General Board Meetings today. Pastoral ballots were opened. I called each pastor and shared the good results of the votes.

April 14-15: Taberg, NY - I went with our Home Missions Director to try to help clarify the next steps in this area.

April 17-20: Dayton OH, I.H.C. - The convention was blessed with great preaching, singing, and giving. Best of all, God's Presence!

April 25-30: Penns Valley - I preached and even sang with Rhoda 4 times during this Revival Meeting effort. Great fellowship at church and around the campfire Friday night.

May 01: Hanover Camp Board meeting. We appreciate the good sense of unity. The Camp President, Bro. Fisher, is doing a good job leading the camp.

May 03: Lewistown Revival - Bro. Fulton gave a challenging message about Spiritual Dehydration.

May 05: Penn View Campus Days had 125 young people that participated. Pray for laborers in the harvest field.

May 08: General Board Meeting - We met to discuss the Media Ministry.

May 10: Rebersburg - I met with Bro. Barry Bennett to discuss their need for a pastor. He also gave me a tour of the parsonage.

May 12: We attended Rev. & Mrs. Johnathan Arnold's beautiful wedding. We are praying for God's best in their lives and ministry.

May 15-16: Relaxed and took a couple days off to fish for bass and crappies. I was also able to witness and pray with a man at one of my fishing spots.



JACOB MARTIN

May 18: Pillow - I spoke at an Appreciation Banquet held by the pastor and his wife. The Dorman's shared nice words, wonderful food and a powerful song to express their appreciation for those working with them at the church.

May 19: Lebanon - Rhoda and I were privileged to attend a revival meeting at the Gospel Center. Rev. Fred Bennett was the evangelist. Key thought, "If we obey God's Go - He will

lead us. God is in the instructions." The Bennett children did a great job singing.

May 21: Lehighton - It was nice to worship with a group of 25 people. Sis. Mosley's saxophone special added to our time of worship.

Beavertown - I was privileged to fill the pulpit while a couple of the pastors were at the G.B.S. Installation Service for Rev. Rodney Loper.

May 22: Home Missions Board - We discussed budgets and church needs.

May 26: Geisinger Hospital - We visited a lady dying with cancer. A concerned daughter wanted us to try to talk and have prayer with her. We then visited Rev. Russ and Janet Witmer in their home. Sis. Witmer has an incurable disease and needs our prayers. Pray that God's special presence and grace will be with them.

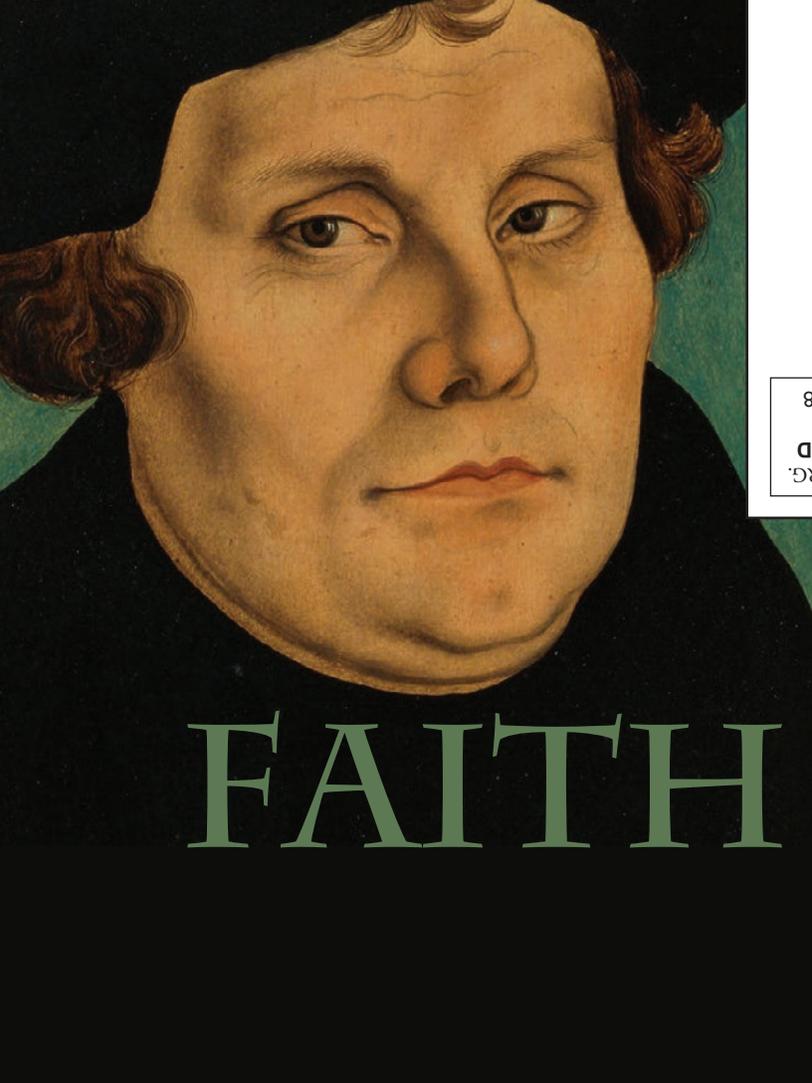
May 27: Attended the wedding of Doug Gardei and Jessica Walter. Thanks Doug for your labors at Penn View. We wish you both God's best.

Enjoyed visiting and playing at Cade Davis's graduation party. I don't know how my preacher friend's children got so old so fast.

May 28: Visited Rev. Donald Kiscadden in the Hershey Hospital.

Baccalaureate Service at Penn View. Rev. Jeremy Fuller gave an excellent exhortation to both young and old from Isaiah 54:2,3. The points were: 1. Think Big 2. Dig Deep 3. Keep True.

May 29: Penn View Graduation. Great job students and faculty. 



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FAITH ALONE



NATHAN PURDY

A year before he died, Martin Luther wrote, “I felt as if I were entirely born again and had entered paradise itself through gates that had been flung open.” These words point back to a defining time in his life. Perhaps, as some suggest, they have a hint of hyperbole. However, given how tortured his soul was prior to this moment, the flourish appears justified. Luther was a frustrated valedictorian in the School of Works; a school accredited to confer a status found praiseworthy by men, but unable to confer peace with God. What, then, brought about this testimony of heaven’s acceptance? “I ... began,” he wrote, “to understand that the righteousness of God is that through which the righteous live by a gift of God, namely by faith.” Well might he use such glowing terms! Right standing before God was not given in payment for effort; it was gifted in response to faith. Alone.

Salvation by faith alone rests at the heart of Luther’s experience. However, his testimony answers a pressing question: where did he come upon this doctrine? Could it be the figment of an over-fasted monk’s imagination? No! “I was seized,” he wrote, “with the conviction that I must understand [Paul’s] letter to the Romans.” There, in the inspired Word, the Spirit showed Luther

what He had shown Paul, a previous summa cum laude grad of this School of Works. Self-Righteous Living degrees are worthless before God. God accepted Paul on the same basis as paupers and prostitutes - faith. Alone.

As Paul argues in Romans, saving faith isn’t faith in something in general or faith in faith. It is “faith in Jesus” (Rom. 3:22). “All have sinned” (Rom. 3:23) and “the wages of sin is death” (Rom. 6:23). Humanity stands guilty and condemned under God’s judgement. The Bible’s heart, however, throbs with the message that Christ died “for us” (Rom. 5:8). His death was God’s judgement upon our sin and perfectly satisfied the demands of God’s justice. It is faith in Christ that flings those gates open! Luther’s Reformation doctrine is an echo of Paul’s inspired doctrine.

Paul spared no ink explaining this doctrine. Moreover, repeated attempts to morph “Faith alone” into “Faith and ...” forced him into frequent and frank defenses of this truth. A faulty definition risks damnation; it’s false doctrine. To append anything to faith in Christ as the basis of acceptance with God does not merely dilute Terrific News into Tolerable News, it turns it into Terrible News. Such news cannot save. Preachers of the Terrible News are to be “accursed” (Gal. 1:8).

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