

The Five “Solas” of the Reformation

Sola Scriptura (Scripture alone)

We reaffirm the inerrant Scripture to be the sole source of written divine revelation, which alone can bind the conscience. The Bible alone teaches all that is necessary for our salvation from sin and is the standard by which all Christian behavior must be measured.

We deny that any creed, council or individual may bind a Christian's conscience, that the Holy Spirit speaks independently of or contrary to what is set forth in the Bible, or that personal spiritual experience can ever be a vehicle of revelation.

Solus Christus (Christ alone)

We reaffirm that our salvation is accomplished by the mediatorial work of the historical Christ alone. His sinless life and substitutionary atonement alone are sufficient for our justification and reconciliation to the Father.

We deny that the gospel is preached if Christ's substitutionary work is not declared and faith in Christ and his work is not solicited.

Sola Gratia (Grace alone)

We reaffirm that in salvation we are rescued from God's wrath by his grace alone. It is the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit that brings us to Christ by releasing us from our bondage to sin and raising us from spiritual death to spiritual life.

We deny that salvation is in any sense a human work. Human methods, techniques or strategies by themselves cannot accomplish this transformation. Faith is not produced by our unregenerated human nature.

Sola Fide (Faith alone)

We reaffirm that justification is by grace alone through faith alone because of Christ alone. In justification Christ's righteousness is imputed to us as the only possible satisfaction of God's perfect justice.

We deny that justification rests on any merit to be found in us, or upon the grounds of an infusion of Christ's righteousness in us, or that an institution claiming to be a church that denies or condemns sola fide can be recognized as a legitimate church.

Soli Deo Gloria (God's glory alone)

We reaffirm that because salvation is of God and has been accomplished by God, it is for God's glory and that we must glorify him always. We must live our entire lives before the face of God, under the authority of God and for his glory alone.

We deny that we can properly glorify God if our worship is confused with entertainment, if we neglect either Law or Gospel in our preaching, or if self-improvement, self-esteem or self-fulfillment are allowed to become alternatives to the gospel.

From The Cambridge Declaration
of the Alliance of Confessing Evangelicals

The Reformation of the Church

The Protestant reformation resulted from Martin Luther's disenchantment with the established church. Martin Luther was a Roman Catholic priest in Germany. He was bothered by certain Catholic practices of the day especially the sale of indulgences whereby it appeared to him, people could buy their way to forgiveness. But the issues were far broader and deeper than indulgences. Luther started to write a complaint, which ended up as a list of 95 abuses of the Roman church. On **October 31, 1517**, he nailed a copy of his 95 grievances to the church door in Wittenberg, Germany. The Roman church asked him to withdraw his objections and when he wouldn't, he was excommunicated from the church. Germans, anxious to sever their Roman ties, widely accepted his reformation ideas thus propelling the Reformation movement in Western Europe

Key Dates of the Reformation

1380 - **John Wycliffe**, "morning star of the Reformation", supervises a translation of the English Bible

1456 - Gutenberg produces the first printed Bible

1517 – Martin Luther's "Ninety-five Theses".

1525 - Tyndale's New Testament published;

1536 – **John Calvin** publishes first edition of *Institutes Of the Christian Religion*;

1549 – **Thomas Cranmer** produces the Book of Common Prayer in The Church of England;

1559 - **John Knox** and the Scottish Presbyterian Church

1611 - King James Version of Bible published

1620 - Mayflower Compact drafted

1630 - **Puritans** with John Winthrop come to America 1633

1646 – The **Westminster Confession** drafted

The Reformers drew up several significant documents of the Protestant Reformation designed to return the Church to the biblical faith expressed in the creedal confessions of the early church. The **Heidelberg Catechism**, The **Belgic Confession**, and the **Canons of Dort** were created to express the distinct ideas of the Protestant Reformation. Finally, in 1646, the Westminster theologians in England drafted a more detailed and fuller explication of biblical theology known as the **Westminster Confession of Faith**. All of these important statements of faith followed the spirit of the Reformational "solas" emphasized by Luther and others.

See also (online at www.sgc.org):

["The Five "Solus" of the Reformation"](#)

["Reasons and Results of the Reformation"](#)

["Reformation Doctrine and the Present-day Catholic Church"](#)