

Reformation Day

Written by K B Napier
Thursday, 19 March 2015 09:15

Perhaps you have not heard of 'Reformation Day'? It is celebrated on October 31st every year, especially by Lutheran churches... which is odd since this denomination has gone so far down the road of heresy and Romanism. The Day itself is kept in memory of the Reformation. Interestingly, though Slovenia is now steeped in Roman Catholicism, it, too, celebrates Reformation Day, because of the immense influence the Reformation had on the country. It has even been a national holiday in Chile since 2008. In the USA many churches have moved the date so that it is held on the Sunday before October 31

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(called 'Reformation Sunday').

For those still unsure of why the Reformation came about... Martin Luther, though himself a Roman Catholic monk and professor, wrote a complaint to the Archbishop of Mainz, about indulgences. It followed the money-grabbing stunt pulled by Rome, who sent Johann Tetzel to Germany to raise money to rebuild St Peter's Basilica, by selling indulgences. Tetzel was the 'Commissioner for Indulgences'.

Luther attached a manuscript to his letter to the Archbishop; it was a copy of his "*Disputation of Martin Luther on the Power and Efficacy of Indulgences*".

This became known as 'The 95 Theses'

(see our article by the same name). It was written in an academic fashion, not as a direct confrontation. Very often what starts as a simple objection, even when solidly based on facts, can become a wide-ranging fiery debate. And this is what happened with Luther's ordinary objections.

One must smile when Luther asks the pope a question (Thesis 86). It bluntly asks the pope why he does not use his own wealth to rebuild the Basilica, instead of taking money off poor believers? And Luther certainly did not like what Tetzel claimed: "As soon as the coin in the coffer rings, the soul from purgatory [also attested as 'into heaven'] springs." ('Here I stand: a life of Martin Luther', Roland Bainton, 1995, Penguin). Luther politely pointed out that only God can forgive a soul, so selling indulgences did nothing but deceive the people. He said Christ alone should be followed, and not human promises.

The much-quoted act of Luther pinning his Theses to the cathedral door is reported by Philipp

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Melanchthon, may, or may not, be true – no-one can fully verify his claim – but it nevertheless stands true that Luther created quite a stir by his objections. (The account may have been true, because it was customary for those at Wittenberg University to post disputations on the cathedral door).

Whether or not Luther planned it, his 95 Theses were soon printed and widely distributed, making them one of the very first controversies to be aided by printing. In two months all of Europe had copies. They reached Britain by at least 1519. As you can imagine this did not go down well with either the Archbishop or Rome!

The result was that students crammed into Wittenberg to hear Luther teach. Why? Because his objections were revolutionary in Roman terms, and the basis for some kind of social uprising. And this is exactly what happened, only the uprising was not just social – it was Biblical, leading to the Reformation that altered Europe and the world. Sadly, it's effects are now eroded.

A document believed to be dated about 1567, states that Reformation Day should take place on the first Sunday after October 15th every year (Parish Order, New Church, Regensburg). The Church Order in Pomerania for the same reason, dates to 1569, but it states the Day should be celebrated on St Martin's Day (November 11th). The one-hundredth anniversary of the Reformation took place throughout Germany from October 31st

to 1

November, 1617. How greatly things have changed... Germany is now a stronghold of Witchcraft and godlessness, and its Reformation beliefs turned to ashes when Hitler took power.

During Reformation Day services most participating churches, using Revelation 14:6, say: "I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach...", because they believe the text refers to Luther! Once celebrated every 31st October on whatever day it fell, the Day is now fixed to fall on a Sunday, on or before October 31st

. "A Mighty Fortress is our God" is sung, and the colour Red is used extensively, to represent the Holy Spirit.

Some Lutheran schools hold Reformation Day pageants and plays, which reconstruct some

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episodes in the life of Luther. The fact that the Day is held on Halloween is said to be deliberate, because if the 95 Theses were pinned to the cathedral door, it would have been best done on the eve of All Saints Day, and people would flock there to look at relics and buy indulgences. Just to look at the relics promised a shortening of purgatory.

I think you can see that the Lutheran tradition is hooked very much on unsatisfactory worship of a man, using unsatisfactory unbiblical means. It is good to recognise the place of Luther in what became the Reformation, but we should never turn one man into an icon, or resort to unbiblical means to celebrate what he did.

Luther indeed deserves our respect and remembrance and I suggest that perhaps the genuine Church should have its own annual remembrance of The Reformation given by God. This would be a focus on a memorial to historical facts and biblical truth, in these days of error and growing apostasy. Sadly, the Lutheran churches are now spiritually dead, but the day it still celebrates has some merit at its core, because it rejoices in the removal of souls from Romanist heresy and enslavement.

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