

Liberty University

**“Rediscovering the Protestant Reformation in African American Worship”**

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in Candidacy for the Degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy

by

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**Ph.D. IN CHRISTIAN WORSHIP**  
**DISSERTATION DEFENSE DECISION**

The committee has rendered the following decision concerning the defense for

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**Rediscovering the Protestant Reformation in African American Worship**

as submitted on

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3.  Redirection of project. The student is being redirected to take WRSP 989 again, as minor revisions will not meet the expectations for the research project.

## **Disclaimer Page**

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## **Dedication**

Dedicated to the saints who have gone on before us to rest from their labors.

## Acknowledgments

And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts,  
to which indeed you were called in one body.

*And be thankful.*

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly,  
teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom,  
singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs,  
*with thankfulness in your heart to God.*

And whatever you do,  
in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus,  
*giving thanks to God the Father through him.*

(Colossians 3:15–17, English Standard Version, emphasis added)

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## Abstract

Foundations are fundamental. Whether in the structure of a building, developing the mind, or establishing the faith, foundations are critical. The five *solas* of the Protestant Reformation are foundational to the Christian faith. When thinking of the Reformation and the five *solas* it produced, Psalm 11:3 comes to mind. This passage reads, “If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do” (Psalm 11:3, King James Version)? Today’s church needs to return to its foundations. This study argues that the five *solas* are a firm and solid foundation for the church. During the turbulent times of the Reformation, they held the church together. The Catholic church, like today’s church, got off course, off-centered, and strayed away from doctrinal truths. In the words of the Apostle Paul, “For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God” (Romans 10:3, KJV). While God has given the church truth and righteousness, there are times when the church becomes complacent and moves away from it. Today’s church, especially the African American church, needs to go back to the foundations. During the Reformation, the *solas* were instrumental in leading the people back to the truths of the Bible. As a result, restoration and reformation took place. The five *solas*: *sola Scriptura* (Scripture Alone), *sola fide* (Faith Alone), *sola gratia* (Grace Alone), *solus Christus* (Christ Alone), *solus Deo Gloria* (God’s Glory Alone) are fundamental doctrines that can help the church regain her footing.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

On October 31, 1517, Martin Luther, a German Augustinian monk, nailed his ninety-five theses to the church's doors at Wittenberg. In doing so, Luther publicly addressed the state of the Catholic church and condemned some of its practices. The nailing of theses to the church door was a common practice in that day, but this time, it would be a catalyst that would change Christendom forever.

The Reformation ultimately brought about a breaking away from the Catholic Church. This breaking away was responsible for the forming of a new denomination. The denomination was made up of one group. That group was the “non-Catholics.” This group would later be called “The Protestants” because they were protesting what was going on in the Catholic Church. This title is still synonymous with the group five hundred years later. The Protestant Reformation is arguably the most significant event to take place in Christianity since Pentecost. However, the Reformation was not a one-time event as the church is constantly reforming as she prepares for the return of Christ. The word *only*, or in Latin, *sola*, is responsible for splintering the church into two groups, Catholics and Protestants. Five important doctrinal convictions shape the theology of the faithful who broke away from Catholicism.

The five *solas*, as they have been called, capture the theological essence of the Reformation. They teach what the Reformation was all about. The Reformers embraced an “only” view regarding Scripture, faith, grace, Christ, and God’s glory. The Catholic Church, on the other hand, ascribed to an “and” view. They taught that Scripture, faith, grace, Christ, and God’s glory all were accompanied by some human contribution. Consequently, “and” was a part of all doctrinal views. To distinguish their teachings from the Catholic Church, the five *solas*: *Sola Fide* (Faith Alone), *Sola Gratia* (Grace Alone), *Sola Scriptura* (Scripture Alone), *Solus*



*Christus* (Christ Alone), and *Soli Deo Gloria* (Glory to God) became the theological blueprint and foundation for all Protestants.

Africans have significantly contributed to Christianity. Many of the early fathers who helped shape Christian theology were from the continent of Africa. Tertullian of Carthage (160–220) is one of the foremost theologians. His most significant contribution is his examination of the doctrine of the Trinity. While the term *Trinity* is not found in the Bible, it is a critical doctrine of the Christian faith. “Tertullian’s trinitarian doctrine was a decisive contribution to orthodox theology, as he was the first Latin writer to use the term *trinitas* to refer to the three persons of the godhead.”<sup>1</sup> Tertullian was instrumental in defending the faith against an ancient heresy and was also the first to use the term *New Testament*.

Augustine of Hippo (354–430) is another important African theologian in Christian history. When Rome fell, he vehemently defended Christianity and helped shape Christian thought on grace and predestination.

Ethiopian Christianity can be traced back to the days of the Apostles and the Ethiopian Eunuch, who embraced the teachings of Christianity and was baptized by Philip (Acts 8:26–40). The Ethiopian Church was founded in the 4<sup>th</sup> century C.E., which was around the same time as the church in Rome.<sup>2</sup>

Church tradition and the writings of historians have supported this notion and have verified that Christianity came to Ethiopia during the Apostolic era. Sergew Hable Selassie, an author of *Ancient and Medieval Ethiopian History*, confirms the Acts account in his writings

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<sup>1</sup> Andrew P. Hillaker “Substance and Person in Tertullian and Augustine,” *Fidei et Veritatis: The Liberty Journal of Graduate Research* 2, no. 1 (2018): Article 2.

<sup>2</sup> Craig Keener and Glenn Usry, *Defending Black Faith: Answers to Tough Questions About African American Christianity* (Westmont, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1997), 17.

about the Ethiopian Church.<sup>3</sup> Historian Ephraim Isaac traces the birth of Ethiopian Christianity back to the days of the Apostles. He asserts that “Ethiopian Jewish Pilgrims who were in Jerusalem for Passover and converted by Peter’s sermon, returned to Ethiopia as missionaries.”<sup>4</sup> The account is recorded in Acts 2.

Before the Reformation, there were references to the Ethiopian Church in the writings of Erasmus (1466–1536), Thomas More (1478–1535), and Pope Clement IV (1478–1535). As a result, Martin Luther found the Ethiopian church very appealing. “Some scholars have noted that Luther mentions Ethiopia at least 85 times in his written works.”<sup>5</sup> According to Martin Luther, Ethiopian Christianity “possessed apostolic practices which were absent in the Roman Catholicism and which Protestants would ‘adopt’ through their own reading of Scripture: communion of both kinds, vernacular Scripture, and married clergy.”<sup>6</sup> The Ethiopian Church did not hold the same views as the Catholic Church about purgatory, indulgences, and marriage as a sacrament. These attributes impacted Luther as he took the steps that inevitably began the Reformation.

Luther became more infatuated with Ethiopian Christianity when he met an Ethiopian cleric, Deacon Michael, on July 4, 1534. Luther captures the essence of the meeting in two letters that were translated. In one of the letters, Luther writes:

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<sup>3</sup> Sergew Hable Selassie, *The Church of Ethiopia: A Panorama of History of Spiritual Life* (Addis Ababa: Ethiopian Orthodox Church, 1980), 1.

<sup>4</sup> Ephraim Isaac, *The Ethiopian Church* (Boston, MA: Henry Sawyer Company, 1968), 20.

<sup>5</sup> Jennifer Powell McNutt, “An Unsung Inspiration for the Protestant Reformation: The Ethiopian Church,” *Christianity Today*, August 27, 2020, <https://www.christianitytoday.com/history/2020/august/unsung-inspiration-for-protestant-reformation-ethiopian-chu.html>.

<sup>6</sup> David D. Daniels, “Martin Luther and Ethiopian Christianity: Historical Traces,” *The University of Chicago, Divinity School*, November 2, 2017, <https://divinity.uchicago.edu/sighting/articles/martin-luther-and-ethiopian-christianity-historical-traces>.

We also ascertained from him that the rite, which we observe in the practice of the Lord's Supper and the Mass, agrees with the Eastern Church. We desire, moreover, that all people should acknowledge and glorify Christ and obey him by true trust in his mercy and by love of the neighbor. Therefore, we entreat good men that they too, would demonstrate Christian love to this guest.<sup>7</sup>

During the visit, Luther's Articles of the Christian Faith were interpreted to Deacon Michael. In another letter written three years after the visit, Luther writes, "Three years ago, there was an Ethiopian monk here, where we held a discussion with him through an interpreter. He summed up all our articles [of faith] by saying, 'This is a good "credo,"' that is, faith."<sup>8</sup>

As a result of Deacon Michael's agreement with the articles of faith, Luther gave Deacon Michael and the Ethiopian Church full fellowship. This same privilege had not been granted to other faith communities, including those being led by Ulrich Zwingli (1484–1531), another reformer. Luther's stand on Ethiopian Christianity is affirmed through his dialogue with Deacon Michael. Luther found that characteristics of the church he had observed in the letters of Paul and other New Testament writers were present in Ethiopian Christianity. His vision for the Reformation had hope as many theological and exegetical views were already present in Ethiopian Christianity. These views were proof that his desire to Reform the Church in Europe was both historical and biblical.

The African American Church should have a vested interest in the Reformation because of its significance to church history and the role that Africans have played in it. The Protestant Reformation changed the direction of the church forever. The Reformers believed

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<sup>7</sup> David D. Daniels and Lawrence Anglin, "Luther and the Ethiopian Deacon," *Lutheran Quarterly* 32, no.4 (2018): 433.

<sup>8</sup> Daniels and Anglin, "Luther," 433.

the church had drifted into error as the leaders departed from the foundational truths of the Gospel.

The African American worship community needs to include the five *solas* in its pursuit of righteousness and theological illiteracy. Today's African American church struggles with finding its place in culture. In its pursuit of relevancy, the African American church tries to find the balance between relevance and reverence. It is weakening as it grapples with social issues and erroneous teaching. The African American church needs to recenter on the Holy Writ. African American theologian Thabiti Anyabwile writes, "Today, we need desperately to recenter the Bible in the life and practice of the church. We need to read the Bible, sing the Bible, preach the Bible, pray the Bible, think the Bible and live the Bible."<sup>9</sup> Since the *solas* are doctrinal foundations, they point the African American church back to the centrality of the Gospel and remind every believer of our dependency on the Sovereign God and His Word to save and redeem us.

### **Statement of Problem**

The Reformation gave rise to a host of denominations of various peoples, nations, and ethnicities. Among this vast group are the descendants of slaves who became Christians during the Middle Passage. Most slaves became Christians as they abandoned and blended their African religious practices with Christianity to form a unique worshipping community known as the "Black Church" or "African American Church." Overwhelmingly, African American Protestants

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<sup>9</sup> Thabiti M. Anyabwile, *The Decline of African American Theology: From Biblical Faith to Cultural Captivity* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2007), 241.

make up a large number of the Protestant community. However, most have no idea what the Protestant Reformation means to church history. Consequently, they are ignorant of the five *solas* and the teaching and songs used in worship may be devoid of their theological truths.

### **Purpose of the Study**

This study seeks to confront and correct the lack of knowledge of the Protestant Reformation and the five *solas* in the African American worship community. Like the church during Martin Luther's time, today's church is in theological chaos and needs to return to a Biblical worldview. The church has shifted away from strong theological teaching to embrace heresies of postmodernism, such as the prosperity gospel and New Thought ideologies. The church struggles with an identity crisis and has forgotten its role in the world. By giving a text-based narrative of the Reformation and the five *solas*, this study brings an awareness of the Reformation and the five *solas* to this vast Protestant community. This study aims to teach the reader the historical importance of the Reformation and the doctrinal value of the five *solas*. The *solas* can aid the church in her pursuit to be triumphant and to emerge at the close of the ages "as a bride adorned for her husband" (Rev. 21:2). Since the majority of the African American worship community is unaware of the Protestant Reformation and the five *solas*, this study aims to be a catalyst in helping the church incorporate these important doctrines in its preaching and music.

### **Research Questions**

RQ1. What is the relationship between African American Pastors and Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders regarding their knowledge of the Protestant Reformation?

RQ2. Is there a significant relationship among and between African American Pastors and Ministers of Music/Worship leaders on the perception of the five *solas* being present in African American Worship?

RQ3. Is there a difference among and between African American Pastors and Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders and their perceptions of the African legacy associated with the Protestant Reformation?

RQ4. Is there a relationship among and between African American Pastors and Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders in regard to their perceptions of the importance of teaching the Protestant Reformation to the African American worship community?

### **Research Methodology**

The research methodology for this study is a mixed-methods study. The first part of the study is text-based. The text-based narrative provides a historical, descriptive, and investigative review of the Protestant Reformation. This review includes the history of the Reformation, the key Reformers, the practice of worship, and the theology inherent in the five *solas*. A brief history of African American Protestantism is also included in this review, as well as an investigative review of the African influences on the Reformation. This research section aims to aid in establishing the importance of the Reformation to church history and to show its relationship to the African American church.

The Quantitative section of the study includes a survey to test the knowledge of leaders in the African American church about the Protestant Reformation and the five *solas*. The nationwide survey has been conducted among Senior Pastors and Worship Leaders/Ministers of Music from Protestant churches within the African American worship community. The survey also seeks to determine the presence of the doctrine of the five *solas* in the preaching and music of the African American church community.

The survey has been developed on Google Documents. The survey consists of ten to twenty questions to gather data on the knowledge of the Protestant Reformation and the five *solas*. The research population consists of one hundred voluntary participants. The desired participants are fifty Senior Pastors and fifty Worship Leaders/Ministers of Music from African American churches. Senior Pastors are ordained male or female pastors serving as pastors of Protestant congregations throughout the United States. The Worship Leaders/Ministers of Music sampling consist of both males and females who lead the music and worship for Protestant congregations throughout the United States. The Protestant congregations are churches that include Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian, Pentecostal, and Non-denominational churches. The participants have been asked if doctrinal precepts inherent in the five *solas* are present in the preaching and music of the churches they serve.

A graphic has been developed and posted on social media (Facebook and Twitter), inviting participants to complete the survey. The graphic consists of a website link where the survey has been generated. The researcher has also emailed constituents from the Hampton Minister's Conference (HUMC), the National Convention of Gospel Choirs and Choruses, Inc. (NCGCC), the Gospel Music Workshop of America (GMWA), and the National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc. (NBC, USA, Inc.). The graphic instructs all interested participants to use the link provided to complete the survey. Each participant has verified his or her role as a Pastor or Worship Leader/Minister of Music in one of the questions of the survey. Only Pastors and Worship Leaders/Ministers of Music results are counted in the data. Participants unknown to the researcher have been verified and eliminated if they have not met the criteria of Pastor or Worship Leader/Minister of Music.

This study follows Liberty University's IRB guidelines for conducting research with human beings, and IRB approval has been obtained before any data collection took place. The purpose of the study has been revealed to each potential participant and each participant has been made aware of how they have been involved in the study. In addition, the researcher has ensured that all categories of ethical issues in the research have been addressed, including protection from harm, informed consent, privacy, and honesty.

The data collection period is two months or until the desired number of surveys are completed and documented. After the data has been collected and analyzed, the findings are introduced in a narrative form.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Foundations are fundamental. Whether in the structure of a building, developing the mind, or establishing faith, foundations are critical. The five *solas* were developed from Scripture and are foundational to the Christian faith. David writes, "If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do" (Ps. 11:3, KJV)? This researcher is committed to *Sola Scriptura* (Scripture alone). God's Word is the final authority. The Word is without error and answers every question that pertains to man. Today's church needs to return to its foundations. It is the desire of this researcher to see the *solas* rediscovered and introduced to the African American worship community.

### **Significance of the Study**

This study is significant to the African American church, as it creates an opportunity for the Protestant Reformation and the five *solas* to be re-introduced and, in most cases, be newly introduced to today's African American worship community. The *solas* are valuable to the



Christian faith, and for this cause, there is a need for them to be present in the church's preaching and music. This study aims to aid in getting God's church back on track as the Protestant Reformation and the five *solas* provide foundational tenets for the Christian faith. This study also seeks to aid in filling the gap of research connecting the Protestant Reformation, the five *solas*, and the African American church.

### **Definitions of Key Terms**

To understand the Protestant Reformation and the five *solas*, it is important to define the key terms for this study.

**Protestant** - A word used to describe persons who "protested" and withdrew from Catholicism. This term was used as a label for any person who followed the teachings of Luther during the Reformation. In today's church community, it refers to any church that is not a Catholic Church and is generally Christian.

**Reformation** - A revolution that took place in the Christian church during the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The event ultimately resulted in the split of the Catholic church.

**Sola** - A derivative of a Latin word meaning "only" or "alone."

**African American Church** - The Black Church and the African American church are terms used synonymously in this project to describe a religious community born out of slavery.

William Whatley writes: "The historic Black or African American churches are more than the regional branch of a broader worldwide communion whose constituency and leadership of a particular ethnic identity. Primarily Baptist and Methodist in theology and liturgy, these churches

came into existence because of the racism of institutionalized White religion in the United States.”<sup>10</sup>

### **Assumptions of the Study**

One of the assumptions this study makes is that the Pastors and Worship Leaders/Ministers of Music are honest in responding to the survey questions. This study seeks to ensure honesty by keeping all responses to the survey questions confidential. The researcher has been the only one handling the responses and has kept all names and personal information private.

This study also assumes that the African American church is interested in increasing its knowledge of the Protestant Reformation and the five *solas*. A lack of desire to increase its knowledge means that the worship community views the Protestant Reformation and the five *solas* as irrelevant and unimportant.

In addition to interest, the study assumes that Pastors and Worship Leaders/Ministers of Music value doctrine and are interested in increasing their knowledge of the Protestant Reformation and the five *solas*, and have been honest about that knowledge in their responses to this study.

### **Limitations**

There is a lack of previous research. While much research has been done on the Protestant Reformation and the five *solas*, there is no documentation of literature indicating a

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<sup>10</sup> William Whatley, “Introducing the African American Churches” in *Readings in African American Church Music and Worship*, ed. James Abbingtion (Chicago, IL: GIA Publications, 2001), 27.

study of the five *solas* and the Protestant Reformation in relationship to the African American church.

The general concern of participant bias is another limitation. An individual participant may be tempted to respond to the instrument in a manner they perceive the researcher desires for them to respond; therefore, participant bias may impact the results.

The survey data has been collected through electronic means. Therefore, there is a possibility for errors when compiling the survey responses and possible coding errors by the researcher when tallying the results.

### **Delimitations**

Only the Senior Pastors and Worship Leaders/Ministers of Music of African American protestant congregations have been included in the sample population.

The participants in the survey are not limited to one geographical area but are located throughout the continental United States.

The study includes only those who can complete the survey online. No paper surveys have been generated or used.

### **Qualifications of the Researcher**

This researcher has spent his entire life serving God in African American Protestant churches. Beginning with his baptism in 1976, this researcher has been nurtured in the faith through Baptist Churches in South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida. The questions: “What does it mean to be Baptist?” “Where did Baptist churches come from?” and “How was Baptist doctrine developed?” occupied this researcher's mind for many years. These questions have led the researcher to begin probing into the history of the church. It is this quest for knowledge that has

made the researcher begin to look at church history. Consequently, he has arrived at the Protestant Reformation, Martin Luther, and the five *solas*.

For approximately eleven years, this researcher served as the Minister of Music for New Mount Olive Baptist Church in Fort Lauderdale, FL, under the pastorate of a great theological mind, the late Dr. Mack King Carter. Dr. Carter was a master theologian, eloquent preacher, and thinker. He was quite knowledgeable of the Protestant Reformation and the church councils held before it. An interest in church history and higher academic preparation was encouraged by serving this great pastor and congregation. For this cause, this researcher returned to school, where he received the Master of Arts in Worship Studies and the Doctor of Worship Studies degrees from Liberty University in 2013 and 2019. This researcher has been a leader in most of the country's foremost African American gospel music and ministerial conferences. For several years, this researcher has presented lectures and seminars at the Hampton University Minister's Conference Choir Directors' and Organists' Guild Workshop.

Additionally, he is a part of the Academic Division of the Gospel Music Workshop of America. For nearly forty years, this researcher has been a part of the National Convention of Gospel Choirs and Choruses, Inc., founded by the "Father of Gospel Music," Dr. Thomas A. Dorsey. On the denominational level, this researcher has served and continues to serve on the Music Staff of the National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc. He is an award-winning songwriter with songs recorded by many national gospel artists. A crowning achievement for this researcher was the inclusion of several of his compositions in two hymnals, *The Total Praise Hymnal* of the National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc. and *One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism*, an ecumenical work published by GIA Publications. God has consistently placed this researcher in the right

place, at the right time, with the right people to fulfill His divine plan. This researcher believes that God has ordered this study “for such a time as this.”

This researcher was inspired to pursue this study when, after speaking to pastors and worship leaders, he realized there was minimal knowledge of the Protestant Reformation. Further investigation has revealed that the average church attendee has no clue as to what the five *solas* are. Since God, in His wise providence, has consistently given this researcher a platform for teaching and developing God’s people, it is incumbent that this study is conducted.

### **Conclusion**

There is a need for the Protestant Reformation and the five *solas* to be embraced by the African American worship community. The *solas* are very important to the Christian faith, and for this cause, they need to be a part of African American worship. The *solas* point Christians to the centrality of the faith, support the church’s structure, and undergird God’s redemptive plan. As the offspring of the Reformation, the modern church, including the African American worship community, has the responsibility to teach these doctrinal truths and pass them to the next generation. It is the goal of this study to remind the church that God has called us to salvation through faith, by grace, through the authority of Scripture alone. Through a life rooted in Christ alone, the church is sure to bring glory to God and God alone.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

Throughout church history, there have been many events that have changed the course of history. In his book, *Turning Points: Decisive Moments in the History of Christianity*, Mark Knoll reflects on at least fourteen of these great points.<sup>1</sup> The Protestant Reformation is affirmed in history as a significant turning point. As it is called, the Reformation is arguably the most significant occurrence in Christian history since the birth of the church on the day of Pentecost. In many respects, the Reformation can be described as a theological revolution that divided the church into two groups, Catholics and Protestants. However, the goal of the Reformation was not to split the church but to bring the church to repentance, revival, and renewal.

The strong doctrinal and theological tenets established by the early church were wavering and the church needed to return to its foundations. B. A. Gerrish contends, “The Reformation was neither a new religion nor a simple recovery of an older one. It was a revision, not a

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<sup>1</sup> Mark Knoll, *Turning Points: Decisive Moments in the History of Christianity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2012).

rejection, of the medieval tradition.”<sup>2</sup> The Reformers were concerned that the church was not addressing the ails and the concerns of the time. The church was silent about financial improprieties, immorality, and political issues. A cloud of darkness overshadowed the church, and the Gospel of Christ that once dispelled the world's darkness had been abandoned. Before the Reformation, there were numerous attempts to bring the Roman Catholic Church back to righteousness, but they were all unsuccessful. Groups from within and outside the church were martyred as their attempts at change were met with a violent end.

The Protestant Reformation was not a sudden occurrence, but it was a storm that had been brewing for a long time. God has always had a remnant of people who cry out against wrong and remain faithful to His Word. God had a remnant even in the Dark Ages prior to the Protestant Reformation. As far back as the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries, God had those who spoke out against the errors in the Roman Catholic church.

One group in the remnant that was used was the Waldenses. Even though they were fiercely persecuted by the Roman Catholic church, they stood firmly on the truth of God and the Gospel. Herman Hanko wrote in his book, *Portraits of Faithful Saints*, “They must be amongst the most faithful of all the dissenters in the Middle Ages.”<sup>3</sup>

The Waldensian movement began in 1218 with Peter Waldo as its leader. Waldo, a rich merchant in France, became disturbed about his soul because he had achieved his wealth through

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<sup>2</sup> B. A. Gerrish, *Continuing The Reformation: Essays on Modern Religious Thought* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1993), 1.

<sup>3</sup> Herman Hanko, *Portraits of Faithful Saints* (Greenville, MI: Reformed Free Publishing Association, 1999), 97.

unscrupulous practices. He approached his priest for teaching in righteousness and a path to God. He was told to give all of his wealth to the poor. He did so and followed Christ from then on. Around 1170, Waldo received the revelation that the Word of God should be foundational in his life. It was at that time that he hired men to translate and share the Bible with him. Years later, he called together a group of faithful men and women who would seek after the truth of the Bible. The group took the name of Waldensians, after their leader. Initially, the group remained true to some of the teachings of the church in Rome. They continued Catholic sacraments and abided under the authority of the pope. However, their consistent devotion to the study of God's Word began to reveal flaws and errors within the Roman Catholic church. As a result, they began to reject many doctrines and practices of the church. It is said of them: "That they did not believe in the doctrines of the church of Rome. That they made no offerings or prayers for the dead. That they did not go to Mass. That they did not confess, and receive absolution. That they did not believe in purgatory or pay money to get the souls of their friends out of it."<sup>4</sup> Moving away from the teachings of the church, they believed that preaching of the Word, not the sacraments, was the necessity for salvation. Believing that the Word of God was supreme, they had the Bible translated into the vernacular of the people for all to access. Their strong opposition to the church kindled the wrath of the church against them and brought severe persecution against them. The persecution was at its height when Pope Alexander III gave orders for them to be exterminated "from the face of the earth."<sup>5</sup> They persevered and after almost 400 years of persecution, they were delivered from their peril by Oliver Cromwell in 1655.

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<sup>4</sup> John Fox, *Fox's Book of Martyrs* (Chicago, IL: The Johnston C. Winston Co., 2007), e-Book, <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/22400/22400-h/22400-h.htm>.

<sup>5</sup> John Fox, *Fox's Book of Martyrs*, chapter 4.



Another group of fearless, committed dissenters was the Cathars. This group is also known in Reformation history as the Albigenses. Named after the town of Albi in southern France where they originated, theirs was among the greatest persecution poured out by the Roman Catholic church. N. R. Needham writes, “It was the Albigensians that aroused the great anxiety and hostility from the Catholic church.”<sup>6</sup>

Another forerunner of the Protestant Reformation is John Wycliffe (1324–1384). Wycliffe was a man of great influence in England, and a large majority of Europe. He is perhaps the most significant forerunner of the Reformation. For this cause, he has often been referred to as “The Morning Star of the Reformation.”<sup>7</sup> Wycliffe, along with others, was disgusted with the demands of the pope on the people to pay large sums of money to them annually. Among those who objected was the King of England, who refused to pay the church tax. Furthermore, Wycliffe’s views were used to aid the King of England as he fought off the Pope’s taxation. In his writings, *On Divine Dominion* and *On Civil Dominion*, Wycliffe declares, “If through transgression a man forfeited his divine privileges, then of necessity his temporal possession were also lost.” Further, he writes, “Men held whatever they had received from God as stewards, and if found faithless could justly be deprived of it.”<sup>8</sup> Wycliffe subscribed to what Rome considered to be unorthodox views and as a result, he was condemned by the Pope.

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<sup>6</sup> N. R. Needham, *2000 years of Christ’s Power-Part II: The Middle Ages* (London, UK: Grace Publications Trust, 2000), 311.

<sup>7</sup> Stephen Arnold, “The Morning Star of the Reformation,” *Desiring God*, <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/the-morning-star-of-the-reformation>.

<sup>8</sup> Donald L. Roberts, “John Wycliffe and the Dawn of the Reformation,” *Christian History*, <https://christianhistoryinstitute.org/magazine/article/john-wycliffe-and-the-dawn-of-the-reformation>.

Wycliffe felt strongly that the Christian should learn the faith for himself, and Scripture was the way for him to do so. Wycliffe's greatest contribution to the Reformation is his philosophical work, *Triologus*, and his English translation of the Bible.

Wycliffe was not alone in the late Middle Ages in his desire to see reform. Other church leaders such as John Huss (1360–1415), and Gerilamo Savonarola (1452–1498) spoke out against the papacy, purgatory, the worship of saints, relics, etc.<sup>9</sup> Unfortunately, their ambitious attempts failed, and the Catholic Church continued in error. As a result, the 16<sup>th</sup>-century Protestant Reformation was another attempt to transform the Church, and all associated with it.

### The Reformers

During the Protestant Reformation, God used several men of faith and courage to bring about reform in the church. There were other godly men of valor and faith who sought to bring the church back to God. Martin Luther (1483–1546) of Germany,<sup>10</sup> John Calvin (1509–1564) of Geneva,<sup>11</sup> and Ulrich Zwingli (1484–1531) of Switzerland<sup>12</sup> were the central characters in the drama of the Protestant Reformation.

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<sup>9</sup> Jack Arnold, "The Cause and Results of the Reformation," *IIM Magazine Online* 1, no. 2 (March 14, 1999): <https://thirdmill.org/files/english/html/ch/CH.Arnold.RMT.2.HTML>.

<sup>10</sup> The following resources were used to research the life and works of Martin Luther: Paul A. Bishop, "Martin Luther and the Protestant Reformation," *Academia*, [https://www.academia.edu/18302924/Martin\\_Luther\\_and\\_the\\_Protestant\\_Reformation\\_Paul\\_A\\_Bishop](https://www.academia.edu/18302924/Martin_Luther_and_the_Protestant_Reformation_Paul_A_Bishop); Bridget Heal, "Martin Luther and the German Reformation," *History Today* 67, no. 3 (March 2017).

<sup>11</sup> The following resources were used to research the life and works of John Calvin: Karin Maag, *Lifting Hearts To The Lord*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2016); R. Ward Holder, "The Reformers and Tradition: Seeing the Roots of the Problem," *Religions* (May 2017): <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel18060105>; R.S. Wallace, *Calvin, Geneva and the Reformation: A Study of Calvin as Social Worker, Churchman, Pastor and Theologian* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1988).

<sup>12</sup> The following resources were used to research the life and works of Ulrich Zwingli: W. P. Stephens, *Zwingli: An Introduction to His Thought* (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1992); Stephen B. Eccher, "Hulydrych Zwingli: Reformation in Conflict," *Perichoresis* 15, no. 4 (2017): 33–53, <https://doi.org/10.1515/perc-2017-0021>.

Martin Luther was an Augustinian monk and the principal voice of the Reformation. Luther believed strongly that the Pope bore the greatest responsibility for the corruption of the church. He gave himself over to the church's teachings, which included prayer, fasting, and confession. Luther's faith and desire to please God deepened, and he found himself very conscious of his sin. Paul A. Bishop writes, "His attempt to dedicate himself to this cause would lead to a growing understanding of his own sinfulness."<sup>13</sup> To this end, Luther concluded that man is wicked and is inclined to sin. He writes:

We are the children of wrath, and all our works and the intentions and thoughts are nothing at all in balance against our sins... no amount of good works could atone for the sins—each an insult to an infinite deity—committed by the best of men. Only the redeeming sacrifice of Christ—the suffering and the death of the Son of God—could atone for man's sins; and only belief in that atonement can save us from hell. It is this faith, that "justifies" —makes a man just despite his sins eligible for salvation.<sup>14</sup>

His spiritual self-examination initially led Luther into religious despair. In an effort to combat his despair, Luther began to study theology. Following his ordination, Luther received a doctorate and began teaching at the University of Wittenberg. Luther used his position as a teacher to address the many ails he saw in the Church. Wittenberg gave Luther the audience he desired to discuss his disagreements with Roman Catholic doctrines.

Mark Shand writes, "Indisputably, justification by faith alone was the fundamental doctrine of the Reformation. It was this doctrine that led to the fragmentation of the Christian church as it then existed; a fragmentation that not only has continued, but which has expanded in

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<sup>13</sup> Paul A. Bishop, "Martin Luther and the Protestant Reformation," Academia, [https://www.academia.edu/18302924/Martin\\_Luther\\_and\\_the\\_Protestant\\_Reformation\\_Paul\\_A\\_Bishop](https://www.academia.edu/18302924/Martin_Luther_and_the_Protestant_Reformation_Paul_A_Bishop).

<sup>14</sup> Will Durant, *The Story of Civilization, The Reformation: A History of European Civilization from Wycliffe to Calvin, 1300–1564* (New York, NY: Simon and Schuster, 1957), 373.

the intervening years.”<sup>15</sup> Luther, throughout his ministry, embraced the doctrine of justification. However, he experienced an internal battle as he began to reflect on the church’s stance on justification. Shand continues, “Initially, Luther was of the view that he could earn his salvation through the keeping of the law of God. However, try as he might, he found no peace in his many pious exercises. In fact, the more he strove to keep the law of God, the greater he felt the weight of his sin.”<sup>16</sup>

Luther was overwhelmed with anger, hatred, envy, and strife. His struggle allowed him to relate to the Apostle Paul when he writes, “O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death” (Rom. 7:24, King James Version)? Luther could not join Paul in giving praise to God, “I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom. 7:25). Here is how Luther describes his struggle:

Though I lived as a monk without reproach, I felt that I was a sinner before God with an extremely disturbed conscience. I could not believe that He was placated by my satisfaction. I did not love, yes, I hated the righteous God who punishes sinners, and secretly, if not blasphemously, certainly murmuring greatly, I was angry with God and said, “As if indeed, it is not enough that miserable sinners, eternally lost through original sin, are crushed by every kind of calamity by the law of the decalogue, without having God add pain to pain by the gospel and also by the gospel threatening us with His righteous wrath!” Thus I raged with a fierce and troubled conscience. Nevertheless, I beat importunately on Paul at the place, most ardently desiring to know what St. Paul wanted.<sup>17</sup>

Luther began to question what he had been taught regarding righteousness. As he embraced what he had been taught by the church, Luther did not fully understand what “the righteousness of God” referred to. Shand continues, “Luther had thought that ‘righteousness of

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<sup>15</sup> Mark Shand, “Justification by Faith Alone: The Article of the Standing or Falling Church,” *Standard Bearer* 94, no. 2 (2017): 37.

<sup>16</sup> Shand, “Justification by Faith Alone,” 37.

<sup>17</sup> Martin Luther, *Luther’s Works*, ed. Helmut T. Lehmann (Philadelphia, PA: Muhlenburg Press, 1960), 34:336–37.

God' referred to the righteous demands that the law of God imposed upon sinners. By the grace of God, he came to realize that by the phrase, 'the righteousness of God,' Paul was not referring to the righteous demands of the law, but to the righteousness that God provided."<sup>18</sup> Luther writes:

I grasped the truth that the righteousness of God is that righteousness whereby, through grace and sheer mercy, He justifies us by faith. Thereupon I felt myself to be reborn and to have gone through open doors into paradise. The whole of Scripture took on a new meaning, and whereas before "the righteousness of God" had filled me with hate, now it became to me inexpressibly sweet in greater love.<sup>19</sup>

It was also at this time that Luther began to rethink his acceptance of the church's view of justification. Luther could no longer accept what the church taught, and he began to speak against it. As a result, the chasm that existed between Luther and the Church began to widen.

The Church taught that it was God's instrument on Earth and that the Pope, the leader of the Catholic Church, was viewed as Christ's representative on Earth. Luther took issue with this view and spoke defiantly against it. At the Diet of Worms (1521), a formal assembly held for Luther to recant his view, Luther testifies, "I am bound by the Scriptures, and my conscience is captive to the Word of God. I cannot, and I will not retract anything, since it is neither safe nor right to go against conscience. I cannot do otherwise, here I stand, may God help me."<sup>20</sup>

The church had been selling indulgences<sup>21</sup> to members as a means of financing church projects. To build St. Peter's Basilica, Pope Leo X commissioned their sale. The sale of

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<sup>18</sup> Shand, "Justification by Faith Alone," 38.

<sup>19</sup> Luther, *Luther's Works*, 337.

<sup>20</sup> Martin Luther, as quoted in Eric W. Gritsch and Robert W. Jenson, *Lutheranism: The Theological Movement and Its Confessional Writings* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress, 1976), vii.

<sup>21</sup> Indulgences were a piece of paper sold by the Catholic Church to shorten a person's time in purgatory and allow them or a loved one to enter heaven.

indulgences added to the controversy surrounding the authority of the church. By selling these, the church allowed members to get around God's code of conduct and what the Scriptures taught about repentance. The Church revisited its view on the remission of sin. They began to teach that the first step was "an act of contrition by which the sinner would pray for forgiveness." Beyond confession of sin and admission of guilt, the sinner was expected to carry out some form of sacramental penance. Indulgences, according to R. H. Bainton, allowed the purchaser to,

Be restored to the state of innocence which they enjoyed in baptism and would be relieved of the all the pains of purgatory including those incurred by an offense to the Divine Majesty. Those securing indulgences on behalf of the dead already in purgatory need not themselves be contrite and confess their sins.<sup>22</sup>

The church then offered indulgences as a way to expand the merits of the Church.<sup>23</sup> This activity prompted Luther and his followers to question the church's authority to accept the buying and selling of indulgences as a means of confession, absolution, and salvation.

Luther condemned the selling of indulgences and voiced his disagreement in writing. His refutation, "Disputation of Martin Luther and the Power and Efficacy of Indulgences," is considered the principal document of the Protestant Reformation. This document would later become the Ninety-Five Theses that were nailed to the doors of the Church in Wittenberg.<sup>24</sup> During that time, the doors of the church served as bulletin boards for sharing information. Along with posting the Theses, Luther also extended an invitation to all to engage in a scholarly debate on the issues he raised. Luther called for church authorities to bring an immediate end to the sale of indulgences. The church's failure to comply with his request prompted Luther to

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<sup>22</sup> Roland Herbert Bainton, *Here I Stand: A Life of Martin Luther* (New York, NY: Abingdon Press, 1950), 58.

<sup>23</sup> Paul A. Bishop, "Martin Luther and the Protestant Reformation," Academia, [https://www.academia.edu/18302924/Martin\\_Luther\\_and\\_the\\_Protestant\\_Reformation\\_Paul\\_A\\_Bishop](https://www.academia.edu/18302924/Martin_Luther_and_the_Protestant_Reformation_Paul_A_Bishop).

<sup>24</sup> See the Ninety-Five Theses and details of Luther's disputations of the church and the Pope at [www.reverendluther.org](http://www.reverendluther.org).

circulate the Theses throughout the church community. As a result of this action, the Theses spread throughout Germany and far-reaching regions. Luther's act started an avalanche that showed no signs of stopping.

Luther's Theses did more than question the sale of indulgences, but it also brought into question the authority of the Pope. Luther took issue with the notion that the Pope had the authority to remit the sins of a Christian. Many Christians believed that having the indulgences in their possession would equate to absolution of their guilt and consequently, they were free from condemnation in life and, ultimately, death. Luther contended that neither the Pope nor the church had the power to do so.

The second portion of Luther's Theses contained instructions for Christians. He wanted to communicate to Christians the need for doing works of compassion. Luther also raised the question as to why the Pope did not personally pay for the building of the Basilica since he was one of the richest among the people.

Luther had strong convictions regarding the authority of the Scriptures in church matters. These strong convictions fueled his passion for having the Bible translated into the everyday language of the people. Since the Scriptures were written in Hebrew and Greek, Luther believed it essential that all ministers know these languages. Luther articulates the importance of diverse language comprehension in this statement:

Though the faith and the Gospel may be proclaimed by simple preachers without the languages, such preaching is flat and tame, men grow at last wearied and disgusted and it falls to the ground. But when the preacher is versed in the languages, his discourse has freshness and force, the whole of Scripture is treated, and faith finds itself constantly renewed by a continued variety of words and works.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Martin Luther, "To the Councilmen of All Cities in Germany That They Establish and Maintain Christian Schools," in *The Christian in Society, II*, ed. Walther I. Brandt, trans. Albert T. W. Steinhäuser, rev. Walther I. Brandt; *Luther's Works*, vol. 45 (Philadelphia, PA: Muhlenberg, 1962), 360.

The Swiss Reformation began with the preaching of Huldrych Zwingli (1484–1531). Even though Zwingli’s teachings are similar to that of Luther, he is not as widely known as Luther or his Swiss counterpart, John Calvin. Most of the early knowledge shared about Zwingli presents Zwingli in a negative light. Jerry Pillay and Catherine McMillan write: “For example, he is repeatedly blamed for having inflicted upon the city a dreadful ‘Puritanismus’ that is anathema to modern creeds of diversity and acceptance. For contemporary citizens of Zurich, Zwingli has become the poster boy for all that is wrong with organized religion: narrow-mindedness, intolerance and sexual repression.”<sup>26</sup> In recent years, new research and perspective have uncovered information about this reformer that is more positive and casts him in a different light. Some researchers contend that the success of the other reformers is due in part to Zwingli’s contributions.

According to Peter Opitz, an expert on the Swiss Reformation, “Not Calvin but Zwingli is both historically and theologically the Father of the Reformed Protestant faith.”<sup>27</sup> Furthermore, he contends that Zwingli’s revolutionary ideas and his ability to share these ideas caused the Swiss Reformation to stretch across Europe more than Luther’s Reformation. Inspired by the Christian humanistic teachings of Erasmus (1466–1536) and Luther’s reform ideology, Zwingli opposed the Catholic Church. He joined in the cry of other reformers calling the church back to the faith practiced in early Christianity. He also wanted those who were church members to have more control over the church and its direction.

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<sup>26</sup> Jerry Pillay and Catherine McMillan, “Huldrych Zwingli’s Contribution to the Reformation,” *HTS Theologese Studies/Theological Studies* 75, no. 4, (2019): a5635, <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v75i4.5635>.

<sup>27</sup> Peter Opitz, “The Swiss Contribution to the Reformation Movement,” *Reformation: Legacy and Future* 67–76 (2015): [https://www.academia.edu/15358770/The\\_Swiss\\_Contribution\\_to\\_the\\_Reformation\\_Movement](https://www.academia.edu/15358770/The_Swiss_Contribution_to_the_Reformation_Movement).



Zwingli's Swiss Reformation was an attempt to end the power struggle between France and the Holy Roman Empire. The power struggle resulted in a war over trade routes between the Alps and important militaristic territories. Consequently, the church brokered deals and amassed significant financial gain. The corrupt leadership of the church was unwilling to relinquish its economic success and worked to maintain its position. For this reason, they began to paint purgatory as a horrible condition. They offered the sale of indulgences with the promise that it would lessen the time one would spend in purgatory.

Zwingli used Scripture to challenge several teachings and customs of the Church. Indulgences, tithes, and the invocation of the saints were a few of the practices that Zwingli opposed. His strict adherence to the Bible would contribute to an unavoidable conflict with the church. Other church-sanctioned traditions such as clerical celibacy, images, praying to the saints, the Mass, and a customary tithe that permitted concubinage would turn up the heat on an already adversarial situation.<sup>28</sup>

Zwingli advocated for the importance of the Scripture in his preaching. In his book, *Clarity and Certainty of the Word of God*, W. P. Stephens concludes that Zwingli taught that a believer should seek God to understand the Word as opposed to reading and accepting the interpretation of expositors and commentaries.<sup>29</sup> The Bible was the center of Zwingli's Reformation. Zwingli's first debate with the church in 1523 presented the Bible as the final authority to adjudicate the practices of man and the church. A return to the Bible was a common desire of Zwingli as it was with other reformers.

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<sup>28</sup> Stephen B. Eccher, "Huldrych Zwingli: Reformation in Conflict," *Perichoresis* 15, no.4 (2017): 33–53. <https://doi.org/10.1515/perc-2017-0021>.

<sup>29</sup> W. P. Stephens, *Zwingli: An Introduction to His Thought* (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1992), 21.

John Calvin (1509–1564) is considered a second-generation reformer as he was not a part of the initial reformation led by Martin Luther. He was an eight-year-old lad when Martin Luther posted the Ninety-Five Theses on the church's doors in Wittenberg in 1517. As Calvin grew and studied Martin Luther's Reformation, he embraced Luther's teachings and became an influential Reformer. Calvin studied law, philosophy, and humanism, and was fluent in both Greek and Latin. Calvin, like others of his time, believed that the church needed reform. He spoke out against the church and consequently was forced to flee from his native country France to Switzerland.

John Calvin began his ministry during a very volatile time for Protestant Christianity. His ministry began to take shape in Switzerland amidst controversy and skepticism. Francis I (1494–1547), the first King of France, was very suspicious of Protestants. When Protestants attacked Catholic Masses, the King believed all Protestants who embraced Protestant theology were subversive and sought to overthrow the government. To defend and apologize for Protestant theology (referring to "Protestant" in general), Calvin wrote and published the first edition of *The Institutes of the Christian Religion*, in 1536.<sup>30</sup> This writing was vital because it addressed the insurrections and other provocative behavior associated with Protestants. Most importantly, the book shared doctrines Calvin believed about God, salvation, and humanity. While Calvin did not introduce any new Reformation ideas, he systematically organized those of the principal reformers.

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<sup>30</sup> John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, trans. H. Beveridge (Ontario: Devoted Publishing, 2016), 33.

Calvin's opening line in *The Institutes* articulates his belief in a personal relationship with God. Calvin writes, "Nearly all the wisdom we possess, that is to say, true and sound wisdom, consists of two parts: the knowledge of God and of ourselves."<sup>31</sup>

Reflecting on the teachings of Martin Luther, Calvin, too, argues that man is sinful by nature and can do nothing to earn salvation. He further purports that God has chosen to save a few people. He refers to these few as the "elect." He argues that God has already decided who would be saved from the beginning of time. This doctrine is identified as predestination and is articulated in *The Institutes*:

By predestination we mean the eternal decree of God, by which he determined with himself whatever he wished to happen with regard to every man. All are not created on equal terms, but some are preordained to eternal life, others to eternal damnation; and, accordingly, as each has been created for one or other of these ends, we say that he has been predestinated to life or to death.<sup>32</sup>

It was also the belief of Calvin that the ideal government be controlled by religious leaders. Calvin's conflict with pastors and the government forced him to leave Geneva. In 1541, however, the city leaders requested his return to the city as its leader. During the three years of Calvin's departure, the church struggled and received orders to return to Catholicism from Cardinal Jacopo Sadoletto (1477–1547).<sup>33</sup> However, the Protestant Church in Geneva persevered as they held on to what Calvin taught them before his departure. When he returned, they placed complete confidence in his leadership by allowing him to respond to the Cardinal's summons. The rule of Calvin and his followers was strict. All residents were required to attend classes, forbidden to wear bright colors, and were not allowed to participate in card games. All violators

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<sup>31</sup> Calvin, *Institutes*, 35.

<sup>32</sup> Calvin, *Institutes*, 406.

<sup>33</sup> Karin Maag, *Lifting Hearts to the Lord: Worship with John Calvin in Sixteenth-Century Geneva* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2016), 13.

were imprisoned, excommunicated, and banished from the city. Any person in the city teaching doctrines different from Protestant theology was burned at the stake.

In his effort to reform Geneva's worship practices, Calvin issued edicts (the 1541 *Ecclesiastical Ordinances*),<sup>34</sup> a Reformed liturgy (*La Forme des Prieres—The Form of Prayers, 1542*),<sup>35</sup> and a new catechism (1541–1542).<sup>36</sup> Changing Geneva's worship customs and practices was difficult as the Protestant community's worship practices were never fully concretized during the early years of the Reformation. Most Reformers embraced the use of the vernacular in worship; however, many still used pre-Reformation liturgical elements in Latin.

Calvin argued that the church should be an example of principles found in Scripture. In his writing, *Ecclesiastical Ordinances*, Calvin contends that the New Testament outlines four orders of ministry: pastors, teachers, elders, and deacons. It was on this premise that the church in Geneva was organized. The pastors were responsible for conducting worship services, preaching, administering the sacraments, and caring for the spiritual well-being of the congregation. The deacons gave oversight to the social welfare of the congregation.

Calvin, like Luther, argued that the justification of believers came through faith in Christ alone. He taught that since all people sin, a relationship with Christ cannot be attained through works. It was Calvin who developed the doctrine of justification by faith in Christ alone. This doctrine was perhaps the most considerable controversy between the Catholic Church and the Protestants. In *The Institutes*, Calvin defines justification:

He is justified who is reckoned in the condition not of a sinner, but of a righteous man;

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<sup>34</sup> J. F. Bergier and R. M. Kingdon, *Registres de la Compagnie des pasteurs de Geneve au temps de Calvin*, trans. G. R. Potter and M. Greengrass (London, UK: Edwards Arnold, 1983) 71–76.

<sup>35</sup> John Calvin, "John Calvin: The Forms of Prayers and Songs of the Church," trans. Ford Lewis Battles, ATLAS, <https://sites.duke.edu/conversions/files/2014/09/Calvin-Letter-to-the-Reader.pdf>.

<sup>36</sup> Maag, *Lifting Hearts to the Lord*, 13.

And for that reason, he stands firm before God's judgment seat while all sinners fall. If an innocent accused person be summoned before the judgment seat of a fair judge, where he will be judged according to his innocence, he is said to be justified before the judge. Thus, justified before God is the man who, freed from the company of sinners, has God to witness and affirm his righteousness.<sup>37</sup>

Calvin believed the Scriptures were inspired by God and their subject was Christ. He believed the Scriptures were written as the Holy Spirit gave the inspiration. He writes, "The Scriptures are the only records in which God has been pleased to consign his truth to perpetual remembrance."<sup>38</sup> Calvin asserts that God has revealed himself in creation, but it is in Scripture that man can see God's revelation clearly and fully in Scripture. Calvin uses the following metaphor to argue this assertion:

For as the aged, or those whose sight is defective, when any book is set before them, though they perceive that there is something written, are hardly able to make out two consecutive words, but, when aided by glasses begin to read distinctly, so Scripture gathering together impressions of Deity, which, till then, lay confused in minds, dissipates the darkness, and shows us the true God clearly.<sup>39</sup>

In essence, the Reformation was about two important issues. In his book, *The Reformers and the Theology of the Reformation*, William Cunningham writes, "It was a great revolt against the see of Rome, and against the authority of the church, and churchmen in religious matters, combined with an assertion of the exclusive authority of the Bible, and of the right of all men to examine, and interpret it for themselves."<sup>40</sup> Cunningham further asserts that the second issue was, "The proclamation and the inculcation, upon the alleged authority of Scripture, or certain

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<sup>37</sup> Calvin, *The Institutes*, 318.

<sup>38</sup> Calvin, *The Institutes*, 35.

<sup>39</sup> Calvin, *The Institutes*, 33

<sup>40</sup> William Cunningham, *The Reformers and the Theology of the Reformation* (West Linn, OR: Monergism Books, 2022), e-Book, <https://www.monergism.com/thethreshold/sdg/cunningham/The%20Reformers%20and%20the%20Theology%20-%20William%20Cunningham.pdf>.

views in regard to the substance of Christianity or the way of salvation, and in regard to the organization and ordinances of the Christian church.”<sup>41</sup>

### The Development of Reformation Theology

The theology of the Reformation was influenced by the social, political, and religious contexts of Medieval Europe. The period was most unusual as things were very uncertain. It was an era of discovery, rebirth (the definition of *Renaissance*), and expansion occurred in many regards: geographically, technologically, theologically, and academically.

The principal Reformers—Luther, Calvin, and Zwingli—all had different views theologically. Despite the plurality of views, there was a synergistic convergence of theology, and five doctrinal tenets guided the Reformation. These tenets represent the theological legacy of the Reformers and the Reformation. Stephen Wellum writes, “Although the Reformation resulted in various theological divisions, at its heart the magisterial Reformers captured the central truths of Christian theology because they received the central truths of Scripture.”<sup>42</sup>

Before examining the theological heritage of the Reformation, it is critical to investigate important aspects of intellectualism of the era. First, humanism was on the rise, and its approaches were applied to the development of knowledge. “The Reformers embraced the famous cry of the humanists to return *ad fontes*, ‘to the sources.’ The Reformers applied these same humanistic methods to the Scriptures themselves, seeking out the best manuscripts of scriptural texts and translating them from their original Hebrew and Greek rather than relying

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<sup>41</sup> Cunningham, *The Reformers and the Theology of the Reformation*.

<sup>42</sup> Stephen J. Wellum, “Are The Five Solas Biblical?” *Southern Seminary Magazine* (2017): <https://equip.sbts.edu/article/five-solas-biblical/>.

upon the Latin translation of the Vulgate commonly used in their day.”<sup>43</sup> Using the early writings of such theologians as Augustine of Hippo (354–430), Cyprian (210–258), Tertullian (155–220), and others, the Reformers developed doctrines rooted in the Scriptures. Second, European universities utilized scholastic methods, such as logic and rhetoric, to communicate during the Reformation. The Reformers embraced these methods to further the work of the Reformation. Martin Luther vehemently condemned the errant teachings of medieval theologians in his 1517 writing, *Disputation on Scholastic Theology*.<sup>44</sup> The condemnation was a bit hypocritical since he utilized the same methods he was decrying in his debate with Erasmus during that period of the Reformation.

#### Worship in the Reformation

In the early sixteenth century, the Protestant Reformation began protesting the corruption in the Catholic Church. While the Reformers generally agreed on core theological tenets such as justification and biblical authority, they disagreed on the sacraments and music. Yet, they were all united in their desire to restore the true worship of God to the Church. Worship is the central focus of the Christian community. It is man’s response to the revelation of the Triune God. The leaders of the Reformation focused on “discovering the *essential ecclesiae*: what makes the church the church?”<sup>45</sup> Even though the Reformers were generally united in their theological views on the doctrines of justification and biblical authority, their disagreements on worship

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<sup>43</sup> Paul C. H. Lim and Andrew J. Martin. “The Theology of the Reformers,” The Gospel Coalition, <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/essay/the-theology-of-the-reformers/>.

<sup>44</sup> Martin Luther, *Disputation on Scholastic Theology*, <https://www.checkluther.com/wp-content/uploads/1517-Disputation-against-Scholastic-Theology.pdf>

<sup>45</sup> Howard G. Hageman, *Pulpit and Table* (Richmond, VA: John Knox, 1962), 7.

components such as the sacraments, music, and the usage of images fueled intense debate and divisiveness.

### The Sacraments

“The sacraments (baptism and the Lord’s Supper) are the only two commanded dramas of Christian worship (Matt. 28:19; Acts 2: 38–39; Col. 2:11–12; Luke 22:14–20; 1 Cor. 11:23–2).”<sup>46</sup> Unfortunately, the sacraments were the subject of great debate before and during the Reformation. The debate during the Reformation existed primarily among the Reformers, who shared varied views on many components regarding it.

### The Eucharist

At the time of the Reformation, the Catholic Church taught that during the Eucharist, the bread consumed is the body of Christ, and the wine is his blood. These elements go through a process of change. This change is called *transubstantiation*: “By the consecration of the bread and wine there takes place a change in the whole substance of the bread into the substance of the body of Christ our Lord and of the whole substance of the wine into the substance of his blood. This change the holy Catholic Church has fittingly and properly called transubstantiation.”<sup>47</sup>

The doctrine of transubstantiation was a great concern for the early Reformers. The early Reformers rejected the doctrine of transubstantiation. In their eyes, the Old Testament supported their argument. The Bible records that the priests entered the Tabernacle repeatedly to offer sacrifices for the sins of the people. They argued that Christ is the ultimate sacrifice offered once

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<sup>46</sup> Ligon Duncan, *Perspectives on Christian Worship: Five Views*, ed. J. Matthew Pinson (Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2009),

<sup>47</sup> “The Catechism of the Catholic Church,” The Holy See, 2005, [https://www.vatican.va/archive/compendium\\_ccc/documents/archive\\_2005\\_compendium-ccc\\_en.html](https://www.vatican.va/archive/compendium_ccc/documents/archive_2005_compendium-ccc_en.html).



and for all (Heb. 7:27). Christ has been sacrificed and does not need to be sacrificed again (Heb.9:11–28). His sacrifice was enough and is final (John 19:30). They viewed the doctrine of transubstantiation as a contradiction to what the Bible teaches.

Even though the Reformers rejected transubstantiation, they struggled to agree in interpreting the words, “This is my body” (Luke 22:19). As a result, Luther came up with a confusing alternative teaching he called *consubstantiation*. Reid Carr writes, “He [Luther] taught that Christ’s body and blood are substantially present alongside the bread and wine.”<sup>48</sup> This teaching added to the confusion and divided the Reformers. This subject was so divisive that it is the only one of fifteen articles Zwingli and his followers refused to sign at the 1529 Marburg Colloquy. Luther argued that Christ was in the elements used in the Lord’s Supper as traditionally taught by the Catholic Church. Dave Armstrong defines Luther’s view on the Eucharist in this manner:

Martin Luther believed in the Real Presence, although he denied transubstantiation and rejected the Sacrifice of the Mass. Luther (according to his nominalistic, anti-Scholastic leanings) didn’t want to speculate about metaphysics and how the bread and wine became the Body and Blood of Christ. He simply believed in the miracles of the literal presence of Jesus’ Body and Blood “alongside” the bread and wine (consubstantiation).<sup>49</sup>

Zwingli did not support the notion that baptism and the Eucharist were a “means of grace.” In his eyes, faith was a work of the Holy Spirit in the individual's soul. Robbie Castleman

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<sup>48</sup> Reid Carr, “Transubstantiation: What Catholicism Teaches About the Supper,” *Desiring God*, September 13, 2022, [desiringgod.org/articles/transubstantiation](https://desiringgod.org/articles/transubstantiation).

<sup>49</sup> Dave Armstrong, “Eucharistic Real Presence,” *Biblical Evidence for Catholicism with Dave Armstrong*, September 21, 2017, [patheos.com/blogs/davearmstrong/2017/09/eucharistic-real-presence-martin-luthers-magnificent-defense.html](https://patheos.com/blogs/davearmstrong/2017/09/eucharistic-real-presence-martin-luthers-magnificent-defense.html).

writes, “For Zwingli, the only change that happened took place not on the table but in the mind and heart of the believer. For Zwingli, grace was not mediated at all through the sacraments.”<sup>50</sup>

Zwingli opined that Christ was seated at the right hand of the Father, and the elements used in the Lord’s Supper were nothing more than a memorial.<sup>51</sup> In his interpretation of John 6:56, Zwingli concluded that the Eucharist is a memorial meal that points the believer back to the sacrifice of Jesus and serves as a reminder of His return.

Calvin stood in the middle of the debate between Luther and Zwingli. Calvin held to his personal view regarding the presence of Christ in the Eucharist, and he contended that “Christ was not actually present in the elements but that ‘all that Christ himself is and has is conveyed to us.’”<sup>52</sup> This view contributed greatly to his inability to agree with the others on this matter. Calvin does not embrace Zwingli’s view that water, bread, and wine are only symbols of God’s presence in the past. He sides with Luther on the notion that the sacraments encapsulate the reality of God’s grace. Calvin views Luther’s position on the issue as a medieval teaching. Still, he embraces his soteriological claim that salvation is a result of *sola fide* through *sola gratia* as received through *sola scriptura*.<sup>53</sup> Calvin functions more as a mediator in the argument of Luther and Zwingli on this regarding the presence of Christ in the sacrament in the Eucharist.

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<sup>50</sup> Robbie F. Castleman, *Story Shaped Worship: Following Patterns from the Bible and History* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2013), 177.

<sup>51</sup> Specifics of the Marburg Colloquy between Luther and Zwingli described by Luther in *Luther’s Works, Vol.38: Word and Sacrament IV*, ed. Jaroslav Van Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann, vol. 38 (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress, 1999) 15-89.

<sup>52</sup> John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster John Knox, 1960), 4.14.12.

<sup>53</sup> This affirmation is regarded as the tri-*sola* summary of the Reformation. Faith alone, grace alone, and Scripture alone are three of the five main tenets of the Reformation. While this summary reflects the main argument of the Reformation, it does not adequately explain the relationship of the sacraments and the Church.

On the one hand, Calvin believes Luther has not put enough distance between the views of Rome. But, conversely, he feels Zwingli has gone to the other extreme. When forced to join the debate and give his view, he concluded that the two were wasting time debating an issue that had little significance to the church.

**Table 1. Table showing the views of the three main Reformers on the frequency of the Eucharist**

Luther	Calvin	Zwingli
Christ's body is present "in, with, and under the form of bread and wine."	Christ is not present in the elements but in the spirit.	Christ is not present spiritually or physically in the form of bread and wine.
Did not believe in transubstantiation, but consubstantiation (even though he did not use this term).	Rejected transubstantiation. Those who receive the elements can receive the actual body and blood of Christ through the Holy Spirit.	Did not believe in transubstantiation. Did not accept Luther's teaching on consubstantiation.

Another area of debate for the Reformers was the availability and frequency of the Eucharist for the laity. In a treatise entitled, *The Babylonian Captivity of the Church*,<sup>54</sup> Luther used Scripture to lay claim to the idea of the cup being available to all laity. Since the priesthood of all believers was a part of Reformation teachings, the involvement of the laity in the sacrament was befitting. Michael Horton asserts, "Once or twice a year, perhaps, the laity in a given parish would receive communion—and then only the bread."<sup>55</sup>

The Bible shows that the Lord's Supper is celebrated regularly in Christian worship (Acts 2:42; 20:7). The *Didache* (c. 50–150) guided the administration of the Lord's Supper. It records, "On the Lord's own day gather together and break bread and give thanks, having confessed your

<sup>54</sup> Martin Luther's *Babylonian Captivity of the Church* addresses the seven medieval sacraments of the Roman Catholic Church and discusses the topic of indulgences.

<sup>55</sup> Michael Horton, "At Least Weekly: The Reformed Doctrine of the Lord's Supper and of its Frequent Celebration," *Mid-America Journal of Theology* no.11 (2000): 147–69.

sins so that your sacrifice may be pure.”<sup>56</sup> The writings of Justin Martyr (110–165) give evidence of a similar practice:

And on the day called Sunday, all who live in cities or in the country gather together to one place and the memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read, as long as time permits, then, when the reader has ceased, the president verbally instructs, and exhorts to the imitation of these good things. Then we all rise together and pray, and, as we before said, when our prayer is ended, bread and wine and water are brought and the president in like manner offers prayers and thanksgivings, according to his ability, and the people assent, saying Amen; and there is a distribution to each, and a participation of that over which thanks have been given, and to those who are absent a portion is sent by the deacons.<sup>57</sup>

While these sources give instructions on the teachings and the frequency of the Eucharist in the early church, these records are from isolated locations and do not give evidence that this was a worldwide practice.

In his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Calvin addresses the frequency of the Lord’s Supper. He reminds the reader of how valued the administration of the Lord’s Supper was in the early church. Calvin writes:

Plainly this custom which enjoins us to take communion once a year is a veritable invention of the devil, whoever was instrumental in introducing it...[T]he Lord’s table should have been spread at least once a week for the assembly of Christians, and the promises declared in it should feed us spiritually. None is indeed to be forcibly compelled, but all are to be urged and aroused; also the inertia of indolent people is to be rebuked. All, like hungry men, should flock to such a bounteous repast. Not unjustly, then, did I complain at the outset that this custom was thrust in by the devil’s artifice, which, in prescribing one day a year, renders men slothful all the rest of the year.<sup>58</sup>

Unlike Calvin, Zwingli believed that the administration of the Lord’s Supper should be a quarterly celebration, such as at Christmas, Easter, Pentecost, and the September 11<sup>th</sup>

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<sup>56</sup>Apostolic Fathers, *The Didache or Teaching of the Apostles*, trans. and ed., J. B. Lightfoot, [onlinechristianlibrary.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/didache.pdf](http://onlinechristianlibrary.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/didache.pdf).

<sup>57</sup> Justin Martyr, “1 Apol. LXVII” in *Anti-Nicene Fathers: The Apostolic Fathers with Justin Martyr and Irenaeus*, vol.1, ed. A Cleveland Coxe (Grand Rapids, MI: Eedmans, 2001), 186.

<sup>58</sup> Calvin, *Institutes*, 4.17.46.

celebrations of St. Felix and St. Regina, the patron saint of Zurich.<sup>59</sup> Zwingli's view of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper as a memorial meal of thanksgiving fueled his ideology of a quarterly celebration.

Luther differed from the other Reformers on the frequency of administering the Eucharist. Kenneth Wieting contends, "He made it clear that the Lord's Supper should be celebrated once or twice on Sundays and during the week, if desired."<sup>60</sup> Luther and the other reformers had varying views on the frequency of administering the Eucharist. The following table records the opinions of Calvin, Luther, and Zwingli.

**Table 2. Table showing the views of the three main reformers on the frequency of the Eucharist**

Calvin	Luther	Zwingli
Weekly administration of the Eucharist	Once or twice on Sundays and during the week	Quarterly: Easter, Pentecost, and Celebrations (St. Felix and St. Regina)

## Baptism

Calvin defines baptism as "a sign of the initiation by which we are received into the society of the church, in order that, engrafted in Christ, we may be reckoned among God's children."<sup>61</sup> This subject sparked much debate and discussion before and during the Reformation. James Torrance writes, "In any discussion of baptism, the first question to be asked is not who

<sup>59</sup> John M. Barkley, *The Worship of the Reformed Church* (London, UK: Lutterworth Press, 166), 21.

<sup>60</sup> Kenneth Wieting, "Are You Fanatical about the Lord's Supper?" *The Lutheran Witness* (November 23, 2020), <https://witness.lcms.org/2020/are-you-fanatical-about-the-lords-supper/>.

<sup>61</sup> Calvin, *Institutes*, 4:15.1.

should be baptized—infants or adults or both—nor how it should be administered—by sprinkling, pouring, or immersion—not whether it may be repeated.”<sup>62</sup>

At Marburg, Luther and Zwingli stood in agreement on the subject of baptism, but the issue divided other Reformers. As a result, many Reformers broke away to form denominations that agreed with their views. Tom Wells contends that four categories have emerged post-Reformation from the debate over baptism: “mode (immersion, affusion, and aspersion), proper candidates (pedobaptism vs. credobaptism), proper administration (an issue for groups like Landmark Baptists and Churches of Christ) and effect.”<sup>63</sup> Each denomination holds its view as significant regarding baptism.

Arguably, Luther’s most popular doctrine is justification by faith alone. He is remembered for “the entire destruction of the doctrine of human merit, and the thorough establishment of the great scriptural truth of a purely gratuitous justification through faith alone.”<sup>64</sup> Luther values *sola fide* so intensely that he concludes that it is the one thing that causes the church to stand or fall. However, tension results from his baptism views alongside his teachings on faith. Anabaptist opponents and others have been quick to draw attention to the issue.

At the time of the Protestant Reformation, a vast majority of the Reformers held to what Rome taught about baptism but could not agree with the Catholic Church on its effects. It was

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<sup>62</sup> James Torrance, *Worship, Community, and the Triune God of Grace* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1997), 63.

<sup>63</sup> Tom Wells, “Baptism and the Unity of Christians,” *Reformation and Revival* 8, no. 3 (Summer 1999): 100-8.

<sup>64</sup> William Cunningham, *The Reformers and the Theology of the Reformation* (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth Trust, 1989), 101.

the view of Rome that, upon baptism, a baby is forgiven of original sin and actual sin. In the Papal Bull of 1439, it is written:

The effect of this sacrament is the remission of all sin, original and actual; likewise of all punishment which is due for sin. As a consequence, no satisfaction for past sins is enjoined upon those who are baptized; and if they die before they commit any sin, they attain immediately to the kingdom of heaven and the vision of God.<sup>65</sup>

Luther advocates that faith is a requirement for baptism and believes that infants could exhibit faith. He asserts:

[If the infant] comes to Christ in baptism, as John came to him, and as the children were brought to him, that his word and work might be effective in them, move them, and make them holy, because his Word and work cannot be without fruit. Yet it has this effect alone in the child. Were it to fail here it would fail everywhere and be in vain, which is impossible.<sup>66</sup>

In his *Institutes*, Calvin presents two lines of defense for baptizing infants. First, he references the covenant God made with Abraham in his children in the Old Testament. Circumcision was the sign and seal of that covenant under the law. Calvin's second line of defense is the texts describing Christ's blessing infants brought to Him. Calvin and his followers advocate that "Infants are baptized into future repentance and faith, and even though these have not yet been formed in them, the seed of both lies hidden within them by the secret working of the Spirit."<sup>67</sup>

Baptism was viewed as nothing more than an indication that God had done a work in the believer's heart. Early in the Reformation, it was surprising that Zwingli embraced infant

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<sup>65</sup> Pope Eugene IV, in the Bull "Exultate Deo" (1439). See Charles George Herbermann, ed., *The Catholic Encyclopedia: An International Work of Reference on the Constitution, Doctrine, Discipline, and History of the Catholic Church*, vol. 2 (New York, NY: Appleton, 1907), 259.

<sup>66</sup> Martin Luther, *Luther's Works*, vol. 40, *Church and Ministry II*, ed. Jaroslav Jan; Oswald Pelikan, (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1999), 244.

<sup>67</sup> Calvin, *Institutes*, 4.16.20.

baptism; however, his understanding of the family in covenant theology laid the basis for his ideology. In *The Rites of Christian Initiation: Their Evolution and Interpretation*, M. E. Johnson summarizes Zwingli's view of the family role in covenant theology in this manner:

Birth to Christian parents within the “covenant” community, for Zwingli, seemed to convey membership in that community automatically. That is birth to Christian parents already constituted their divine “election” to salvation and so their baptism was simply an external sign of what was true for them already... as a sign of membership in the covenant community, infant baptism had its parallel with circumcision among the Jews.<sup>68</sup>

The views of the main Reformers (Luther, Calvin, and Zwingli) on baptism are captured in table 3.

**Table 3. Table containing the views of the main Reformers on baptism**

Luther	Calvin	Zwingli
Practiced Infant Baptism by sprinkling	Practiced infant baptism by sprinkling	Practiced infant baptism by sprinkling
Viewed baptism by immersion for adults as being in line with New Testament Teaching	Viewed baptism by immersion for adults as being in line with New Testament Teaching	Considered baptism by immersion

### Preaching in the Reformation

In Article VII of the Augsburg Confession (1530), the church is the place where the Word of God is preached and the sacraments are ministered. The Second Helvetic Confession (1566) states that “The preaching of the Word of God is the Word of God.”<sup>69</sup> The Reformation made preaching the centerpiece of worship. At the time of the Reformation, preaching was reserved for special occasions on the liturgical calendar. Liturgical events such as Christmas and

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<sup>68</sup> M. E. Johnson, *The Rites of Christian Initiation: Their Evolution and Interpretation* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1999), 244.

<sup>69</sup> Heinrich Bullinger, “The Second Helvetic Confession,” *Monergism*, [www.monergism.com/second-helvetic-confession](http://www.monergism.com/second-helvetic-confession).



Easter were marked by preaching in the open plains and town squares. The Reformers brought preaching back to a place of honor within the sphere of the Christian community.

The Reformers believed that there was an imbalance in the church between preaching and the sacrament. As a result, it led to a one-sided approach to worship. In a pamphlet entitled, *Concerning the Ordering of Divine Worship in the Congregation*, Luther draws this conclusion:

This is the sum of the matter: that everything shall be done so that the Word prevails... We can spare everything except the Word. We profit by nothing so much as by the Word. For the whole Scripture shows that the Word should have free course among Christians. And in Luke 10, Christ himself says: "One thing is needful"—that Mary sit at the feet of Christ and daily her his Word.<sup>70</sup>

The Reformers wanted to see preaching take root in the lives of all who followed Christ. It was critical to the Reformers that the Word of God take deep root in the lives of the people. They sought for the people to read the Word, study the Word, translate the Word, memorize the Word, meditate on the Word, and ultimately, live the Word. Luther believed preaching was a sacred call and should not be for selfish gain. This fueled much of his disdain and anger toward the clergy. Luther asserts, "Christ did not establish the ministry of proclamation to provide us with money, property, popularity, honor or friendship, nor to let us seek our own advantage through it; but to have us publish the truth freely and openly, rebuke evil, and announce what pertains to the advantage, health, and salvation of souls."<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> Martin Luther, *Luther's Works, vol. 53: Liturgy and Hymns*, ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann, (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1999), 14. This quote is from Luther's 1523, "Concerning the Order of Public Worship."

<sup>71</sup> Martin Luther, Luther's words from a sermon on 2 Corinthians 11:19ff are referred to and quoted in part by Irvin J. Habeck, "Luther's Attitude Toward the Public Ministry," Edward C. Fredrich, ed. *Luther Lives*, (Milwaukee, WI: Northwestern Publishing House, 1983), 39-40. Emphasis added.

The Reformers sought to restore preaching to the center of worship because it is God-ordained. God uses preaching for His glory, and He uses it to edify His sheep. In his book

*Reformed Dogmatics*, Herman Hoeksema writes:

Through the preaching it pleases God through Christ, the exalted Lord, the chief Prophet of God, Who alone gathers His church to speak to His people unto salvation. This is very evident from Romans 10:14,15. In this passage we read, according to the original: “How shall they believe in him whom they have not heard?” Through preaching therefore you do not hear about Christ, but you hear HIM.<sup>72</sup>

The Reformation marked a return to the primacy of preaching. In the early church, preaching was at the forefront of all gatherings of God’s people. As the church fell into error, preaching was lost and only occurred on special occasions. The Reformation represents a rebirth and revival. James Hastings Nichols writes in his book: “Whatever else it was, the Reformation was a great preaching revival, probably the greatest in the history of the Christian church. Riding a rising tide of preaching in the late Middle Ages, the Reformers expanded the practice still farther, and gave it a significantly new function and character.”<sup>73</sup> Before the Reformation, the laity rarely heard preaching from the priests in their local parishes. Long periods would pass before a sermon was uttered from the pulpit. Mostly, local priests practically abandoned their parishes except for occasional check-in visits. Martin Luther commented in 1520: “Lo, whither that the glory of the church departed! The whole earth is filled with priests, bishops, cardinals and clerics, and yet not one of them by virtue of his office, unless he be called to do by another and by a different call besides his sacramental ordination.”<sup>74</sup> On the rare occasion of a sermon, it

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<sup>72</sup> Herman Hoeksema, *Reformed Dogmatics* (Jenison, MI: Reformed Free Publishing Association, 1985), 637.

<sup>73</sup> James Hastings Nichols, *Corporate Worship in the Reformed Tradition* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1968), 29.

<sup>74</sup> Martin Luther, “The Babylonian Captivity” in *Works of Martin Luther* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1982), 280.

was placed in a special service and done poorly. The *homily*, as these sermons were called, was brief and unoriginal. Most priests took portions from sermons of the patristic fathers and composed very few original sermons. There was no expository preaching. Consequently, the body was not edified and built up through the Word. Moreover, the people could not understand the sermons as they were read in Latin, which was not the vernacular of the listener.

There were several contributors to the decline of preaching before the Reformation. One reason was the authority of the Pope, which also led to the decline in the authority of the Bible. This contributed heavily to why the Reformers developed *sola Scriptura*. As offices such as cardinals, bishops, priests, and monks multiplied, so did the power of the Pope. At this time, the Popes pontificated themselves as mediators between God and men. In their estimation, they represented God, and the people hearkened to their voices.

Consequently, their decisions and directives were held by the Catholic Church without question and infallible. For this cause, the voices of the Pope and the traditions they established in the Church were lifted to a status equal to or above the Word of God. As far as Rome was concerned, the people did not need the Bible, and preaching was unimportant.

Another reason for the decline in preaching was the emphasis placed on the Mass. The Mass, along with other rituals and ceremonies, dominated worship gatherings. In Catholicism, it was believed that incredible things took place during Mass. First of all, the elements (bread and wine) changed into the actual body and blood of Christ. Secondly, the priests offered up the body of Christ as a sacrifice to atone for the sins of the congregation. They believed forgiveness was granted to them because of the work of the priest as a chief means of grace for them. Furthermore, they were taught that their salvation was connected to the Mass. For this cause, preaching was unnecessary.

During the Reformation, the Reformers challenged the papal system as they shed light on the errors of the Mass. They did this through *sola Scriptura*. The restoration of preaching to the church was central to the success of the Reformation. As the Bible was placed into the hands of the people in their vernacular, they were able to hide the Word in their hearts. The result was their acceptance of the Bible as the sole authority for the church and all believers. The Word of God became a powerful weapon in their hands to help reform the church and bring it back to God. Martin Luther exclaims in thesis 62, “The true treasure of the church is the most holy Gospel of the glory and grace of God.”<sup>75</sup>

In his *Treatise on Christian Liberty*, Luther writes:

One thing and only is necessary for Christian life, righteousness and liberty. That one thing is the most holy Word of God, the Gospel of Christ...Let us then consider it certain and conclusively established that the soul can do without all things except the Word of God, and that where this is not, there is no help for the soul in anything else whatever. But if it has the Word, it is rich and lacks nothing, since the Word is the Word of life, of truth, of light, of peace, of righteousness, of salvation, of joy, of liberty, of wisdom, of power, of grace, of glory, and every blessing beyond our power to estimate.<sup>76</sup>

Elmer Kiessling gives a noteworthy summary on the impact of the Reformation on preaching in this statement:

The details of the art of sermonizing are all very well for ordinary men. That is why after Luther’s time, the solid body of homiletical wisdom, developed in part and transmitted by the pre-Reformation preachers, was appropriated and added to by those that followed after. But for a time rules were in abeyance while the giants of the Reformation occupied the pulpits. Indeed, not the least of their achievements was the creation of new rules to supplement the old. Preaching was never the same again.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>75</sup>Luther, “Ninety-Five Theses.”

<sup>76</sup> Martin Luther, *A Treatise on Christian Liberty*, [https://wedgeblade.net/files/archives\\_assets/21600.pdf](https://wedgeblade.net/files/archives_assets/21600.pdf).

<sup>77</sup> Elmer Carl Kiessling, *The Early Sermons of Luther and Their Relation to the Pre-Reformation Sermon* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1935), 146.

Reformation preaching is characterized by the proper use and interpretation of Scripture. This combination led to the development of two of the *solas* of the Reformation, *sola gratia* and *sola fide*. These two tenets of the Reformation became predominate in the contents of Reformation preaching. Prior to the Reformation, the goal of the limited amount of preaching done was to illicit a moral response by the hearer. The goals were empty as they only led to monastic vows, pilgrimages, and the purchase of indulgences. Though they were done in the name of Christ, the results were meaningless and never brought the listener into relationship with Him.

The preaching of the Reformation brought attention to the vicarious work of Christ. As the main Reformer, Luther took great pleasure in sharing Christ's compassion and the joy of the resurrection. "The theme—the human Jesus Christ, one of us, bearing our sin and its guilt, alienating power, and corrupting effects to the cross and into death for us—breathes in every sermon."<sup>78</sup> The essence of Reformation preaching is found in the justification by grace through faith. It is the theme of Luther's preaching and encapsulates the hallmark of the Reformation.

### Images and Relics

In addition to the differences over the sacraments, the Protestant Reformation resulted from differences over other worship practices. The Reformers disagreed with many worship practices in the Catholic Church.

Historically, images, statues, and paintings in any form of the Godhead have been prohibited as it is believed to violate the second commandment. A central point of contention for the Reformers was the veneration of images that had become customary in Catholicism. The Reformers argued that creating an image of God was impossible because He was beyond

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<sup>78</sup> Fred W. Meuser, *Luther the Preacher* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1983), 19–20.

depiction. They believed it was blasphemous and constituted the “graven images” the Bible teaches against. Calvin did not approve of images and relics in Christian worship. He states, “God is opposed to idols, that all may know He is the only fit witness to Himself. He expressly forbids any attempt to represent Him by a bodily shape... We must hold it as a first principle, that as often as any form is assigned to God, his glory is corrupted by an impious lie.”<sup>79</sup> Calvin was against any images in the church. Christianity is a religion built on faith in the unseen. Images and depictions of Christ add nothing to the faith and can easily take the Christian’s mind off of “things above” (Col. 3:2) as they focus on things made by man. Moreover, the Reformers contend that images lead to idolatry.

As the Reformation continued in various regions, followers of the reformers set out on tours of destruction where they raided churches destroying images, artwork, and anything they viewed as idols. Zwingli was able to corral the enthusiasm of his followers, but the damage had been done. In the eyes of Zwingli and other Reformers such as Luther and, eventually, Calvin, “Art as art was a gift of God. Art misused in the construction of idols was a distortion of that good gift and a sin.”<sup>80</sup> Zwingli did not support using images, relics, and other objects in worship. He wrote a letter to a friend name Urbanus to implore him, “Let us not be prematurely troubled as to the abolition of the mass or the casting out of the images, but let us labor to restore to their Creator the hearts that are given over to this world. The mass has fallen already; the images will, I think, disappear of their own motion. For we shall banish in vain one or the other unless public piety ratify the decree.”<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Calvin, *Institutes*, 1:11.

<sup>80</sup> Jim West, “Tearing Down the Images,” *Christian History* no. 118, <https://christianhistoryinstitute.org/magazine/article/urban-reformation-tearing-down-the-images>

<sup>81</sup> West, “Tearing Down the Images.”

In his work, *Answer to Valentin Compar*, Zwingli opines, “The believers, or those who are trusting, go to God alone; but the unbelievers go to the created.”<sup>82</sup> Luther adopts a different view from Zwingli on iconoclasm. He writes, “Images, eucharistic vestments, church ornaments, altar lights, and the like I regard as things indifferent. Any who wishes may omit them. Images and pictures taken from the Scriptures and from good histories, however, I consider very useful yet indifferent and optional. I have no sympathy with the iconoclasts.”<sup>83</sup>

In making this statement, Luther opposed one of his early supporters and fellow reformers, Karlstadt (1486–1541). In 1522, Karlstadt published a pamphlet entitled, *On the Rejection of Images*, arguing for removing relics, images, and statues from churches. As a result, he and his followers caused great upheaval in Wittenberg during Luther’s absence. Upon Luther’s return from hiding, he was forced to deal with the fallout and did so by going against Karlstadt and his followers. In an essay written in 1525, Luther argued:

Do not suppose that abuses are eliminated by destroying the object which is abused. Men can go wrong with wine and women. Shall we then prohibit wine and abolish women? The sun, the moon, and stars have been worshiped. Shall we then pluck them out of the sky? Such haste and violence betray a lack of confidence in God.<sup>84</sup>

Luther believed and taught that worship should be:

Whatever is free, that is, neither commanded nor prohibited, by which one can neither sin or obtain merit, this should be in our control as something subject to our reason so that we might employ it or not employ it, uphold it or drop it, according to our pleasure and need, without sinning and endangering our conscience.<sup>85</sup>

### Music and the Reformation

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<sup>82</sup> West, “Tearing Down the Images.”

<sup>83</sup> Luther, *Luther’s Works*, 371.

<sup>84</sup> Bainton, *Here I Stand*, 213.

<sup>85</sup> Bainton, *Here I Stand*, 213.

The Reformers shared diverse views on the functionality and usage of music in worship. At the time of the Reformation, music had become a significant component of worship as the organ and a semi-professional choral group were staples in most parish churches. According to Jonathan Willis, “The singing of complex polyphonic music, where the voices of singers weaved elaborately together, had become an important means of praising and serving God.”<sup>86</sup>

Some Reformers were against the usage of the Gregorian chant, and elaborate instrumental and vocal music. “The dangers of overly theatrical performances, the unwarranted expense of elaborate ceremonies and enormous pipe organs and the uselessness of text unintelligible to the common man.”<sup>87</sup> John Calvin and reformer William Farel (1489–1565) introduced the concept of congregational singing to Geneva after they returned from exile in 1541. The concept was a part of the conditions of their return and was widely received.

The early Reformers, especially Calvin and Farel, struggled with handling music, especially using instruments in worship. In their eyes, the church had fallen into error as relics, candles, incense, and other components, such as instruments, were introduced in worship. In their minds, the addition of instruments was another example of falling away from the teachings of the Bible. The usage of instruments, in their eyes, was a holdover from Catholicism and needed to be abandoned if reform was to occur. Their goal was to bring the church back into alignment with the Scriptures. As they read and interpreted New Testament worship, they saw no evidence of the usage of instruments in worship in the early church. As a result of their views and findings, they were forced to make decisions as they sought to reform the church. Calvin

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<sup>86</sup> Jonathan Willis, “Luther’s musical legacy is the Reformation’s unsung achievement” *The Conversation*, October 31, 2017, <https://theconversation.com/luthers-musical-legacy-is-the-reformations-unsung-achievement-85197>.

<sup>87</sup> John Barber, “Luther and Calvin on Music and Worship,” *Reformed Perspectives* 8 (June 2006): 1.



once preached in a sermon on I Samuel 18, “All that is needed is a simple and pure singing of the divine praises, coming from heart and mouth, and in the vulgar [vernacular] tongue ...

Instrumental music was tolerated in the time of the law because the people were then in infancy.”<sup>88</sup>

There were differing views among the Reformers as it related to the usage of instruments in worship. John Wycliffe preferred unaccompanied singing,<sup>89</sup> and John Huss shared the same sentiment.<sup>90</sup> Another early German Reformer, Gerhard Carlstadt (1480—1541), was in total opposition to accompanied singing. He believed “that the player of the instrument could not worship if he was busy attending to music matters.”<sup>91</sup>

John Calvin was very conservative in his views of music in the Reformation. In a similar manner to Luther, Calvin believed music to be powerful and worked to limit its usage in worship. In his writing, *Institution of the Christian Religion*, he briefly addressed the subject of music. It was Calvin’s view that “The use of musical instruments in worship smelled of popery, and was an unnecessary aid, a form of distraction from worship which is contrary to Paul’s principles that the tongue be employed in praise of God (I Cor. 14:16).”<sup>92</sup> He had great disdain for the usage of instruments and was vocal about it on many occasions. He argued that worship should be inwardly transformational and not limited to outward expressions.

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<sup>88</sup> Paul S. Jones, “Calvin and Church Music” in *Calvin and Culture: Exploring a Worldview* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2010), 220.

<sup>89</sup> Gottchard Lechler, *John Wycliffe and His English Precursors*, trans. Peter Lorimer (London, UK: Religious Tract Society, 1884), 298.

<sup>90</sup> Gustave Reese, *Music in the Renaissance* (New York, NY: W.W. Norton and Company, 1959), 732–33.

<sup>91</sup> Jack P. Lewis, “Music in Worship During the Reformation,” Truth for Today, [http://www.biblecourses.com/English/en\\_lessons/EN\\_200803\\_06.pdf](http://www.biblecourses.com/English/en_lessons/EN_200803_06.pdf).

<sup>92</sup> Robert Osei-Bonsu, “John Calvin’s Perspective on Music and Worship and Its Implications for the Seventh-Day Adventist Church,” *Horin Journal of Religious Studies* 3, no.1 (2013): 89.

In his Calvinistic worship model, he required the usage of only words from Scripture for church music. Calvin contended that music should not be a hindrance to worship. Therefore, music in Calvinistic worship was simple so as not to distract the worshiper. Unlike Luther, who wrote and promoted hymns written from Scripture, Calvin argued that church music should come directly from the Psalms. According to Calvin, the Psalms “ensured that Divine revelation was being put to music.”<sup>93</sup> He believed that the Holy Spirit gave the Psalms to David in his worship time. In essence, he advocated that God gave David the words he wanted to be used in praise to Him. Charles Garside asserts, “When John Calvin proposed to reorder the whole vocal-music life of the Christian community around the singing of Psalms, it was because the words of the Psalms were God’s words, put by God in the mouth of singers, just as HE had put them first in the mouth of David.”<sup>94</sup>

Calvin believes that the Psalms draw the listener closer to God and focused their hearts and minds on worship. Erin Lambert summarizes this perspective in her article, “‘In Corde Iubilum’: Music in Calvin’s Institutes of the Christian Religion.” She writes:

Calvin argued that the music of the Church should differ fundamentally from that of the wider world. Godly music was to separate the faithful from the world, and the music of the church should not incline listeners to dissolute behavior. Calvin consequently paid careful attention to the ways in which music affected the listener. He identified text and melody as the two elements of music and argued that melody acted upon the heart more forcefully than the Word alone. Although melody might distract listeners from a text, it might also be used to draw a text’s meaning into the heart of the listener. In this context, he suggested that the Psalms, paired with melodies that would incline singers and listeners to devotion, provided the only suitable music for worship.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> Barber, “Luther and Calvin on Music and Worship,” 1.

<sup>94</sup> Charles Garside, “The Origins of Calvin’s Theology of Music: 1536–1543,” *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* 69, no.4 (1979): 7–9.

<sup>95</sup> Erin Lambert, “‘In Corde Iubilum,’ Music in Calvin’s Institutes of the Christian Religion,” *Reformation and Renaissance Review* 3, no. 4 (2021): 271.

In Calvin's view, music can be dangerous because it can be a distraction. For this cause, he contended that safeguards should be put in place and the Psalms, paired with suitable melodies, met the safeguard requirement.

Charles Garside further summarizes Calvin's view when he writes, "The Psalms will serve as a talisman against the power of music, and melody, with all its capacity for intensification, will now accompany words which are made and spoken by the Holy Spirit, even by God Himself."<sup>96</sup> Calvin's high regard for the Psalms is critical because it would be the impetus for Calvin's development of metrical psalmody, a key element of Calvinistic worship. While there were similarities in the views of Luther and Calvin on music, the significant difference was in the source from which Calvin wrote. Luther wrote from a variety of sources, but Calvin stayed with the Scripture, predominately the Psalms.

Calvin believed that Scripture should be in the vernacular of the people. Moreover, he advocated for the singing to be in their vernacular. Calvin introduced his first Psalter in 1539 and revised and reintroduced it as the Genevan Psalter in 1562. Calvin had a great appreciation for music and supported its usage in the church, but he desired that it be used with pure motives. Knowing the power of music, he was concerned about music being a distraction and leading people away from God. W. David Taylor contends that Calvin believed instruments "risked contaminating the true praise of God."<sup>97</sup> Calvin wanted God and God alone to be worshiped.

Ulrich Zwingli, an accomplished musician was in total opposition to the usage of instruments in worship. Zwingli was a follower of Erasmus, a humanist, and was committed to

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<sup>96</sup> Charles Garside, "The Origin of Calvin's Theology of Music: 1536 to 1543," *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* 69, no. 4 (1979): 24.

<sup>97</sup> W. David O. Taylor, "John Calvin and Musical Instruments: A Critical Investigation," *Calvin Theological Journal* 48, no 2 (2013): 254.

the practices of the early church. Jeremy S. Begbie writes: “Zwingli was ruthlessly consistent—the intricacies of Latin polyphony, the sounds of the organ, the chanting of the Psalms, the setting of the Mass, even the unaccompanied unison singing of the psalms in the vernacular (as Calvin allowed) must all go.”<sup>98</sup>

Zwingli was very strict in his theology of music. He desired to break away from the Catholic Church, and abolishing its music practices was his attempt. Neil Stipp writes, “He and his followers removed art works from the church and destroyed organs and other instruments in order to display their disdain for Catholic Church music and tradition.”<sup>99</sup>

Luther is widely known to Christendom as the one who ignited the fire associated with Protestant Reformation. He never desired to split the church or establish a new ecclesiastical body. Instead, he wanted to *re-form* and bring the Church back into alignment with New Testament teachings and practices. As he led the reformation of the Church, Luther played a very significant role in the rebirth of music in worship.

As the Reformation ensued, many changes took place in public worship. Among these changes were changes in the music. On October 31, 1517, the recognized, official date of the Protestant Reformation, reform was already taking place in the church. For example, records reflect that as early as 1501, a hymnal was compiled and printed by the Bohemian Brethren. This was a sign that some form of congregational singing had entered the worship of the church.

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<sup>98</sup> Jeremy S. Begbie, *Resounding Truth: Christian Wisdom in the World of Music* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publishing Group, 2007), 115.

<sup>99</sup> Neil Stipp, “The Music Philosophies of Martin Luther and John Calvin,” *The American Organist* (September 2007): 68.

## Martin Luther and Music

By the time Luther came on the scene with the Reformation, congregational singing had ceased. Luther was trained in music and was an accomplished composer. As Luther broke with the Roman Catholic Church, he kept many liturgical practices in place, such as the Gregorian Chant being sung in Latin. Helen Pietsch contends: “As with most music students of his time, Luther had a grounding in both singing and the lute and was recognized as a skilled lute-player with a pleasant tenor voice.”<sup>100</sup> Augustine and other Christian theologians grappled with music and its power. It is written that Augustine was “afflicted with scruples of conscience whenever he discovered that he had derived pleasure from music and had been happy thereby” and “was of the opinion that such joy is unrighteous and sinful.”<sup>101</sup> This was not the case with Luther. He embraced the power of music and its effects on the listener's emotions. Luther writes:

Whether you wish to comfort the sad, to terrify the happy, to encourage the despairing, to humble the proud, to calm the passionate, or to appease those full of hate—and who could number all these masters of the human heart, namely, the emotions, inclinations, and affections that impel men to evil or good?—what more effective means than music could you find?<sup>102</sup>

Furthermore, Luther believed music to be powerful and impactful on people's emotions. Luther once wrote in a letter to a Catholic composer:

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<sup>100</sup> Helen Pietsch, “On Luther’s Understanding of Music,” *Lutheran Theological Journal* 26 (December 1992): 160.

<sup>101</sup> Pietsch, “On Luther’s Understanding of Music,” 162.

<sup>102</sup> Martin Luther, “Preface to Georg Rhau’s *Symphoniae Iucundate*” in *Luther’s works, vol. 53: Liturgy and Hymns*, ed. J. J. Pelikan, H.C. Oswald, and H.T. Lehmann (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1999), 323.

There are, without doubt in the human heart many seed-grains of virtue which are stirred up by music. All those with whom this is not the case I regard as blockheads and senseless stones. For we know that to the devil's music is something altogether hateful and unbearable. I am not asked to confess publicly that next to theology there is no art which is the equal of music. For it alone, after theology, can do what otherwise only theology can accomplish, namely, quiet and cheer up the soul of man, which is clear evidence that the devil, the originator of depressing worries and troubled thoughts, flees from the voice of music just as he flees from the word's theology. For this very reason the prophets cultivated no art so much as music in that they attached their theology not to geometry, nor to arithmetic, nor to astronomy, but to music, speaking the truth through psalms and hymns.<sup>103</sup>

Luther recognizes the power of music and its effect on God's people. Music has the ability to lift the spirit of depression and make the heart glad. For this cause, Luther advocates the usage of music in worship. Luther writes in the preface of his last hymnal: "God has made our hearts and spirit happy through his dear Son, whom He has delivered up that we might be redeemed from sin, death, and the devil. He who believes this cannot but be happy; he must cheerfully sing and talk about this, that others might hear it and come to Christ."<sup>104</sup>

Luther had a great passion for music and its use in the church. He was so committed to high standards in music that all men interested in studying for the ministry had to exhibit a high competency in music before being accepted as ministerial candidates. In Luther's eyes, music was not an invention of man but a gift from God (*Musica Dei donum optimi*). Luther states, "Music is an outstanding gift of God and next to theology. I would not give my slight knowledge of music for a great consideration. And youth should be taught this art; for it makes fine skilled

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<sup>103</sup>Walter E. Buszin, "Luther on Music," *The Musical Quarterly* 32, no. 1 (Jan, 1946): 84.

<sup>104</sup> Mark Noll, "Singing the Word of God," *Christian History* 95 (2007): [www.christianhistoryinstitute.org/magazine/article/singing-the-word-of-god](http://www.christianhistoryinstitute.org/magazine/article/singing-the-word-of-god).

people.”<sup>105</sup> Luther believed the emotions associated with music should not be limited to secular music but should be evident in church music.

Luther believed and fully acknowledged that music came from the creative hand of God.

In the preface to a collection of music, Luther affirms:

I most heartily desire that music, that divine and precious gift, be praised and extolled before all people. Experience proves that next to the Word of God, only music deserves being extolled as the mistress and governess of the feelings of the human heart...A greater praise than this we cannot imagine.<sup>106</sup>

Music played a critical role in Luther’s reformation of the Church; therefore, he strongly urged the usage of music in worship. That is not to say music was not a part of the church’s worship before the Reformation. It was present but was performed by a designated group of professional musicians. Luther sought to return the song of the people to the people because as Christ’s blood was not limited to a select group, neither should music. Carl Schalk, an imminent Lutheran hymn writer, is convinced that “Luther’s desire for the active participation of the congregation through hymnody was a result of his concern that the people participate actively *in the singing of the liturgy*” [emphasis original].<sup>107</sup> In the 16<sup>th</sup> century, Luther encouraged congregational singing by developing and popularizing the *chorale*. Donald Jay Grout writes, “The most distinctive and important musical contribution of the Lutheran church was the strophic congregational hymn called in German a *Choral* or *Kirchenlied* (Church song) and in English *chorale*.”<sup>108</sup> The *chorale* was foundational to the music of the Reformation. They

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<sup>105</sup> John Barber, “Luther and Calvin on Music and Worship,” *Reformed Perspectives Magazine* 8, no. 26 (2006): [https://thirdmill.org/magazine/article.asp?link=http%3A%5E%5Ethirdmill.org%5Earticles%5Ejoh\\_barber%5EPT.joh\\_barber.Luther.Calvin.Music.Worship.html&at=Luther+and+Calvin+on+Music+and+Worship](https://thirdmill.org/magazine/article.asp?link=http%3A%5E%5Ethirdmill.org%5Earticles%5Ejoh_barber%5EPT.joh_barber.Luther.Calvin.Music.Worship.html&at=Luther+and+Calvin+on+Music+and+Worship).

<sup>106</sup> Walter E. Buszin and Martin Luther, “Luther on Music,” *The Musical Quarterly* 32, no.1 (Jan. 1946): 81.

<sup>107</sup> Carl Schalk, *Luther on Music* (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1988), 24.

<sup>108</sup> Donald Jay Grout, *A History of Western Music*, 3rd ed. (New York, NY: Norton, 1980), 251.

consisted of two components: the text and the tune. They were written simply because Luther's ultimate goal was to get the congregation to sing. Schalk states:

Luther viewed the congregational hymn or chorale as an integral and vital part of the *liturgy* and not merely as a general Christian song loosely attached to worship. It was *liturgical hymnody* [emphasis original]—in which doxa [glory or praise] and dogma [teaching or belief] were united in doxological proclamation and in which the people joined together in praise, mutual expression of faith, and in the simple, practical and liturgical demonstration of the universal priesthood of all believers—that was the genius of the developing hymnody of the early Lutheran Reformation.<sup>109</sup>

Luther's most famous chorale is considered the battle hymn of the Reformation, "*Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott*" ("A Mighty Fortress is Our God").<sup>110</sup> While this is Luther's most famous hymn, very little is known about its origin. There is debate among scholars regarding the date that Luther wrote the hymn. An early hymnal indicates the hymn's first appearance was in 1533; however, a few 19th-century hymnologists had found the hymn in hymnals before 1533. These hymnals, however, were destroyed during World War II. Scholars believe that Luther penned the hymn somewhere between 1521 and 1529. The majority of the scholars have pinpointed the composition of the song to 1527–28. Heinrich Heine supposes that the hymn was sung by the Reformers as they entered the Diet of Worms (1521).<sup>111</sup>

Considered the "Battle Hymn of The Reformation," it was a cry against the pope and the Roman Catholic church. The hymn is a paraphrase of Psalm 46. While Luther does not paraphrase the entire Psalm, the hymn is concentrated on the first three verses of the psalm and concludes with the battle found in the latter verses. Even though "*Ein feste Burg*" was not

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<sup>109</sup> Carl Schalk, "German Hymnody," in *Hymnal Companion to the Luther Book of Worship* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1981), 19.

<sup>110</sup> Albert B. Collver, "A Mighty Fortress," LutheranReformation.com (October 1, 2015), [www.lutheranreformation.org/history/a-mighty-fortress/](http://www.lutheranreformation.org/history/a-mighty-fortress/).

<sup>111</sup> Andreas Loewe and Katherine Firth, "Martin Luther's 'Mighty Fortress,'" *Lutheran Quarterly* 32 (Summer 2018): 128.



composed for a specific occasion, it is revered as a hymn emphasizing *sola fide* and *solus Christus*. These basic tenets of the Reformation inspired the reformers to “fight the good of faith” and bring the church back to God.

Luther had a vision of a singing church, which was one of his greatest aspirations for worship. One church historian asserts:

The church was no longer composed of priests and monks; it was now the congregation of believers. All were to take part in worship...a taste for music was diffused throughout [Germany]. For Luther’s time, the people sang; the Bible inspired their songs...Hence the revival in the sixteenth century, of hymns... hymns were multiplied; they spread rapidly among the people, and powerfully contributed to rouse it from sleep.<sup>112</sup>

Three sources gave Luther inspiration for congregational singing. The first inspiration was Gregorian Chant. Sung in Latin, Gregorian Chant had been a mainstay in the church for many years. Luther and the Reformers sought to focus the church on the traditional tenets that had fortified the church for centuries. Luther slightly altered the texts and the tunes, but Gregorian Chant was the foundation of the music Luther composed. A second source of inspiration to Luther was the *Leisen*. This group of Pre-Reformation German folk hymns contained some form of *Kyrie eleison* at the end of each stanza. Robin A. Leaver writes, “These folk songs were mostly single-stanza, paraliturgical refrains sung in processions, pilgrimages, funerals, liturgical dramas, closely associated with the major festivals of the church year and frequently being translations or paraphrases of Latin liturgical texts.”<sup>113</sup> His final inspiration was traditional folk song. This influence created controversy as the tune associated with this source was both secular and sacred. As a result, Luther was accused of using bar tunes in sacred music.

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<sup>112</sup> Jean-Henri Merle D’Aubigne, *History of the Reformation in the Sixteenth Century II*, trans. David D. Scott (Glasgow: Blackie and Son, 1846), 335.

<sup>113</sup> Robin Leaver, *The Whole Church Sings: Congregational Singing in Luther’s Wittenberg* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2017), 20.

The impact of Luther on church music was massive. It was through the eyes of Luther that the church was able to see the creative hand of God at work. While many struggled with skepticism regarding the role of music, Luther taught the church the value of music and proved that it could be trusted to build faith when appropriately used.

Luther aided the church in developing a theology of worship through music. Luther argued that the purpose of music had a theological basis, and that the Word of God aids in growing faith. Robert Goeser writes in his article, “Luther: Word of God, Language, and Art:”

Fundamental to Luther’s view of language is his understanding that the word or symbol bears what it signifies. Words are able to bear the presence of God. As the Word [Christ] is fully God and bears the presence of God, so words bear the Word. This understanding is there early on in Luther’s writings and gets articulated constantly. He doesn’t hesitate to use the most graphic and shocking language; for example, he says that with the bodily voice of the preached Gospel, the true Christ—as he sits at the right hand of the Father—is brought into the human heart.<sup>114</sup>

In Luther’s eyes, music embodies God’s redemptive plan for humanity. While music is symbolic or metaphorical, it represents God’s stable, steadfast presence in an ever-changing world.

Music, without a word, proclaims the creative order of God and drives away the devil. As the music of David calmed the spirit of Saul and forced the devil to flee, so does music when heard by believers. David J. Susan writes, “When a man or woman in Christ sings the Word, double blessing is here: music’s power for good and against evil, and the Holy Spirit’s power for good and against evil.”<sup>115</sup>

Luther used the book of Psalms to write hymns for congregational singing. Following the example of earlier hymn writers and church leaders, Luther wrote from the songbook of Israel,

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<sup>114</sup> Robert Goeser, “Luther: Word of God, Language, and Art,” *Currents in Theology and Mission* 18. no. 1 (Fall 1991): 9.

<sup>115</sup> David J. Susan, “Some Parallel Emphases Between Luther’s Theology and His Thought About Music, and Their Contemporary Significance,” *Concordia Journal* 11, no.1 (January 1985): 10.

the Psalter. Believing that the Psalter contained the story of redemption, Luther translated the Psalms into usable text for hymns. Two of his major works focused on the Psalms—*Dictata super Psalterium* (1513–16) and *Operationes in Psalmos* (1519–21). When the Protestant Reformation began in 1517, Luther had translated all of the penitential Psalms by 1524 and completed translating the entire book.<sup>116</sup>

Another of Luther's great contributions to the Reformation was his liturgy reform—making it accessible to the common man. His liturgical reform was accomplished in two phases. First, Luther observed in 1523 that there was a need for a change in the order of the Mass. As time passed, the Mass became more about the priests and less about the people. Donald P. Hustad, in his book *Jubilate II: Church Music in Worship and Renewal*, lists the major downfalls of the liturgy before Luther's reform. He contends:

1. The Liturgy of Word had little significance. In many parishes sermons were rarely heard, because local priests were too poorly trained to be capable of preaching.
2. Typical worshipers understood little that was being said and sung, since the service was in Latin.
3. The Lord's Supper was no longer a joyous action of the whole congregation; it had become the priestly function of celebrant alone.
4. Each celebration of the mass was regarded as a separate offering of the body and blood of Jesus. The emphasis was on Christ's death, with scant remembrance of his resurrection and second coming.
5. The Roman eucharistic prayer was not a "Prayer of Thanksgiving," but a rather long petition which voiced repeated requests that God would receive the offering of the mass, thus generating a spirit of fear lest it not be accepted.<sup>117</sup>

After years of abuse, Luther and the reformers set out to bring the church back to God and restore true worship. The second phase of liturgical reform was the restoration of the proclamation to worship. As previously stated in this literature review, preaching was no longer a

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<sup>116</sup> Susan, "Some Parallel Emphases," 10.

<sup>117</sup> Donald P. Hustad, *Jubilate II: Church Music in Worship and Renewal* (Carol Stream, IL: Hope Publishing Company, 1993), 185.

part of the worship service. Preaching had been replaced with “stories on the lives of saints, legends, fables, and discourses on ‘blue ducks,’ as Luther puts it.”<sup>118</sup> Luther argued that preaching was the reason why the church gathered. He writes, “[A] Christian congregation should never gather together without the preaching of God’s Word and prayer, no matter how briefly... [W]hen God’s Word is not preached, one had better neither sing nor read, or even come together.”<sup>119</sup> When reforming the mass, Luther focused on making preaching the main focus, and all other practices, such as the sacraments, were secondary.

### The Five *Solas*

At the heart of the Reformation are five important doctrinal convictions held in high regard by the Reformers. Even though the Reformers were very diverse, they all agreed on some critical, fundamental, and foundational tenets that form the Christian faith. The convictions about Christ’s death, burial, resurrection, and return fortify the teachings of the church. The five *solas*, as they are called, capture the essence of the Reformation. They teach about the Reformation and argue why this occurrence is essential to the Christian faith. Ronald Cammenga states, “The Reformers said ‘only’ or ‘alone’ while Rome consistently said, ‘and.’”<sup>120</sup> The Reformers embraced an *only* view of Faith, Grace, Scripture, Christ, and God’s glory. While the Catholic Church embraced the main tenets of the *solas*, they believed they all required some human contribution. Consequently, *and* was a part of all doctrinal views. The five *solas* became the

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<sup>118</sup> Kurt J. Eggert, “Martin Luther, God’s Music Man” (Lecture, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, November 10, 1983).

<sup>119</sup> Mark Birkholz, “Luther’s Reform of the Mass,” Reformation 500<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, March 27, 2017, [www.lutheranreformation.org](http://www.lutheranreformation.org).

<sup>120</sup> Ronald Cammenga, “The Five Solas of the Protestant Reformation,” *The Standard Bearer* 94, no. 2 (October 2017): 34.

blueprint and foundation for Reformed theology to distinguish the teachings of the Reformers from those of the Catholic Church.

First, *Sola Fide*. The Bible teaches that faith alone is how believers are saved and justified. Man is incapable of saving himself, and neither can he atone for his wrong. The natural propensity to try to fix things is at the heart of humanism and contradicts the Gospel. The Westminster Confession of Faith (1646), a document eventually birthed by Reformation thought, says, “Faith, thus receiving and resting on Christ and his righteousness, is the alone instrument of justification: yet is it not alone in the person justified, but is ever accompanied with all other saving graces, and is no dead faith, but worketh by love.”<sup>121</sup> The Roman Catholic Church teaches that man is righteous before God partly because of faith. They contend that faith and good works are a part of the equation that produces righteousness. The Reformers view this as antithetical to the Gospel. The Gospel affirms that the finished work of Christ offers atonement for the sins of man. By having faith in Christ and His finished works, believers have access to salvation (Matt. 20:28, 26:27–28; John 6:25–58; Acts 10:43; Rom. 3:9; Rom. 5:1; 1 Cor. 15:3–4; 2 Cor. 5:18–21).<sup>122</sup> Wellum writes, “*Sola Fide* is a reminder that God is God in all of his self-sufficiency, moral splendor, and glorious perfection. It is also a reminder that God, He rightly demands and deserves from us perfect obedience.”<sup>123</sup>

Second, *Sola Gratia*. Grace is a free gift from God. There is nothing that man can do to merit salvation. Humans deserve death and eternal damnation; however, God has lavishly given His grace. All have strayed away from God and are “dead” in sin and “by nature children of

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<sup>121</sup> Gregg Strawbridge, “The Five Solas of the Reformation,” Five Solas, <https://www.fivesolas.com/5solas.htm>.

<sup>123</sup> Wellum, “Are The Five Solas Biblical?”

wrath” (Eph. 2:1, 3). Paul writes, “For by grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast” (Eph. 2:8). Salvation occurs only through the grace of God and without any contribution from humans. Matthew Anderson writes, “While there are many descriptions of atonement and how it works, the Reformation’s fundamental insight was that we are reconciled with God and each other, not by what we have done, but entirely and completely by what God has done for us in Jesus Christ. This is grace.”<sup>124</sup> At the time of the Reformation, it was the view of the Catholic Church that salvation was bestowed partly by the grace of God and partly by merit. Through *sola gratia*, the Reformers rejected this notion and argued that salvation comes through grace alone. In his work, *The Bondage of the Will*, Luther contends, “There is no such thing as human merit in God’s sight, whether the merit is great or small. We cannot give ourselves even one tiny bit of credit for our salvation. It is entirely because of God’s grace.”<sup>125</sup>

Third, *Sola Scriptura*. The Bible is the only infallible authority and source of divine instruction. It is Paul who states in his second letter to Timothy that “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works” (2 Tim. 3:16–17). At the time of the Reformation, the Roman Catholic Church had elevated the decisions of councils, the decrees of the pope, and other writings of the church, such as the *Apocrypha*, to the same level as the authority of the Scripture. Luther advocated for the supremacy of Scripture in the life of the believer and the church. Cammenga states, “The Reformers rejected Rome’s elevation of other authorities alongside the authority of Holy

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<sup>124</sup> Matthew R. Anderson, “The Three Reformation Solas and Twenty-First Century Ethical Issues,” *Consensus* 30, no. 1, Article 5, <http://scholars.wlu.ca/consensus/vol30/iss1/5>.

<sup>125</sup> Martin Luther, *The Bondage of the Will* (London, UK: Grace Publications Trust, 1984), 6.

Scripture. Rome taught that the Bible was an authority in the church, in fact a very important authority the church. But that the Bible was not the *only* authority.<sup>126</sup> Luther argues:

Unless I am convinced by the testimony of the Scriptures or by clear reason (for I do not trust either the pope or the 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.<sup>127</sup>

By embracing *sola Scriptura*, the Reformers confessed that God's Word and God's Word alone is the final authority and standard of Truth. *Sola Scriptura* reminds believers that man is not the final arbiter of truth. The Word of God, properly interpreted and embraced, guides man in truth and never leads him astray.

Fourth, *Solus Christus*. In the Reformation, this tenet of "Christ alone" focused on the finished work of Christ. The Reformers attempted to bring the church back to faith in Christ as the one and only mediator between God and man. The Reformers taught that man is saved by Christ alone and not by his own merit. In his first letter to Timothy, Paul tells his beloved Son in the ministry that salvation can only be accomplished through Christ. "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. 2:5). Paul also affirms that Christ is the source of salvation and "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is no other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). Unfortunately, in years prior to the Reformation, the church began to lift clergy and believers who died in the faith to a platform equal with Christ. As a result, they began to pray to and call on those who were dead or alive to aid them in their lives. The Reformers took issue with any form of mediation as they believed Jesus alone was worthy of access to the Father. He mediates and

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<sup>126</sup> Cammenga, "The Five Solas of the Protestant Reformation," 34.

<sup>127</sup> Bainton, *Here I Stand*, 182.

intercedes on our behalf. Jesus Christ alone is king (Rev. 19:16). Christ alone is the High Priest (Heb. 4:14). Jesus Christ alone is the Redeemer (Gal. 3:13). Andrew Corbett states, “When we say *Solus Christus*, we are stating our belief that salvation (the forgiveness of our sins and a new and right relationship with God) is possible only by the work Christ being merited to us.

Salvation is not through the Church, Mary, the Saints, or our own efforts.<sup>128</sup> This view argues that salvation is complete because of the finished work of Christ. According to Wellum, *Solus Christus* says, “In Christ alone God’s righteous demand against sin is definitively and completely satisfied. Precisely because Jesus is God, the Son incarnate, his merits alone are sufficient; there is nothing more that we can add to his work.”<sup>129</sup>

Fifth, *Soli Deo Gloria*. Of the five *solas*, this *sola* is the most important of all. It captures the essence of God’s sole purpose for creating the world and all within it. He created all things for His glory. The history of worship has God at the center. From the beginning of time, the Sovereign of Holy Writ created all that is for His glory. The goal of man in every aspect of life is to give glory to God. Man has a natural propensity not to give God the glory He deserves and to resist the knowledge of God. Even though man has beheld God’s glory in creation and experienced His glory written on the heart, man tends to think too highly of himself. In the Old Testament, God reminded Israel that He chose them for the sake of His name and His glory (Deut. 7:7–8; Isa. 48:9–11). In the New Testament, Paul teaches believers that, while they may be wise and noble by man’s standards, they can only boast in God (1 Cor. 1:26–31). He instructs that God’s ultimate plan for humanity is to bring glory to Him (Eph. 1:3–14; Rom. 9:14–24). And he ends on this note, “For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be

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<sup>128</sup> Andrew Corbett, “The Five Pillars of Biblical Christianity, Part 2,” Finding Truth Matters, July 20, 2006, [www.findingtruthmatters.org/articles/theology/solo-christo/](http://www.findingtruthmatters.org/articles/theology/solo-christo/).

<sup>129</sup> Wellum, “Are The Five Solas Biblical?”



glory forever. Amen” (Rom. 11:36). Strawbridge argues, “In contrast to the monastic division of life into sacred versus secular perpetuated by the Roman Church, the Reformers saw all of life to be lived under the Lordship of Christ. Every activity of the Christian is to be sanctified unto the glory of God.”<sup>130</sup>

Over five hundred years later, the five *solas* represent the heart of Christian theology. They point Christians to the centrality of the faith and remind them of the believer’s dependency on the Sovereign God to save and redeem them. The *solas* support the structure of the church. These teachings undergird the redemptive plan of God, and they work to fulfill that plan. As the offspring of the Reformation, Christians have the responsibility of revisiting these doctrinal truths and passing them to the next generation. God calls people to salvation through the authority of Scripture alone. Through faith alone, God accepts through grace alone. Through a life rooted in Christ alone, Christians are sure to bring glory to God and God alone.

#### Afrocentric Christianity

The history of Christianity has most often been told from a Eurocentric perspective. Consequently, much of what has been taught regarding the Bible has no cultural or geographical connection to Christians who are not of European descent, especially African Americans. When discussing the Protestant Reformation, Africa is often left out. Since many early theologians have come from Africa and some of the oldest Christian communities have begun in Africa, it is incumbent upon this research project to look at the indelible impression Africans have made on the Protestant Reformation and Christianity in general.

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<sup>130</sup> Strawbridge, “The Five Solas of the Reformation.”

Egypt has played a major role in the development of Christianity and has been greatly overlooked in church history. In his work, *African Christianity*, Ogbu Kalu states, “The story of Christianity in North Africa is a part of a golden period of African cultural prominence in the world stage.”<sup>131</sup> Egypt is often recognized for its geographical and cultural significance, but rarely is the significance to Christianity discussed. While the Bible records several references to Egypt, there is very little research exploring the importance of Egypt to Christianity.

The book of Acts reveals the presence of people from Egypt, Libya, and near Cyrene (Acts 2:10). In Acts 18:24, the presence of Apollos from Alexandria is recorded. Matthew’s record of the flight of Joseph, Mary, and the baby Jesus from Herod reveals Egypt as their destination (Matt. 2:13). Christian tradition reveals a connection between Mark and Egypt. Kula writes, “A late second-century fragment from Clement refers to Mark as the founder of the Egyptian church. The fourth-century historian Eusebius reports the accepted traditions regarding Mark: and they say that this Mark was the first that was sent to Egypt and that he proclaimed the Gospel which he had written, and first established churches in Alexandria.”<sup>132</sup> Furthermore, Kula writes, “Until the break of Catholic Christianity, following the 5<sup>th</sup> century Council of Chalcedon of 415 AD, Alexandria was the complex but formidable power of Catholic Christianity throughout the church.”<sup>133</sup> The details of this research are important because they reveal the connection between Africa and Christianity. While there are numerous mentions of Egypt in the Bible, the contributions of this country to Christianity are rarely discussed. For this cause, misunderstandings and untruths have emerged regarding Africa and Christianity. Vuyani Sindo

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<sup>131</sup> Ogbu Kula, *African Christianity: An African Story* (Trenton, NJ: African World Press, 2007), 45.

<sup>132</sup> Kula, *African Christianity: An African Story*, 45.

<sup>133</sup> Kula, *African Christianity: An African Story*, 49.

writes, “The first being that Christianity only arrived in Africa in the 1600s, and the second that Africa has not had any contribution in shaping the Christian Faith.”<sup>134</sup> This misunderstanding is the result of how scholars have portrayed the role of the Africans and the African church in the formation of Christian thought. The church in Africa has historically been viewed as a docile community of believers in Christian history.

Conventional Christian teachings have been framed by Roman and Greek culture. Afrocentric research, however, reveals a different story. Africa has been overlooked even though it has played a major role in the development of Christian thought. An Afrocentric view of Christianity allows African Americans to see themselves in salvific history.

Beginning with evidence chronicled throughout the Bible, it is easy to see that ancient Africans have played a significant role in the development of God’s people, beginning with the land of Cush. When Africa comes up in a biblical discussion, the discussion is often relegated to dark-skinned people in Ethiopia, such as those included in Jeremiah’s writing. Jeremiah writes, “Can an Ethiopian change his skin” (Jer. 13:23)? The identity of Ethiopians has been consistently associated with dark-skinned people. However, there are three categories that represent the scattered Clans of Cushites. In his book, *The Blessing of Africa*, Keith Burton devotes an entire portion of the book to discussing these groups. He categorizes the groups as the Ethiopians, who reside on the west of the Red Sea, the Arabians, who are situated on the east side of the Red Sea, and the Mesopotamian Cushites, who are primarily the people of Babylon.<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>134</sup> Vuyani Sindo, “The Legacy and the Future of the Church in Africa,” *George Whitefield College Newsletter*, March 2021, <https://www.gwc.ac.za/the-legacy-and-the-future-of-the-church-in-africa/>.

<sup>135</sup> Keith Burton, *The Blessing of Africa: The Bible and African Christianity* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2007), 65.

Genesis 10 records a Table of Nations that includes a brief biography of the son of Cush, Nimrod. According to the Bible, Nimrod was a great hunter and warrior before God. He is credited with establishing the first cities noted in Scripture after Cain's city, Enoch, named after his son. Nimrod had a hand in the development of the kingdoms of Babylon and Assyria. Keith Burton writes, "When Micah prophesies to Israel, Assyria is still known as the land of Nimrod."<sup>136</sup> King Nebuchadnezzar, the great Babylonian king, later defeated the Assyrians and conquered the land of Judah. Burton contends, "Although the captor of God's people, Nebuchadnezzar, was divinely chosen as the repository of a prophetic dream that unveiled the future of the universe. This leaves him to proclaim the sovereignty of the God of Israel, and it appears that he eventually submitted to the supreme God."<sup>137</sup>

The Queen of Sheba is another significant Bible character from Africa. She is first introduced in the Bible when she visits Solomon in I Kings 10. The biblical account of this queen indicates that she was a woman of wealth, power, and beauty. She traveled to Jerusalem after she "heard of the fame of Solomon concerning the name of the LORD" (I Kings 10:1) to ask him some hard questions. Since God had given Solomon the gift of wisdom, "There was not anything hid from the king, which he told her not" (1 Kings 10:3). The queen was greatly impressed with Solomon's wisdom, hospitality, and reputation. She states, "Howbeit I believed not the words, until I came, and mine eyes had seen it: and, behold, the half was not told me: thy wisdom and prosperity exceedeth the fame which I heard" (I Kings 10:7). In Matthew 12:42 and Luke 11:31,

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<sup>136</sup> Burton, *The Blessing of Africa*, 62.

<sup>137</sup> Burton, *The Blessing of Africa*, 65.

she is mentioned again in the Bible when she was referred to as “The Queen of the South” by Jesus.

The Bible also records the presence of another Egyptian Queen, Candace. She is associated with the story of the Ethiopian Eunuch found in Acts 8:26–39. The story of the Ethiopian Eunuch has significance in Protestant Reformation and history. This significance is discussed later in this research project. Luke draws attention to the fact that the Ethiopian was a eunuch. As one considers the role of this Eunuch, it is important to note that not only was he a religious figure, but he was a powerful political figure. Burton writes, “The Ethiopian was much more than a eunuch: he functioned as a powerful politician who served as the treasurer of the entire kingdom.”<sup>138</sup> Acts 8:27 indicates that he had gone to Jerusalem to worship. This shows a tie to the newly established Christian church.

The presence of Africans in the Bible is quite substantial as both the Old and New Testaments bear strong evidence of the Africans in God’s plan for humanity. The role and presence of Africans do not end there, but it continues into the church through the early church fathers.

Tertullian of Carthage (160–220) was one of the foremost theologians of the early church. This influential thinker was the first Christian theologian to write in Latin. His most significant contribution to Christianity is his examination of the doctrine of the Trinity. While the term *Trinity* is not found in the Bible, it is a critical doctrine of the Christian faith. Andrew Hillaker writes, “Tertullian’s trinitarian doctrine was a decisive contribution to orthodox theology, as he was the first Latin writer to use the term *trinitas* to refer to the three persons of

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<sup>138</sup> Burton, *The Blessing of Africa*, 68.

the godhead.”<sup>139</sup> Along with defending the faith against the ancient heresy of Gnosticism, Tertullian is credited with being the first to use the term *New Testament*. In his argument against Marcion (85–160), written circa 208 C. E., Tertullian writes, “The Divine Word, who is doubly edged with the two testaments of the law and the gospel.”<sup>140</sup> Even though Tertullian’s contributions to Christianity are significant, he is rarely appropriately characterized. In his work, *Ancient African Christianity*, David Wilhite characterizes Tertullian as a legalist, a fideist, a priest, a Montanist, a misogynist, and a Roman. Most appropriately, Wilhite characterizes Tertullian as an African.<sup>141</sup>

The work of Tertullian influenced other African theologians. One of those theologians is Origen (184–253). G. L. Prestige writes, “He [Origen] was one of the greatest teachers ever known in Christendom...He was the founder of biblical science, and though not absolutely the first great biblical commentator, he first developed the principles of exposition to be followed and applied the technique of methodical explanation on the widest possible scale.”<sup>142</sup> Jean Danielou contends, “Origen’s writings can be said to mark a decisive period in all fields of Christian thought. His research into the history of the different versions of the Scriptures and his commentaries on the literal and spiritual senses of the Old and New Testaments make him the founder of the scientific study of the Bible.”<sup>143</sup> Though relatively unknown to the modern-day

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<sup>139</sup> Andrew P. Hillaker “Substance and Person in Tertullian and Augustine,” *Fidei et Veritatis: The Liberty Journal of Graduate Research* 2, no.1 (2018): Article 2.

<sup>140</sup> Tertullian, *Against Marcion*, “Chapter XIV,” <http://earlychristianwritings.com/text/ter tullian123.html>.

<sup>141</sup> David Wilhite, *Ancient African Christianity* (New York, NY: Routledge Publishing, 2017), 20.

<sup>142</sup> G. L. Prestige, “Lecture 3: Origen: or, The Claims of Religious Intelligence,” *Fathers and Heretics*, (1940): 43.

<sup>143</sup> Jean Danielou, *Origen* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1955), vii.

church, Origen has his place in the history of Christianity as another brilliant contributor to the history of the church from Africa.

Augustine of Hippo (354–430) is arguably the most influential mind in Christian church history since Paul. Like Tertullian, Augustine was from Carthage and is revered as one of the greatest of the Church Fathers. Augustine was born during a tumultuous time for the church. His birth took place shortly after the Edict of Milan (313). The edict protected Christianity from persecution throughout the Roman Empire. Throughout his lifetime, Augustine witnessed the church on the verge of collapse due to a multiplicity of heretical teaching that crept into Christendom. In his writing, *The Confessions*,<sup>144</sup> Augustine chronicles his journey through life and his conversion. Many scholars contend this work is the first autobiography written in Western Literature.<sup>145</sup> This book, written in the form of prayer, walks the reader through the good and the bad of his life. Augustine produced an extensive number of writings, with his primary aim being his care and concern for the church. His works consist of theological reflection, commentaries on books of the Bible, polemical works, sermons, and letters.<sup>146</sup> It was Augustine who introduced “the doctrine of original sin, which teaches that human beings are sinful at the moment of conception because they inherit guilt from Adam and Eve.”<sup>147</sup>

Long before the Middle Passage, Africans played a pivotal role in the development of Christian thought. In today’s modern church history, African Americans play a significant role in

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<sup>144</sup> Augustine, *The Confessions*, trans. Maria Boulding (Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 1997).

<sup>145</sup> Edward Oakes, T., S. J. “Augustine’s Confessions: A Biography,” *First Things: A Monthly Journal of Religion and Public Life* no. 216 (October 2011): 67.

<sup>146</sup> David L. Eastman, *Early North African Christianity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academics, 2021), 144.

<sup>147</sup> Eastman, *Early North African Christianity*, 143.

the promulgation of the Gospel. It is important, however, to note that indigenous people on the continent of Africa have contributed to shaping the faith that takes believers from earth to glory.

Ethiopian Christianity has played an integral role in the development of early Christianity. The origin of Ethiopian Christianity can be traced back to the days of the Apostles and the Ethiopian Eunuch who embraced the teachings of Christianity and was baptized by Philip (Acts 8:26–40). The Ethiopian church was founded in the 4<sup>th</sup> century A.D., around the same time as the church in Rome.<sup>148</sup> Church tradition and the writings of historians support this notion and verify that Christianity came to Ethiopia during the Apostolic era.<sup>149</sup> Sergew Hable Selassie, a scholar of Ancient and Medieval Ethiopian History, confirms the Acts account in his writings about the Ethiopian Church.<sup>150</sup> In a like manner, historian Ephraim Isaac traces the birth of Ethiopian Christianity back to the days of the Apostles and asserts that Ethiopian Jewish pilgrims who were in Jerusalem for Passover and converted by Peter’s sermon returned to Ethiopia as missionaries.<sup>151</sup>

Some historians, however, take issue with the claim and also refute the Eunuch’s role in Christianity during the time of the Apostles. Faquada Kusa writes, “Historian Fikadu Gurmesss doubts the eunuch’s role in Ethiopian Christianity, saying that even though it is conventionally acceptable that Ethiopia is one of the ancient nations, citing the story of the encounter between

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<sup>148</sup> Craig Keener and Glenn Usry, *Defending Black Faith: Answers to Tough Questions About African American Christianity* (Westmont, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1997), 17.

<sup>149</sup> Andrew Lawler, “Church Unearthed in Ethiopia Rewrites the History of Christianity in Africa,” *Smithsonian Magazine*, <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/church-unearthed-ethiopia-rewrites-history-christianity-africa-180973740/>.

<sup>150</sup> Sergew Hable Selassie, *The Church of Ethiopia: A Panorama of History of Spiritual Life* (Addis Ababa: Ethiopian Orthodox Church, 1980), 1,



the Apostle Phillip and the Ethiopian eunuch is not a credible historical event that led to the coming of Christianity to Ethiopia.”<sup>152</sup>

Conversely, other sources give credence to the fact that Judaism existed in Ethiopia before the arrival of Christianity. For example, Ethiopian Orthodox researcher, Bernard Leeman, asserts, “Ethiopia has an ancient association with the Israelite First Temple and a culture obsessed even today with the Ark of the Covenant reflecting the ancient existence of an Israelite.”<sup>153</sup>

With all of the evidence presented, there must be a call for the silence to be broken about the influence of African Christianity, particularly the Ethiopian church, on Christianity and the Protestant Reformation. Moreover, there is a connection between Martin Luther and the Ethiopian church. For reasons beyond knowledge, this connection has been ignored and rarely discussed on an academic level.

#### Martin Luther and Ethiopian Christianity

Before Luther’s time, history demonstrates that Ethiopian Christianity has been in existence and is found to be fascinating to believers. Before and after the Reformation, there are references to the Ethiopian church in the writings of Erasmus (1466–1536), Thomas More (1478–1535), Pope Clement VII (1478–1534), and others. According to Meskerem L. Debele,

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<sup>152</sup> Faquada Kusa, *Evangelical Faith Movement in Ethiopia* (Minneapolis, MN: Lutheran University Press), 25.

<sup>153</sup> Bernard Leeman, “The Art of the Covenant: Evidence Supporting the Ethiopian Traditions,” *Ethiopian Orthodox*, August 2010, <http://www.ethiopianorthodox.org/amharic/holybooks/arkofthecovenant.pdf>.

there is historical and religious evidence that Thomas More's *Utopia* (1551), is rooted in Ethiopia.<sup>154</sup> Clearly, Luther is not alone in his interest in Ethiopian Christianity.

Ethiopian exiles migrated to such cities as Rome, Venice, Cyrus, and Jerusalem. In his writing, "Martin Luther and Ethiopian Christianity," David Daniel states, "The renowned German scholars, Martin Brecht, George Posfay, Tom G.A. Hardt, Mark Ellingen, and Martin Wittenberg have all acknowledged the presence of Ethiopian Christianity in Luther's thought, even if in a limited manner."<sup>155</sup> Scholars point out that Luther was very much inspired and interested in the Ethiopian church.

Martin Brecht writes, "The appearance of an Ethiopian cleric in Wittenberg in 1534 was a unique event. It was difficult to communicate with him, because he spoke only a little Italian."<sup>156</sup> "Nevertheless, Luther believed he was able to determine that they agreed on the doctrine of the Trinity. The differences in worship ceremonies were not regarded as divisive of the church, and their eucharistic liturgies appeared equally compatible."<sup>157</sup> As a result of these commonalities, Luther had great respect and admiration for the Ethiopian Church.

Early modern Christians often mentioned Ethiopian Christianity. However, Luther's consistent referencing of Ethiopian Christianity is noteworthy. In her article, "An Unsung

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<sup>154</sup> Meskerem L. Debele, "The Ethiopian Root of Thomas More's *Utopia*," *International Journal of African Renaissance Studies - Multi-, Inter- and Transdisciplinarity* 11, no. 1, (2016): 22–33, DOI: 10.1080/18186874.2016.1212461.

<sup>155</sup> David D. Daniels, "Martin Luther and Ethiopian Christianity: Historical Traces," University of Chicago Divinity School, November 2, 2017, <https://divinity.uchicago.edu/sightings/articles/martin-luther-and-ethiopian-christianity-historical-traces>.

<sup>156</sup> David Daniels and Lawrence Anglin, "Luther and the Ethiopian Deacon," *Lutheran Quarterly* 32, no. 4 (2018): 429. Philip Melancthon's letter translation states that Luther communicated with the Ethiopian cleric through an interpreter with Italian being the selected language. The interpreter, however, knew very little Italian.

<sup>157</sup> Martin Brecht, *Martin Luther: The Preservation of the Church, 1532–1546* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1999), 59.

Inspiration for the Protestant Reformation: The Ethiopian Church,” Jennifer Powell McNutt states, “Some scholars have noted that Luther mentions Ethiopia at least 85 times in his written works.”<sup>158</sup> Luther’s mention of Ethiopia includes references to historic places and the challenges within the empire. These annotations though fragmented, contribute to a timeline and framework of Luther’s comprehension of the Ethiopian church.<sup>159</sup>

Luther’s perspective on Ethiopian Christianity is found in his writings. In these writings, Luther references Ethiopia and shares his sentiments regarding its Christian community. Luther writes, “Most of the time when mention is made of the nations that are to be converted to Christ, the Ethiopians are singled out for mention.”<sup>160</sup> Luther, furthermore evokes Ethiopian Christianity when he states, “But the church is symbolized and called by the name ‘Ethiopia.’”<sup>161</sup> The fact that Luther stated the Christian church “is symbolized and called by the name ‘Ethiopia’” implies that he believed that the Ethiopian church could be traced back to the Acts 8 pericope. Furthermore, Luther believed that Ethiopia was the first nation in history to convert to Christianity. David Daniels notes, “Located in Africa beyond the orbit of the Roman Catholic Church—this first Christian kingdom, according to Luther, served as an older, wiser, black sibling to the white Christian kingdoms in Europe.”<sup>162</sup>

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<sup>158</sup> Jennifer McNutt, “An Unsung Inspiration for the Protestant Reformation: The Ethiopian Church.” Christianity Today. <https://www.christianitytoday.com/history/2020/august/unsung-inspiration-for-protestant-reformation-ethiopian-chu.html>.

<sup>159</sup> Brecht, *Martin Luther: The Preservation of the Church 1532–1546*, 59.

<sup>160</sup> Martin Luther, *Luther’s Works* (Fortress Press and Concordia Publishing House, 1957–1986), 10:349.

<sup>161</sup> Martin Luther, *Luther’s Works*, 10:350.

<sup>162</sup> David D. Daniels, “Honor the Reformation’s African Roots,” Commercial Appeal, October 21, 2017, <https://www.commercialappeal.com/story/opinion/contributors/2017/10/21/honor-reformations-african-roots/783252001/>.

Luther found the Ethiopian church very appealing and that it contained attributes of what Luther believed the church should be. First and foremost, the Ethiopian church was uncorrupted by the papacy in Rome. When writing the Theses, Luther was focused on limiting the excessive amount of power the Pope wielded. To Luther, the selling of indulgences was the last straw, and it had to be addressed. Luther believed that the authority of the Pope should be limited and held to Gospel standards. As it related to the selling of indulgences, he argues, “Popes have no power over the souls who are in purgatory, only God does, and Popes cannot give absolution if God has not granted it.”<sup>163</sup> In his article, “Martin Luther’s Fascination with Ethiopian Christianity,” David Daniels writes, “Absent from Ethiopian Christianity were practices Protestants would dismiss: the primacy of the Roman Pope, indulgences, purgatory, and marriage as a sacrament.”<sup>164</sup>

Luther was captivated by the fact that the Ethiopian church had other practices that were absent in the Roman Catholic Church. For example, the Ethiopian church, like other Orthodox churches, had the Bible translated into their language.

The Ethiopian church had a high view of communion without transubstantiation, and the bread and wine were served to both the clergy and the laity.<sup>165</sup> The Ethiopian church also embraced married clergy. The Ethiopian church did not hold the same views as the Roman Catholic church related to purgatory, indulgences, and marriage as a sacrament. These views made the Ethiopian church very appealing and fascinating to Luther as he embarked on the Reformation. In his article, “Martin Luther and Ethiopian Christianity: Historical Traces,” David

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<sup>163</sup> Leonardo De Chirico, *A Christian’s Pocket Guide to the Papacy* (Fearn: Christian Focus Publications, 2015), 18–40.

<sup>164</sup> David D. Daniels, “Martin Luther’s fascination with Ethiopian Christianity,” *The Christian Century*, October 31, 2017, [www.christiancentury.org/blog-post/guest-post/martin-luthers-fascination-ethiopian-christianity](http://www.christiancentury.org/blog-post/guest-post/martin-luthers-fascination-ethiopian-christianity).

<sup>165</sup> Gene Veith, “How Ethiopia Influenced the Reformation,” *Patheos*, November 2, 2017, <https://www.patheos.com/blogs/geneveith/2017/11/how-ethiopia-influenced-the-reformation/>.

Daniels asserts, “For Luther, the Church of Ethiopia had more fidelity to the Christian tradition, and the practices mentioned above were marks of this fidelity. Thus, the Church in Europe needed to be reformed in the direction of Church of Ethiopia.”<sup>166</sup>

#### Martin Luther and Deacon Michael, Ethiopian Cleric

Luther became more infatuated with the Ethiopian church when he met an Ethiopian cleric, Deacon Michael (c. 1500s) in 1534. Luther captures the meeting in two letters that were translated. In one of the letters, Luther states:

We also ascertained from him that the rite, which we observe in the practice of the Lord’s Supper and the Mass, agrees with the Eastern Church. We desire, moreover, that all people should acknowledge and glorify Christ and obey him by true trust in his mercy and by love of the neighbor. Therefore, we entreat good men that they, too, would demonstrate Christian love to this guest. Wittenberg 1534, July 4.<sup>167</sup>

During the visit, Luther’s *Articles of the Christian Faith* were interpreted to Deacon Michael. In a letter written nearly three years after the meeting, Luther writes, “Three years ago, there was an Ethiopian monk here, where we held a discussion with him through an interpreter. He summed up all our articles [of faith] by saying, “This is a good ‘credo,’ that is, faith.”<sup>168</sup> As a result of Deacon Michael’s agreement with the articles of faith, Luther gave Deacon Michael and the

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<sup>166</sup> David Daniels, “Martin Luther and Ethiopian Christianity: Historical Traces,” University of Chicago Divinity School, November 2, 2017, <https://divinity.uchicago.edu/sightings/articles/martin-luther-and-ethiopian-christianity-historical-traces>.

<sup>167</sup> *Melaunchthons Briefwechsel Texte*, vol.6, *Texte 1395—1683 (1534—1535)* ed. Christine Mundhenk, et.al (Stuggart-Bad Cannstatt: Frommann-Holzboog, 2005), 99–100 . The text is from the autography and cited by David D. Daniels and Lawrence Anglin in “Luther and the Ethiopian Deacon,” *Lutheran Quarterly*, Vol.32, no. 4 (2018), 433. This excerpt is from a letter of recommendation drafted by Philip Melanchthon for the Ethiopian, Deacon Michael.

<sup>168</sup> David D. Daniels and Lawrence Anglin, “Luther and the Ethiopian Deacon.”

Ethiopian church full fellowship. However, he withheld this privilege from other faith communities, including those being led by Zwingli.<sup>169</sup>

Luther's stand on Ethiopian Christianity is affirmed through his dialogue with Deacon Michael. Daniels writes, "Luther learned that what he had discovered in reading the letters of Paul and the other New Testament writers was present in the Ethiopian Church."<sup>170</sup> No doubt, this discovery was exhilarating to Luther. There was hope for his vision of reformation as many theological and exegetical views were already present in Ethiopian Christianity.

It is impossible to ignore the contributions of Africa and Africans to Christianity. When Africans were enslaved and brought to the West, they brought their traditions, theology, and practices with them. Subsequently, these inherent spiritual qualities were affected by their new environment. Just as Luther's Reformation efforts are inspired, in part, by his association with the African continent, the black church in America also needs to reclaim these Reformation roots. For this reason, this research project turns its attention to the black religious culture in America.

### Black Theology and Spirituality

Black spirituality and theology have had the most significant impact on the ability of black people to survive all the atrocities they have experienced. In his book, *Black Spirituality and Black Consciousness*, Carlyle Stewart writes, "African Americans have been soul survivors because African-American spirituality has enabled them to adapt, transcend, and transform the absurdities of racism, oppression, and adverse human conditions into a creative soul culture that

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<sup>169</sup> Daniels, "Martin Luther and Ethiopian Christianity: Historical Traces."

<sup>170</sup> David D. Daniels, "Ethiopian Christianity: Reclaiming Africa's Role in Reformation History," *Reformation Reset* (2018): 21–25.

has helped them maintain sanity, vitality, and wholeness.”<sup>171</sup> Black spirituality and Black Theology may mean a variety of things across the *diaspora*. Thabiti Anyabwile contends, “The term theology is applied to academic discourse (e.g., systematic theologies) or practical works (e.g., slave songs and testimonies). To be certain varying levels of specificity and elasticity of concepts are found in these repositories of African American Christian theology. Here, then, ‘theology’ is what is believed, taught, and confessed in various forms by African Americans.”<sup>172</sup>

*Black Theology* became widely used in the 1960s as black people began to ponder their view of God in light of their existential condition. Furthermore, black clergy used the term to positively respond to secular movements such as the Black Power Movement and black consciousness ideology. Black theologians such as James Cone and others provoked the church to address issues in Christianity that conservative theologians had ignored. For this cause, the National Committee of Black Churchmen defines *Black Theology* in this manner: “Black Theology is a theology of black liberation. It seeks to plumb the black condition in light of God’s revelation in Jesus Christ, so that the black community can see that the gospel is commensurate with the achievement of black humanity.”<sup>173</sup>

Black Theology emerged as the slave wrestled with accepting the theology and religion of the slave owner. The religion of the slave owner and his treatment of slaves created a conundrum for the slave as they struggled with how a God so loving could allow them to experience the cruelty of slavery.

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<sup>171</sup> Carlyle Fielding Stewart, *Black Spirituality and Black Consciousness* (Trenton, NJ: African World Press, 1999), xiii.

<sup>172</sup> Thabiti Anyabwile, *The Decline of African American Theology: From Biblical Faith to Cultural Captivity* (Downers Grove, IL: InverVarsity Academic, 2007), 16.

<sup>173</sup> James Cone and Gayraud Wilmore, eds., *Black Theology: A Documentary History* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1998), 1:38.

In his book, *A Black Theology of Liberation*, James Cone writes, “Black theology is an attempt to analyze the nature of that reality, asking what we can say about the nature of God in view of God’s self-disclosure in biblical history and the oppressed condition of black Americans.”<sup>174</sup> This definition of Black Theology allowed the African American religious community to express its theological perspectives as it sought to survive oppression in America. Furthermore, Cone states, “Black Theology puts black identity in a theological context.”<sup>175</sup>

Identity in the context of the black experience is not static. Moreover, it is socio-dynamic, radical, and historical in its constructs. Beyond these constructs, identity in the black experience is multi-layered, converging, and intersecting. Tracy Robinson, in an essay entitled, “The Intersection of Identity,” writes, “Race... alone does not constitute all of one’s attitudes, experiences, and cognitions related to the self.”<sup>176</sup> When considering the context of Black Theology, the question arises as to what does “Black” in Black Theology represent? Does it represent skin color? Is it a pigmentation reference in religion? In his work, *A Black Political Theology*, J. Deotis Roberts argues that Black is “a symbol of self-affirmation.”<sup>177</sup> James Cone states further that blackness is “an ontological symbol for all people who participate in the liberation of [humanity] from oppression.”<sup>178</sup>

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<sup>174</sup> James Cone, *A Black Theology of Liberation* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1990), 55.

<sup>175</sup> Kwame Bediako, “Black Theology,” in *New Dictionary of Theology*, ed. Sinclair B. Ferguson and David F. Wright (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 103.

<sup>176</sup> Tracy Robinson, “The Intersection of Identity,” in *Souls Looking Back: Life Stories of Growing Up Black*, ed. Andrew Garrod, Janie Victoria Ward, Tracy L. Robinson, and Robert Kilkenny (New York, NY: Routledge, 1999), 85.

<sup>177</sup> J. Deotis Roberts, *A Black Political Theology* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1974), 21.

<sup>178</sup> Cone, *A Black Theology of Liberation*, 32.



In an article entitled, “Black Power and Black Theology in Southern Africa,” theologian Simon Maimela points out that the ontological aspects are undeniably a part of the conversation and symbolism associated with Black Theology. He contends:

When used ontologically, black refers literally to certain people and is specific and therefore particular. As such it is confined to black people and their concerns. When used symbolically the word refers to every human situation of enslavement, domination and oppression and therefore to the situation of deprivation, powerlessness and of being the underdog who suffers injustice at the hands of the powerful and the ruling elite.<sup>179</sup>

Black Theology does not focus solely on the sufferings and oppression of black people alone. It seeks to address the sufferings and pain of all people in all the world. Cone argues in his work, *Black Theology and Black Power*, “Being black in America has little to do with skin color. Being black means your heart, your soul, your mind, and your body are where the dispossessed are.”<sup>180</sup>

A 1964 book by Joseph R. Washington, Jr. started controversy due to its insinuation that, since Black Theology has formed outside white Reformation constructs, it cannot be viewed as authentic. In the book, *Black Religion: The Negro and Christianity in the United States*, Washington states:

Concern with the ultimate in the Christian faith and what God requires of those who are called to live responsibly in His world may easily be less than primary for a segregated minority without a theology. It is evident that a crass materialism pervades Negro congregations, overlaid with a few theological generalizations, a terminology, and a feeling for religion which analyzed may now be more this-worldly than other-worldly. But a firm theological basis for a responsible perspective is missing, and Negro congregations are finally forced to seek purpose from the twin stimuli of social dictates and class values.<sup>181</sup>

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<sup>179</sup> Simon Maimela, “Black Power and Black Theology in Southern Africa,” *Scriptura* 12, (1984): 48–50.

<sup>180</sup> James Cone, *Black Theology and Black Power* (San Francisco, CA: Harper and Row, 1969), 151.

<sup>181</sup> Joseph R. Washington, *Black Religion: The Negro and Christianity in the United States* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1964), 14.

The notion that White Protestantism contained more substance and was superior to Black Theology created a firestorm of controversy among black ministers and black theologians.

The religious practices and beliefs of Africans have been scrutinized and investigated since these people of ebony hue have arrived on the shores of America. Thabiti Anyabwile asserts, “Early African American Christian theology was birthed and grew up in the context of American chattel slavery and the Colonial experience.”<sup>182</sup>

As they arrived in America through the Middle Passage, Africans brought fundamental theological tenets with them. In his book *Black Belief*, Henry Mitchell asserts:

For many years African religions have been studied ethnographically, first by European missionary-scholars who learned the native language, and later by African scholars who themselves went out with tape recorders and notebooks to penetrate the curtain of exclusivity and idiosyncrasy that surrounds a people of oral rather than written traditions. The result has been to open up the possibility of an African theology that is something more than a blackenization of the canons of Rome, Geneva, and Canterbury.<sup>183</sup>

Mitchell’s thesis centers on the notion that the religion of the Africans has been adapted to meet the needs of the people in a new place. John S. Mbiti, a Christian African Theologian, expounds on early discussions and views of African religion:

It was believed that Africa borrowed many of its beliefs, characteristics, and foods from outside. All types of theories developed to explain how various religious traits reached Africans from the Middle East or Europe. There is evidence that Africa has always had contact with the outside world, but these contacts were based upon a “give-and-take process.” Africa has exported ideas, cultures, and civilization to outsiders.<sup>184</sup>

Most slaves transported to America came from the West Coast of Africa, predominantly Ghana. In West African culture, there are many names attributed to God, but it is a widely accepted concept that “God is a personal Being, who made the heavens and the earth, created

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<sup>182</sup> Anyabwile, *The Decline of African American Theology*, 17.

<sup>183</sup> Henry H. Mitchell, *Black Belief* (New York, NY: Harper and Row Publishers, 1975), xii.

<sup>184</sup> John S. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy* (New York, NY: F. A. Praeger, 1969), 6–7.

humanity, and the only fixed idea regarding God is that God made everything.<sup>185</sup> Stephen S. Farrow contends, “From birth to burial, and even beyond, the personal experiences of the African are regulated and controlled by his religion.”<sup>186</sup> The African slaves held true to aspects of their traditional religions but began to embrace Christianity and establish churches.

### The Black Church

Slavery is the most demoralizing act ever inflicted against humanity. African American sociologist, C. Eric Lincoln notes:

During the summer of 1619, twenty Africans held captive aboard a Dutch frigate were turned over to the English colonist at Jamestown, Virginia in exchange for provisions for the ship’s crew. This event marked the beginning of the black experience with English America and American Christianity.<sup>187</sup>

When arriving in the new world, the slaves sought to retain their West African religious traditions. Moreover, they grappled with understanding the religion of the slave master. They sought to make sense of the confusion they felt in the new land. Edward Smith contends:

As part of their spiritual quest, blacks sought to retain the religion of their native lands. Although differences existed, the people of West Africa shared a number of common religious beliefs, especially in a Supreme God as well as lesser gods. By meshing West African religious traditions with Euro-American Christianity, Afro-Americans were gradually able to create a new religious tradition—an Afro-American Christian faith.<sup>188</sup>

Early on, the slaveowners were reluctant to introduce Christianity to slaves for various reasons. Some believed that slaves were foreign creatures and had no right to the sacraments or

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<sup>185</sup> Robert H. Milligan, *The Jungle Folk of Africa* (New York, NY: Revell Co., 1908), 249.

<sup>186</sup> Stephen S. Farrow, *Faith, Fancies, and Fetich or Yoruba Paganism* (New York, NY: Negro Universities Press, 1969), 4.

<sup>187</sup> C. Eric Lincoln, “The Black Heritage in Religion in the South,” in *Religion in the South*, ed. Charles Reagan Wilson (Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 1985), 35.

<sup>188</sup> Edward D. Smith, *Climbing Jacob’s Ladder: The Rise of Black Churches in Eastern American Cities, 1749–1877* (Washington D.C.: Smithsonian Institute Press, 1988), 25–26.

baptism. Lincoln writes, “These reasons and others were main obstacles to the conversion of these poor people which held them to be ‘too dull’ to be instructed, or ‘without souls,’ or otherwise incapable of Christian responsibility.”<sup>189</sup>

Since religion was a focal point of the life of the African slave, the slaveowners used it to their advantage. They sought to control the thinking and lives of the slave through religion. To the slave, however, religion offered hope for a better life on earth and the afterlife.

The slave owner allowed the slaves to attend worship with them in their churches. The slaves recognized a disconnect between the faith of their owners and their behavior. For this cause, it was very difficult for the slaves to embrace the faith of their oppressive masters. Pierre Berton, in his thought-provoking book, *The Comfortable Pew*, writes:

Indeed, the history of the race struggle in the United States has been, to a considerable extent, the history of the Protestant rapport with the status quo. From the beginning, it was the church that put its blessing on slavery and sanctioned a caste system that continues to this day. It is a negation of that Christian equality before God which the church preaches.<sup>190</sup>

In hopes that religion would sustain slavery, slaveowners began to approve of the proselyting of slaves and the establishment of churches. It was in these separate churches that the slaves could express themselves freely regarding their spiritual convictions, their views of slavery, and the sinful condition of their owners. For this cause, this worshiping community has been viewed as both invisible and visible.

In her book *Ev'ry Time I Feel the Spirit*, Gwendolyn Sims Warren describes the early African American church as two branches. She writes, “The early African-American church was divided into two main branches: ‘the visible’ and the ‘invisible’ church. The visible church

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<sup>189</sup> Lincoln, “The Black Heritage in Religion in the South,” 38.

<sup>190</sup> Pierre Berton, *The Comfortable Pew* (Philadelphia, PA: J.B. Lippintrott Co., 1965), 29.

consisted of black congregations of the white denominations, a few independent African churches, and mixed congregations where black and white worshipers met together.”<sup>191</sup> In a like manner, Lincoln writes:

In “Invisible Church” met deep in the woods and swamps, as far as possible from the suspicious eyes of the master or his overseer. There in the security of the wilderness, the black slave worshipers assembled around a large iron pot, inverted wash tubs, or wet blankets to capture the fervent praying, singing, preaching, which marked the style of the “Invisible Church.” In the “Invisible Church” there were no “masters” and no “mistresses,” and God ordained no special punishment or subservience for black people. The “Invisible Church” drew its membership primarily from the field slaves who were less accommodated than other slaves to the white man’s way of life and less susceptible to his spiritual reasoning. Above all, the “Invisible Church” proved under the most adverse circumstances possible the slave capacity for responsible self-determination.<sup>192</sup>

The Black church is arguably the most researched organism in the African American *diaspora*. Scholastically and academically, its origin, function, and activity have been extensively studied. In addition, many authors have been insightful and helpful as they have contributed to the historical and sociological research of the organism.

In an essay entitled, “Introducing the African American Churches,” William Watley states, “The historic Black or African American churches are more than the regional branch of a broader worldwide communion whose constituency and leadership is of a particular ethnic identity.”<sup>193</sup> Watley further states, “From the perspective of many African Americans, racism has been and continues to be the greatest heresy and the major church-dividing issue since Christianity was first preached to the enslaved sons and daughters of Africa.”<sup>194</sup>

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<sup>191</sup> Gwendolyn Sims Warren, *Ev’ry Time I Feel The Spirit* (New York, NY: Henry Holt and Company, 1997), 15.

<sup>192</sup> Lincoln, “The Black Heritage in Religion in the South,” 46.

<sup>193</sup> William Watley, “Introducing the African American Churches,” in *Readings in African American Church Music and Worship* (Chicago, IL: GIA Publications, Inc., 2001), 29.

<sup>194</sup> Watley, “Introducing the African American Churches,” 30.

Baptist and Methodist are the primary denominations of the Black church. These denominations represent the denominational affiliation of slave owners and the early missionaries. In the book, *The Negro Church in America*, E. Franklin Frazier contends, “The Negro masses were concentrated in the Methodist and Baptist churches which provided for a more emotional and ecstatic form of worship than the Protestant Episcopal, Presbyterian, and Congregational churches. But even in the Methodist and Baptist denominations, there were separate church organizations based upon distinctions of color and what were considered standards of civilized behavior.”<sup>195</sup> Even though many of the slave masters were members of Reformed congregations, the slaves embraced Reformed theology as they converted to Christianity.

#### Black Reformed Theology

From the late 18<sup>th</sup> century until now, African American Baptists have articulated Reformed doctrines. In his book, *An Outline of Baptist History*, Reverend W. Bishop Johnson (1858–1917), the first president of the National Baptist Education Convention, an early National Baptist Convention, states, “Colored Baptists are Calvinistic [sic] in doctrine.”<sup>196</sup> Edward Wheeler, 19<sup>th</sup> century Baptist historian, describes African American Baptists as Calvinists who have modified the view on human will.<sup>197</sup>

As the Great Awakening took root in the south, the first ordained African American Baptist minister was a self-identifying Calvinist. George Liele (1750–1828) was instrumental in

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<sup>195</sup> E. Franklin Frazier, *The Negro Church in America* (New York, NY: Schocken Books, 1974), 37.

<sup>196</sup> W. Bishop Johnson, *An Outline of Baptist History* (Nashville, TN: National Baptist Publishing Board, 1911), 80.

<sup>197</sup> Edward L. Wheeler, *Uplifting The Race: Black Minister in the New South 1865-1902* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1986), 9.

establishing independent African American churches in the 1770s. Not only is Liele's founding of independent Baptist churches in the 18<sup>th</sup> century significant, he is also believed to be the first African American born Baptist foreign missionary as he founded a church on the island of Jamaica in 1784.<sup>198</sup>

Liele's conversion is typical of most slave conversions during the First Great Awakening. His conversion took place as a result of hearing the preaching of a white revivalist. Liele's master, Henry Sharpe, was a deacon at Buckhead Creek Baptist Church and took his slave, George Liele, to church with him. Liele heard the Gospel and confessed a hope in Christ. In her work, *Trabelin' On: The Slave Journey to an Afro-Baptist Faith*, Mechal Sobel traces Liele's conversion experience to 1773.<sup>199</sup> Liele recalls his conversion experience:

Here I lived a bad life, and had no serious thoughts about my soul; but after my wife was Delivered of our first child, a man of my own color, named Cyrus, who came from Charlestowne, South Carolina to Silver Bluff told me one day in the woods, That I lived so, I should never see the face of God in glory (Whether he himself was a converted man or not, I do not know.) I did not think of Adam and Eve's sin, but I was sin. I felt my own plague; and I was so overcome that I could not wait upon my master...I felt myself at the disposal of Sovereign mercy.<sup>200</sup>

After Liele was converted, his master emancipated him. Liele's gift for preaching was undeniable and he began preaching to slaves on nearby plantations full-time. He eventually joined the first African American Baptist church, Silver Bluff Baptist Church, on the plantation that he inhabited. Shortly after emancipating Liele, Henry Sharpe died. Sharpe's children sought

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<sup>198</sup> Lewis G. Jordan, *Negro Baptist History USA: 1750-1930* (Nashville, TN: Townsend Press, 1995), 6–7.

<sup>199</sup> Mechal Sobel, *Trabelin' On: The Slave Journey to an Afro-Baptist Faith* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988), 104–05.

<sup>200</sup> George Liele, et al, "Letters Showing the Rise and Progress of the Early Negro Churches of Georgia and the West Indies," *The Journal of Negro History* 1, no.1, (Jan 1916): 73.

to re-enslave Liele and consequently had him imprisoned.<sup>201</sup> In an effort to secure his family, Liele fled to the English colony on the island of Jamaica. Prior to his departure, Liele preached as a plantation evangelist. Liele baptized his converts in the Savannah River and these *baptizans* became founding members of the First African Baptist Church in Savannah.<sup>202</sup>

Upon leaving America, Liele became the indentured servant of an English Army colonel named Kirkland. It is the belief of National Baptist historian Lewis Jordan that upon arriving on the island of Jamaica, Liele was moved by the sad conditions of the enslaved Jamaicans and others. Consequently, he began to preach the Gospel and organized a Baptist church with four converts. Liele, although he was persecuted, jailed, and even tried for sedition, succeeded in building a church.<sup>203</sup>

In an effort to secure funds to build his church, Liele wrote a letter to two British Baptist leaders and identified himself as a Calvinist. In his letter, Liele writes, “I agree to election, redemption, the fall of Adam, regeneration, and perseverance, knowing the promise is to all who endure, in grace, faith, and good works, to the end, shall be saved.”<sup>204</sup>

While Liele and others are noted figures in the sphere of African American Baptists, Bishop Daniel Payne (1811–1893) is a key figure in the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church. Payne joined the church in 1841 after leaving the Lutheran denomination. He was received fully into his new denomination in 1843. Payne is noted for working to improve the

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<sup>201</sup> Lewis G. Jordan, *Negro Baptist History USA: 1750–1930* (Nashville, TN: Townsend Press, 1995), 6–7. Two possible reasons for Liele’s imprisonment have been discussed: First, Sharpe’s children believed him to be a supporter of the British during this era of the revolution; and, the children believed Liele to be more of an asset to them as a slave.

<sup>202</sup> Carter G. Woodson, *The History of the Negro Church* (Washington, DC: The Associated Publishers, 1921), 43–45.

<sup>203</sup> Jordan, *Negro Baptist History USA*, 7.

<sup>204</sup> Liele, “Letters Showing the Rise and Progress,” 73.



character and academic preparation of the pastor. For this reason, he has been recognized as the “Apostle of Education to the Negro as well as the Apostle to Educators in the A.M.E. Church.”<sup>205</sup> He is viewed as a major theological contributor to Black Methodism. His sermon, “The Christian Ministry: Its Moral and Intellectual Character,” delivered in 1859, articulates Reformed teaching on the authority of Scripture. Payne contends, “Such a man will listen to the doctrines and read the Fathers, but he obeys Christ and Christ alone, giving reverence to human creeds only so far as they breath the spirit of the written Word, respecting the Fathers and the doctors only so far as they are echoes of the voice of Christ.”<sup>206</sup>

Lemuel Hayes (1753–1833) is another towering figure in Black Reformed theology. Hayes was the “first African American ordained by any religious organization in America.”<sup>207</sup> In his preaching and written works, Hayes articulates Reformed theology as that which has shaped African American faith. In his work, *The Character and Work of Spiritual Watchman Described* (1792), he discussed God’s sovereignty in election. He writes, “God has from eternity appointed a proper number for the display of His mercy and justice.”<sup>208</sup> The doctrine of election is a core but controversial Reformed theological doctrine. John Calvin is known for developing this doctrine as it is articulated in his *Institutes*. Calvin writes, “As Scripture, then, clearly shows, we say that God once established by his eternal and unchangeable plan those whom he long before

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<sup>205</sup> Benjamin F. Lee, “The Centenary of Daniel Alexander Payne, Fourth Bishop of the African Methodist Episcopal Church,” *Church Review* 28, no. 1 (July 1911): 423–29.

<sup>206</sup> Thabiti Anyabwile, *The Faithful Preacher: Recapturing the Vision of Three Pioneering African American Pastors* (Wheaton, IL: Cross Way, 2007), 94.

<sup>207</sup> Thabiti Anyabwile, *May We Meet in the Heavenly World: The Piety of Lemuel Haynes* (Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Book, 2009), 6.

<sup>208</sup> Jemar Tisby, “Reformed Theology is Indigenous to African American Christianity,” *The Aquila Report*, The Reformed Churchmen Publications, Inc., April 26, 2016, <https://theaquilareport.com/reformed-theology-is-indigenous-to-african-american-christianity/>.

determined once for all to receive salvation, and those whom, on the other hand, he would devote to destruction.”<sup>209</sup> The Bible establishes the doctrine of election. Paul writes, “For those whom he foreknew he also predestined...And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified” (Rom. 8.29).

Every era of the Black Church contains new norms and changes in the African American experience. As these changes have occurred, the church’s theological tenets have been influenced by new African American thought, preaching, and literary contributions. As a result, the church’s theological leanings have been affected.

#### The Decline of Black Reformation Theology in the Black Church

With most black churches being birthed from mainline Protestantism, there initially was an inherent subscription to the *five solas* of the Reformation. The *five solas* represent an inheritance given to the Black church through the constructs of colonial Christianity. Scholars argue that the Black church needs to return to reformation doctrine as the church awaits the return of Christ. In his book, *Black and Reformed*, Anthony Carter argues:

African Americans should identify with Reformed theology because it is the theology of Joseph when he declared to his brothers, “You meant evil against me; but God meant it for good...” (Genesis 50:20). It is also the theology of Job when, in struggling to resolve God’s providence in his suffering, he declared, “Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him” (Job 13:15). Ultimately it is the theology of Paul, who summed up the above statements in Romans 8:28: “And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.”<sup>210</sup>

Scholars such as Thabiti Anyabwile and Mack King Carter argue that there has been a shift in Christology in the Black Church. Carter argues, “If we would minister to family and

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<sup>209</sup> Calvin, *Institutes*, 21.

<sup>210</sup> Anthony Carter, *Black and Reformed: Seeing God’s Sovereignty in the African American Christian Experience* (Phillipsburg, NJ: R&R Publishing Co, 2016), 61.

community, we must make clear who Jesus is. This is what the community had to do during slavery. We had to go through a process of theological transposition. The oppressive Christ was rejected, and the Christ of freedom was embraced.”<sup>211</sup> Carter contends, “As we become more attuned to the American myth of power and success it is going to be an enormous task to preach the Biblical Christ in the community. This is already being demonstrated in the number of young, middle-class brothers and sisters who are identifying with the health-wealth heresy, which is nothing but a modern-day version of Gnosticism.”<sup>212</sup> It is thought that as African American Protestants have sought to understand the role of Christianity in the plight of African Americans in America, the Christological view of the Reformation has been altered.

According to Anyabwile, “The story of African American Christology is an object lesson in learning to examine and appropriate the old and the new.”<sup>213</sup> An example of this may be found in the Nicene Creed and the formula from Chalcedon.<sup>214</sup> The creed of Nicaea and Chalcedon has guided the church in its development of Christology for over 1,700 years. In his book, *God of the Oppressed*, James Cone asserts that while these formulas allow Christianity to appropriate “the meaning of Christ’s relation to God and the divine and human natures in his person, [while] fail[ing] to relate these Christological issues to the liberation of the slave and the poor in the society.”<sup>215</sup> As a result, African Americans Protestants have struggled with appropriating the character and work of Jesus considering their oppression. Over the centuries, African Americans

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<sup>211</sup> Carter, *A Quest for Freedom*, 97.

<sup>212</sup> Carter, *A Quest for Freedom*, 97.

<sup>213</sup> Anyabwile, *The Decline of African American Theology*, 167.

<sup>214</sup> The Nicene Creed, formulated in 325 C.E., states that Jesus is “of one substance with the Father.” From the Council of Chalcedon (451 C.E.), the two natures of Jesus (“truly God and truly Human”), were agreed upon.

<sup>215</sup> Cone, *God of the Oppressed*, 104.

have felt the need to see how Jesus identifies with them and their sufferings. Howard Thurman contends:

The striking similarity between the social position of Jesus in Palestine and that of the vast majority of American Negroes is obvious to anyone who tarries long over the facts. We are dealing here with conditions that produce essentially the same psychology. There is meant no further comparison. It is the similarity of a social climate at the point of a denial of full citizenship that creates the problem for a creative survival.<sup>216</sup>

Nearly two centuries after the end of slavery, the offspring of former slaves have embraced a new consciousness and ideology, and consequently, new Christological views have also been embraced. Theologians such as James Cone, Howard Thurman, and Marcus Garvey seek to give the Black church new lenses to see beyond the divine nature of Jesus to His ethnicity. These thinkers have brought the church to an awareness of His humanity, as well as His divinity. In an effect to help black people see Jesus in their existential condition, Cone and Thurman’s teachings “emphasize the concrete historical existence of Jesus as a disclosure of God’s will to be with the oppressed and to include them in his plan of redemption.”<sup>217</sup> Bruce Fields states, “Black Theology involves the process of formulating theology from the perspective of an oppressed people. It seeks to interpret the gospel of Jesus Christ against the backdrop of historical and contemporary racism.”<sup>218</sup>

Anyabwile argues against this approach when he writes, “God does not exist—and Jesus did not tabernacle among men, suffer the agony of crucifixion, and was not raised from the grave—to affirm the ethnic sense of identity and self-worth of any single people.”<sup>219</sup> He further

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<sup>216</sup> Howard Thurman, *Jesus and the Disinherited* (Boston, MA: Beacon, 1976), 7.

<sup>217</sup> Anyabwile, *The Decline of African American Theology*, 169.

<sup>218</sup> Bruce Fields, *Introducing Black Theology: Three Crucial Questions for the Evangelical Church* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2019), 15.

<sup>219</sup> Anyabwile, *The Decline of African American Theology*, 169–70.

concludes in response to this brand of theology, “The price of liberation seems to be the deity of Jesus and in some quarters of African American Christianity, this is precisely the error that reigns.”<sup>220</sup> Anyabwile and others believe that liberation theology is the cause of an idolatrous view of Jesus.

Olin P. Moyd, in his dissertation, “Redemption in Black Theology,” provides a better understanding of the Black Theology movement. He contends:

Black theology seeks to explicate the Black community’s understanding of God’s promise and the goal toward which He is directing the world while Black people in America are and were going through dehumanizing experiences. Redemption in the Black tradition is seen as a voluntary act on the part of the Redeemer on behalf of humankind in need of redemption.<sup>221</sup>

Over the years, political and ethical conflicts have abounded as black people have sought to understand Jesus’ ministry to the poor and the oppressed. Mack King Carter writes, “From a psycho-theological perspective, the problem among African Americans stems from the fact that we are torn between allegiance to a God who wills our destruction and the God who wills our well-being.”<sup>222</sup> Those who have embraced the liberating God of Moses survive and thrive through oppression. Others, who choose the wrong view of God, are self-destructive and have never experienced the joy that comes with salvation.

The Black Church must reconsider the role of *sola Scriptura* in its worship. In his book, *Reviving the Black Church*, Thabiti Anyabwile contends, “The Black Church really exists as multiple black churches across denominational, theological, and regional lines.”<sup>223</sup> He further

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<sup>220</sup> Anyabwile, *The Decline of African American Theology*, 169.

<sup>221</sup> Olin P. Moyd, *Redemption in Black Theology* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1979), 23.

<sup>222</sup> Mack King Carter, *A Quest for Freedom: An African American Odyssey* (Winter Garden, FL: Four-G Publishers, 1993), 96.

<sup>223</sup> Thabiti Anyabwile, *Reviving The Black Church: A Call to Reclaim a Sacred Institution* (Nashville, TN: B & H Publishing, 2015), 5.

argues that the black church has moved away from the centrality of the Bible. In his eyes, the centrality of the Bible has been replaced with an evangelical hermeneutic, a liberation hermeneutic, and a prosperity hermeneutic.<sup>224</sup>

Early in its development, the Black Church adopted an evangelical hermeneutic regarding its interpretation of the Bible. Early black Christians believed that “The Bible’s main theme is spiritual salvation, culminating in the Person and work of Jesus Christ” and “the primary matter [of the Bible is] spiritual life.”<sup>225</sup>

The liberation hermeneutic was developed as black Christians sought to understand the role of Christianity in the oppression they suffered as slaves and second-class citizens in America. James Cone states, “The task of Black Theology is to analyze the black man’s condition in the light of God’s revelation in Jesus Christ with the purpose of creating a new understanding of black dignity among black people and providing the necessary soul in that people to destroy racism.”<sup>226</sup>

The prosperity hermeneutic is a “Christian theology whose signature teaching is that God wants believers to be rich and enjoy good physical health.”<sup>227</sup> While it has not originated with black theologians, many of its teachings have been embraced and synthesized into black churches across the nation. Ardent supporters of the prophetic tradition of black preaching show great concern regarding the rise of prosperity Gospel preaching. It is believed that “The message of the prosperity gospel is diametrically opposed to that of the prophetic tradition that includes

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<sup>224</sup> Anyabwile, *Reviving the Black Church*, 20–24.

<sup>225</sup> Anyabwile, *Reviving The Black Church*, 21.

<sup>226</sup> Cone, *Black Theology and Black Power*, 117

<sup>227</sup> Debra J. Mumford, *Exploring Prosperity Preaching: Biblical Health, Wealth, and Wisdom* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 2012), 1.

the social gospel, black liberation theology, and womanist theology. Whereas the prophetic tradition says that ‘God is on the side of the poor and oppressed,’ the prosperity gospel says that ‘God is on the side of the rich.’”<sup>228</sup> In his book, *Crisis in the Village*, Robert Franklin shares his concern for the black church and the infiltration of prosperity preaching. He argues that the prosperity gospel is the greatest threat to “contemporary black church tradition.”<sup>229</sup>

While Anyabwile argues the need for the Bible to return to the center of black preaching, there are other voices who argue that it is and has always been. Cleophus Larue states, “Indeed, it is no secret that the Bible occupies a central place in the religious life of black Americans. More than a mere source for text, in black preaching the Bible is the single most important source of language, imagery, and story for the sermon.”<sup>230</sup> Ruthlyn Bradshaw also argues the value and the importance of the Bible in black preaching. She states, “To begin with, black preaching is rooted in scripture. The Bible is key in black people’s struggle for freedom and is unquestionably the main source for preaching and teaching in the black church.”<sup>231</sup>

Anyabwile contends that the three aforementioned schools of interpretation utilized by the black church have de-centered the Bible, “either by neglect[ing it],” by rebell[ing] against it,” or by “misusing it or misquoting it.”<sup>232</sup> Anyabwile is not alone in his critique of black preaching.

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<sup>228</sup> Makoto Kurosaki, “The Sociopolitical Role of the Black Church in Post-Civil Rights Era America,” *The Japanese Journal of American Studies*, no. 23 (2012): 277–78.

<sup>229</sup> Robert Michael Franklin, *Crisis in the Village: Restoring Hope in African American Communities* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2007), 112.

<sup>230</sup> Cleophus J. LaRue, *The Heart of Black Preaching* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2000), 10.

<sup>231</sup> Ruthlyn Bradshaw, “Preaching in the Black Church,” in *Readings in African American Church Music and Worship, Vol. 2* (Chicago, IL: GIA Publications, 2014), 269.

<sup>232</sup> Anyabwile, *Reviving The Black Church*, 25.

Over twenty years ago, Henry H. Mitchell, a preaching professor and highly respected preacher, gave a strong critique of black preaching in many traditional churches. He writes:

The cardinal sin of the Black pulpit is probably that of irrelevant celebration—gravy that does not match the meat, so to speak. Good gravy is always made of the essence of the meat to be served, and the same is true of the good gospel feast. When the celebration is about something else, the real message is lost, while the celebration, if it has any substance at all, is recalled.<sup>233</sup>

Anyabwile asserts that the Black church needs to return to the centrality of the Bible and do so through expositional preaching. He states, “By expository preaching, I mean the kind of preaching that exposes the meaning of the text of Scripture and applies that meaning to the hearer. When the main point of the text becomes the main point of the sermon, then you have expository preaching.”<sup>234</sup>

On the contrary, Xavier Pickett argues, “The goal of preaching is not expositional preaching, but rather to present and proclaim Christ as resurrected.”<sup>235</sup> Pickett deepens his argument and states:

I would suggest, contrary to popular opinion, many sectors of the Black Church are probably more true to apostolic preaching than many White (Reformed) churches because of its basic commitment to answering [the question] “What does the gospel of Jesus Christ have to do with real concrete struggles and especially among the poor and marginalized?” Often times it seems as though preaching through a book of the Bible or chapter is used as an excuse not to engage current issues and evils in the world. And what is more striking on the other side of the fence is among Black conservatives, as long as I have been under and heard evangelical/Reformed Black preaching, I cannot ever recall a sermon on HIV/AIDS, low expectations, or the cradle to prison superhighway that affect many Black folks. So from the look of things, most Black expositors are succumbing to the same inherent problems of expository preaching just like their White counterparts because it was primarily invented for their context.<sup>236</sup>

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<sup>233</sup> Henry Mitchell, *Black Preaching: The Recovery of a Powerful Art* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1990), 121.

<sup>234</sup> Anyabwile, *Reviving the Black Church*, 41.

<sup>235</sup> Xavier Pickett, “Expository Black Preaching,” *Soul Preaching*, June 11, 2007, [www.soulpreaching.com/expository-black-preaching](http://www.soulpreaching.com/expository-black-preaching).

<sup>236</sup> Pickett, “Expository Black Preaching.”



Some scholars argue that the African American preaching tradition is different from other cultures as it has been shaped by culture and tradition. Therefore, it should be studied, embraced, and celebrated as it was produced in the crucible of oppression. Ameen Hudson writes, “One style or tradition is not greater than another as long as it’s communicating the full counsel of God’s Word to his people, accurately explaining and applying it to everyday life.”<sup>237</sup>

Preaching must be a commitment to preaching the unsearchable riches of Jesus Christ. The proclamation and explanation of the glorious Gospel must be at the center of worship in all Christian faith communities. Graeme Goldsworthy poses a penetrating and pervasive question about preaching. He asks, “Can I preach a Christian sermon without mentioning Jesus?” While this question seems odd for the church, it is a reality in the African American worship community. Goldsworthy contends:

If we would see God, he is most clearly revealed in Jesus Christ. If we would see what God intends for our humanity, it is most clearly revealed in Jesus Christ. If we would see what God intends for the created order, we discover that it is bound up with our humanity and, therefore, revealed in Christ. There is no direct application apart from the mediation of Christ... we simply cannot afford to ignore the words of Jesus that the Scriptures testify to him.<sup>238</sup>

Through preaching, a Christological dilemma must be addressed. It is summed up in the words of the two disciples of John the Baptist. They raise the question, “Art thou he that should come or do we look for another” (John 1:14). The issue here is not whether we choose Jesus or Muhammad, or Jesus or Buddha. Preaching must answer the question, “Who is Jesus?” Carter states, “Let us be honest in saying that we have Americanized Jesus. He is no more than a

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<sup>237</sup> Ameen Hudson, “Don’t Assume Black Preaching Isn’t Expository,” The Gospel Coalition, January 21, 2020, <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/reviews/black-preaching-expositional/>.

<sup>238</sup> Graeme Goldsworthy, *Preaching the Whole Bible as Christian Scripture: The Application of Biblical Theology to Expository Preaching* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdsman Publishing Company, 2000), 122.

transcendent synonym for Uncle Sam, and the American way of life has replaced the Kingdom of God in the consciousness of the Christian community.”<sup>239</sup>

### The Music of the Black Church

Music plays a pivotal role in African American worship. Unlike other church cultures, the Black Church has not experienced a great deal of what has been characterized in the Evangelical church as the *worship wars*. The general consensus in this worship community is “make sure the singing is good.” C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence Mamiya state, “In the Black Church good preaching and good singing are almost invariably the minimum conditions of a successful ministry. Both activities trace their roots back to Africa where music and religion and life itself were all one holistic enterprise.”<sup>240</sup> If the African American church is going to embrace Reformed theology, it must do so by giving attention to the theology of what is sung.

While there are scores within and outside the Black Church who celebrate its music, there are many who share frustration and disgust in regard to what they see and hear in worship.

Wendell Whalum argues:

There is probably no area of Black church life more perplexing and pathetic than music and what we have let happen to it. Not only have a conglomerate of styles and functions crept into our church music, but there seems to be little knowledge of the “why music in worship” concept in the minds of those whose responsibility it is to govern the church and its music. The pathetic aspect is that the music, often enjoyed by worshipers, offers little by way of Christian education or kingdom building, and the effects lasts only a few minutes after its “embers” fade away.<sup>241</sup>

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<sup>239</sup> Carter, *A Quest for Freedom*, 96.

<sup>240</sup> C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence H. Mamiya, *The Black Church in the African American Experience* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1990), 346.

<sup>241</sup> Wendell P. Whalum, “Church Music: A Position Paper,” *Readings in African American Church Music and Worship*, (Chicago, IL: GIA Publications, 2001), 507.

Music in the African American church is feeling the pressure to entertain as means of attracting new congregants and satisfying the industry-driven appetite of its current membership. Consequently, a peril exists and could prove disastrous up the road. One scholar writes: “It is possible to have church without outstanding preaching, *but not without good singing*. It can fill the vacuum of a poor sermon. *Good singing is impassioned, intensely emotional, and spiritually powerful*. This is due to the conviction about what sermon the soloists and choir are delivering in song [emphasis original].”<sup>242</sup>

Over the years, there has been a watering down of the Gospel message. This is largely due in part to the focus on record sales, particularly in the crossover market. For this cause, many argue that the music in the Black church has become too secular. In his history of gospel music, Raymond Wise contends, “As secular record companies began to enter the gospel market, many gospel artists were told to compromise their gospel message or omit the altar calls from their concerts.”<sup>243</sup>

James Abbingtion further argues:

The secularization, commercialization, and industrialization of gospel music in the United States since the early 1970’s has reduced congregational singing to accommodate additional choral selections from the Top Forties charts and radio stations’ most requested hits. This reduction of congregational singing has decreased worshipers’ participation in communicative worship, leaving them to become mere spectators. Congregations have become audiences that applaud, react, and reinforce the choir and the minister, who also too often are reduced to performers.<sup>244</sup>

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<sup>242</sup> Brenda Aghahowa, *Praising in Black and White: Unity and Diversity in Christian Worship* (Cleveland, OH: United Church Press, 1996), 65.

<sup>243</sup> Raymond Wise, “Defining African American Gospel Music by Tracing Its Historical and Musical Development from 1900 to 2000.” Ph.D diss., Ohio State University, 2002.

<sup>244</sup> James Abbingtion, *Let Mount Zion Rejoice: Music in the African American Church* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 2001), 58.

Abbingtion further writes, “The selection of music and worship styles in many of our churches is being dictated by the mass media and record companies who are not trying to win souls to Christ, but are merely selling music to consumers.”<sup>245</sup>

In recent years, many Black churches have abandoned the apostolic admonitions recorded in Ephesians 5:19 and Colossians 3:15–17. In these two pericopes, the church is admonished to sing “psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs.” In many Black churches, hymns have been removed from the church’s repertoire. This removal has resulted in much of the foundational, theological tenets being absent from the African American worship experience. In his writing, *The Faith We Sing*, S. Paul Schilling writes, “Our hymnody is full of biblical language and imagery and informed by biblical faith. Therefore we shall want to ask how authentically a particular hymn reflects some facet of truth contained in the Scriptures.”<sup>246</sup>

Music has always been a driving force in African worship. It fuels the frenzy of freedom in worship. Unfortunately, in many congregations, this freedom is taken to an extreme.

Melva Costen contends:

Congregations might find themselves “enjoying the Lord” so much that they assume that this is to happen only when one gathers to worship informally. Another danger is that congregations might assume that all services of worship must be jubilant in order for authentic worship to take place. There is always the possibility that Christ has entered the space with a whip to drive out the thieves and the money changers—those who have allowed ritual actions to become empty.<sup>247</sup>

In many churches, good singing has taken the place of the Word of God, and herein lies a major issue for African American Worship. Wendell Whalum argues: “The clergy and musician

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<sup>245</sup> James Abbingtion, *Let the Church Sing On: Reflections on Black Sacred Music* (Chicago, IL: GIA Publications, 2009), 81.

<sup>246</sup> S. Paul Schilling, *The Faith We Sing* (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster, 1983), 23.

<sup>247</sup> Melva Wilson Costen, *African American Christian Worship* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1993), 127.

must always bear in mind that ‘music is the handmaiden of theology,’ and, as such, serves as an aid in the need for a critical explanation of the Word.’<sup>248</sup>

### Conclusion

The African American church is the most important institution in the African American community. This worship community continues to be shaped and developed by its constituency, African American people. When one takes a cursory look at the African American Worship community, one sees a vibrant faith community that is “earnestly contending for the faith” (Jude 1:3). As this worship community continues to share the faith, it does so primarily through its preaching and music. Unfortunately, the Protestant Reformation and its theological foundations are largely missing from African American Worship. Moreover, most of the faithful who make up this diverse worship community are unaware of the Protestant Reformation and where the Black Church fits in. African Americans stand to gain much by learning the history of the Reformation and knowing the role they played in developing the related tenets of the Christian faith. By discovering and embracing the Reformation, this community of faith can better reach the lost and prepare for the coming of the Lord Jesus in His splendor and majesty.

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<sup>248</sup> Wendell P. Whalum, “Church Music: A Position Paper,” in *Readings in African American Church Music and Worship* (Chicago, IL: GIA Publications, 2001), 507.

### Chapter 3: Methodology

Chapter Three describes the research methodology conducted in this project. The first portion of the chapter consists of the research design, research ethics, human subject protection, conflicts of interest, and biases. The second part of the chapter contains information on the population and sample size, instrumentation, data collection, and analysis, including validity and limitations.

#### Research Design

The research design for this study is mixed methods. “Mixed methods involves combining or integration of qualitative and quantitative research and data in a research study.”<sup>1</sup> “Often the distinction between qualitative research and quantitative research is framed in terms of using words (qualitative) rather than numbers (quantitative) or better yet, using closed-ended questions and responses (quantitative hypotheses) or open-ended questions and responses (qualitative interview questions).”<sup>2</sup>

The first part of this study is qualitative, which provides a historical, descriptive, and investigative literature review of the Protestant Reformation. The review includes documents and printed sources that describe the history of the Reformation, the key Reformers, worship practices, and the theological tenets of the five *solas*. A brief history of African American Protestantism is also a part of the study. This section of the study is more than a cursory literature review. It also provides insight into how the Black Church has progressed to this point. This study reviews some of the major theological challenges facing the African American church

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<sup>1</sup> John W. Creswell and J. David Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2018), 4.

<sup>2</sup> Creswell, *Research Design*, 3.

today. By bringing these issues to light, the aim of this study is to show how a return to Reformation theology has the potential to strengthen the church and help it better be God's representative on earth.

The second part of the study is quantitative. It examines the knowledge of the Protestant Reformation and its teachings among African American Senior Pastors and Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders today. The knowledge is examined through a survey design. According to John Creswell, "Survey research provides a quantitative or numeric description of trends, attitudes, or opinions of a population by studying a sample of that population."<sup>3</sup> The study incorporates a statistical correlation between the knowledge of the Protestant Reformation and the five *solas* among Senior Pastors and Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders in African American Protestant congregations. The survey seeks to determine if Protestant Reformation teachings exist in the African American worship experience, primarily in preaching and singing.

#### Research Ethics and Human Subjects Protection

The ethical research considerations of this study necessitate an appropriate usage of human subjects for the quantitative portion of the study. This research project requires the usage of human subjects for data retrieval. Concerns of an ethical nature are addressed through Liberty University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval process. "The IRB committees exist on campuses because of federal regulations that provide protection against human rights violations."<sup>4</sup> IRB approval has been granted along with full permission to conduct this study (see appendix A). While serving the church as a Senior Pastor or Minister of Music/Worship Leader

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<sup>3</sup> Creswell, *Research Design*, 12.

<sup>4</sup> Creswell, *Research Design*, 91.

is a calling from God, this researcher recognizes that surveys and questionnaires have the potential to be daunting and uncomfortable. The study is conducted with participant anonymity and voluntary participation, which allows for honesty and confidentiality in the research process. No names are associated with the completed surveys or the resulting data by the participants. The answers to each research question are submitted electronically to the researcher through an electronic survey instrument; therefore, the participants cannot see the answers of other participants.

Any participant who does not feel comfortable completing the survey for any reason is not forced to participate. They are allowed to simply opt-out. There is no penalty for non-participation. In like manner, there is no compensation associated with participating. The data for the survey is confidential, encrypted, and stored in the researcher's computer, which is password protected and carried by the researcher or locked at home at all times.

#### Population and Sample Size

The research population for this study consists of fifty Senior Pastors and fifty Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders and is representative of the major denominations that are a part of the diverse worship community of African American Protestant churches. The sample population meets the following criteria:

1. The participant is at least 18 years old in age.
2. The participant serves as either the Senior Pastor or Minister of Music/Worship Leader at an African American Protestant church.



### Instrumentation

The quantitative portion of this study uses a survey as the instrument to gather data and to measure the knowledge of the participants regarding the Protestant Reformation. The research survey seeks to answer four research questions:

RQ1. What is the relationship between African American Pastors and Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders regarding their knowledge of the Protestant Reformation?

RQ2. Is there a significant relationship among and between African American Pastors and Ministers of Music/Worship leaders on the perception of the five *solas* being present in African American Worship?

RQ3. Is there a difference among and between African American Pastors and Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders and their perceptions of the African legacy associated with the Protestant Reformation?

RQ4. Is there a relationship among and between African American Pastors and Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders in regard to their perceptions of the importance of teaching the Protestant Reformation to the African American worship community?

The survey is developed to link directly to the research questions. This instrument must be developed by the researcher instead of utilizing an existing one because the literature gap reveals that no current studies exist with this specific focus. A survey conducted by Pew Research in 2017,<sup>5</sup> conducted in celebration of the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Reformation, addresses key theological tenets of Protestantism and polled North American Protestants on three

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<sup>5</sup> “U.S. Protestants Are Defined by Reformation-Era Controversies 500 Years Later,” Pew Research, August 31, 2017, <https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2017/08/31/u-s-protestants-are-not-defined-by-reformation-era-controversies-500-years-later/>.

of the five *solas*. While the study is a significant work, it is five years old and does not capture what is occurring in African American Protestantism in this hour. Absent from the study is any indication that Reformation theology is present in worship through music and preaching. Moreover, the study does not identify the various denominations involved in the study. These reasons, along with others, necessitate the need for a survey that gathers critical data for the study.

The survey used for this study is developed by the researcher. Developed using Google Forms, the survey link is distributed via social media and email. The survey is reviewed by non-participating colleagues and edited by the researcher as needed.

#### Data Collection

In preparing the literature review, data is collected from various sources to ascertain the current research available. These sources include dissertations, theses, peer-reviewed articles, and other scholarly works. Background data collected from various authors give aid and insight for this new research. First, the research briefly traces the history and origin of the Reformation. Chapter Two contains a historical account of the Reformation, beginning with Martin Luther's nailing of the Ninety-Five Theses to the doors of the church in Wittenberg. Information is gathered on the select major reformers and their contributions to the Reformation as well as their views on worship and music. This information includes a substantive review of the five *solas* that constituted the theological tenets of the Reformation. Secondly, the researcher gathers data on key figures from the African continent who have made contributions to the development of Christianity. The data is gathered from historical theological writings, topical books, and articles. Research also commences on the early Black church in North America and its theological

foundations. Thirdly, research is done to discover some of the theological perils and issues associated with today's African American church.

This study utilizes a quantitative descriptive survey. This approach is chosen because “Quantitative research questions inquire about the relationships among variables that the investigator seeks to know.”<sup>6</sup> In this case, the researcher seeks to discover the relationship between the Senior Pastor and Minister of Music/Worship Leader as it relates to the questions posed in the survey instrument. Specifically, the surveys gather data regarding the knowledge of the Protestant Reformation among Senior Pastors and Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders. The first portion of the survey requests that each participant identify their role (Senior Pastor or Minister of Music/Worship Leader) in the local church. The participants are also asked to acknowledge their denominational affiliation. The participants are asked to choose from a list that includes Baptist, Methodist, Episcopal, Lutheran, Pentecostal (Trinitarian), Pentecostal (Oneness), Non-denominational, and Other. The rationale for collecting this information is to identify denominational variables that may impact the data. This information is used for comparisons in validity later in the study.

Participants are asked to answer five questions based on a Likert-type response scale (See appendix G for instrumentation samples). In a like manner, nine questions are developed that require a unipolar response (*yes, no, or don't know*).

## Data Analysis

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<sup>6</sup> Creswell, *Research Design*, 136.

The data collected is compiled and analyzed for each Senior Pastor and Minister of Music/Worship Leader who participates in the research survey. Leedy and Ormrod state a fundamental principle regarding data exploration: “How the researcher prepares the data for inspection or interpretation will affect the meaning that those data reveal. Therefore, every researcher should be able to provide a clear, logical rationale for the procedure used to arrange and organize the data.”<sup>7</sup>

Data analysis is performed utilizing the SPSS 19 software program. One database is created. The first part of the database contains demographic and survey consent information. This includes the role of the participant (Senior Pastor or Minister of Music/Worship Leader) and the denominational affiliation of the participant.

The second part of the database contains information collected from SPSS for each participant. This database contains aggregated scores for each of the research areas, which includes the knowledge of the participants regarding the Protestant Reformation, the importance of the Reformation and the five *solas* to church history, the presence of the five *solas* in African American worship, and the knowledge of African legacy associated with the Reformation.

The data collected from the completed surveys is downloaded from Google Documents into the Excel program. From this download, the responses from the two participant groups (Seniors Pastors and Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders) are separated and tallied. Each question is tabulated individually.

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<sup>7</sup> Paul D. Leedy and Jeanne Ellis Ormrod, *Practical Research: Planning and Design* (New York, NY: Pearson, 2019), 305.

The researcher meticulously examines the data from the completed surveys. Measures are taken as the survey instrument is designed to ensure that participants answer all questions. As a result, no missing data is detected.

Validity represents the extent to which an instrument “yields accurate assessments of the characteristics of the phenomenon in question.”<sup>8</sup> This researcher uses several means to establish validity. Several experts are used to establish face validity. In addition to this, the survey instrument is pilot tested by a diverse group of musicians who are not included in the research findings. Creswell contends, “This testing is important to establish the content validity of scores on an instrument; to provide an initial evaluation of the internal consistency of the items; and to improve questions, format, and instructions.”<sup>9</sup> The feedback received from these experts aids the researcher in making necessary modifications to the research instrument.

### Limitations

The researcher is interested only in ascertaining the participants’ knowledge regarding the Protestant Reformation and the contributions of Africans to Christianity and the participants’ opinion on whether the Reformation is important to the African American worship community. The researcher is aware, however, that the potential for bias exists. A bias potentially lies in the fact that the researcher has over forty years of experience in leading music ministry in the African American church community. The researcher is a part of the Gospel music community as a contributing songwriter and recording artist. While the researcher is greatly concerned about the lack of Reformation knowledge in the community, he is a part of that community and is

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<sup>8</sup> Leedy and Ormrod, *Practical Research: Planning and Design*, 104.

<sup>9</sup> Creswell, *Research Design*, 154.

potentially biased in his understanding of what exists and what does not exist. Moreover, the researcher is a lifelong member of the National Baptist Convention, USA—the largest African American Protestant community in the country. The researcher, having served in a leadership role within the music department of the National Baptist Convention, USA, is very concerned about the perception of the Protestant Reformation. He is knowledgeable that the Reformation and its theological tenets seem to be rarely discussed in this worship community. While steps have been taken to minimize and, as much as possible, eliminate bias, there still exists the possibility that bias exists.

A limitation of the study lies in the pool of participants. The study involves only fifty participants from each of the two primary the worship leaders of the church (Senior Pastors and Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders). This limited number of participants and the two categories may not represent the broader African American worship community. No measures are taken to ensure a broad representation of the various denominations. The surveys are distributed via social media and email, with random responses.

### Conclusion

The research methodology and design are foundational to the success of this mixed methods study. The study consists of an online survey that contains five questions in Likert Scale format and nine *yes/no/don't know* questions. After one hundred participants (fifty Senior Pastors and fifty Worship Leaders/Ministers of Music) anonymously participate in the quantitative survey, the data is analyzed to provide a comprehensive investigation of the research questions.

## Chapter 4: Findings

The study investigates the knowledge of the Protestant Reformation within the African American Worship community—specifically, the knowledge of the five *solas* that are a theological product of the Reformation. The researcher has sought to gain this knowledge by surveying the two most important leaders in this worship community: the Senior Pastor and the Minister of Music/Worship Leader. The study was conducted with a random sample of participants comprised of fifty Pastors and fifty Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders. The findings from this mixed-methods study are presented in this chapter.

### Research Questions

The following research questions have guided this study:

RQ1. What is the relationship between African American Pastors and Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders regarding their knowledge of the Protestant Reformation?

RQ2. Is there a significant relationship among and between African American Pastors and Ministers of Music/Worship leaders on the perception of the five *solas* being present in African American Worship?

RQ3. Is there a difference among and between African American Pastors and Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders and their perceptions of the African legacy associated with the Protestant Reformation?

RQ4. Is there a relationship among and between African American Pastors and Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders in regard to their perceptions of the importance of teaching the Protestant Reformation to the African American worship community?

Chapter four covers the compilation procedure and the measures this researcher has utilized to collect and report the quantitative data. This chapter also analyzes the research findings to determine what has been discovered. The chapter addresses the mixed method manner in which the data has been gathered and evaluates both the quantitative and qualitative approaches to ascertain this information.

### Compilation Protocol

This research study utilizes a qualitative survey developed from the literature review. The quantitative survey was refined upon the advice and counsel of colleagues. All survey data was collected using a Google Forms document. The data from the Google Forms document was exported into an Excel spreadsheet. The questions and their responses were separated into individual forms for tallying. The number of responses from each denomination was coded and exported into IBM's SPSS software for all comparative analysis. SPSS was selected because it was the best software to compile comparative data across the survey instrument.

### Demographic and Consent Questions

Prior to beginning the survey, all participants were asked a general age demographic question, as well as a consent question. The participants were also asked to identify their leadership role in the local church and acknowledge their denominational affiliation. The data from these questions are found in Appendix B.

The survey employed a mixture of *yes/no*, *yes/no/don't know*, and several Likert scale questions. The raw data for each response is found in Appendix B. Google Documents gave the data in a .csv format which was convertible to an Excel document. The researcher created reports for both groups (Senior Pastor and Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders). Appendix C provides



the data for both groups. From the Excel spreadsheet, the responses were exported into a document that captured the results for each question for the two groups (Senior Pastors and Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders). This document is found in Appendix D. Each answer was coded numerically into ordinal numbers 0 through 4. For the *yes/no* questions, 0 corresponds with the answer *no*, and 1 corresponds with the answer *yes*. For questions with the answers *yes/no/don't know*, the number 2 is assigned to *yes*, 1 to *no*, and 0 to *don't know*. For the Likert scale questions, the mean of the responses is used. The survey required that all questions be answered for the survey to be submitted. SPSS, Version 19 software package, was used to perform statistical calculations and generate charts and graphs for data analysis.

Of the various denominations that have responded to the survey, Baptists represent the largest number of both groups (Senior Pastors and Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders). In this study, the Baptist participants are a mixture of the three major conventions: The National Baptist Convention, USA, National Baptist Convention of America, and the Progressive National Baptist Convention. The participant group consists of thirty-one Senior Pastors and thirty-three Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders. According to the Pew Research Center, Baptist is the largest denomination in black Protestantism.<sup>1</sup>

The National Baptist Convention, USA is the oldest and largest among Baptists.<sup>2</sup> Throughout the history of black Baptists, scholars have opted to use the titles *movements* and *conventions* when discussing this group. This has been done largely in part to maintain the view

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<sup>1</sup> Besheer Mohamed, Kiana Cox, Jeff Diamant, and Claire Gecewicz, "Religious Affiliation and Congregations," Pew Research, February 16, 2021, <https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2021/02/16/religious-affiliation-and-congregations/>.

<sup>2</sup> William Watley, "Introducing the African American Churches" in *Readings in African American Church Music and Worship*, ed. James Abbington (Chicago, IL: GIA Publications, 2001), 27.

of the local church as independent. Founded in 1895, this convention represents the first successful attempt “to organize a national body or denomination” after the Civil War.<sup>3</sup>

The Progressive National Baptist Convention (PNBC) emerged in 1961 as a result of the Civil Rights Movement. A host of significant Civil Rights leaders are associated with this group. Among them are Gardner Taylor, Martin Luther King, Sr., Martin Luther King, Jr., and Benjamin Mays. This group adopted its name as it was a countermovement to the conservative National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc. PNBC was divided over the denomination’s involvement in the battle for Civil Rights in America. Jon Michael Spencer writes, “This schism was caused by the unusually long tenure of convention president Joseph H. Jackson, and his perceived social conservatism as reflected in the convention’s lack of involvement in Civil Rights activism.”<sup>4</sup>

The Methodist participants include Senior Pastors from African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E.) churches, African Methodist Episcopal Zion (A.M.E.Z.) churches, Christian Methodist Episcopal (C.M.E.) churches, and United Methodist churches.

While Baptist churches are viewed as the first independent black congregations in America, the African American Episcopal Church is viewed as the first independent denomination established in North America. Founded by Richard Allen, a self-educated former slave and ordained Methodist minister, the African Methodist Episcopal Church represents the activism of blacks in America. After years of racial discrimination and humiliation, Richard Allen and Absalom Jones organized “the first Black mutual aid society, the Free African Society,

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<sup>3</sup> Watley, *Readings*, 35.

<sup>4</sup> Jon Michael Spencer, *Black Hymnody: A Hymnological History of the African American Church* (Knoxville, TN: The University of Tennessee Press, 1992), 94.

in 1787.”<sup>5</sup> The history of the denomination records that Jones was kneeling in prayer when he was forced from his knees in the sanctuary of the white St. George’s Methodist Episcopal Church in Philadelphia. Allen, Jones, and many freed slaves joined the church and were very involved. The years of humiliation and disrespect came to a head, and according to Allen, “We all went out of the church in a body, and they were no longer plagued by us in the church.”<sup>6</sup>

The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church (A.M.E.Z.) is another Methodist branch of Methodism. It, too, was founded because of the mistreatment of African Americans. After being welcomed into the fellowship of John Street Methodist Episcopal Church in New York City, many slaves experienced discrimination in the church’s liturgy of worship and in the ordination process. The A.M.E. Zion Church is known as the “Freedom Church.”<sup>7</sup> Among its list of famous parishioners are abolitionists Sojourner Truth, Harriet Tubman, and Frederick Douglass.

Douglass was a licensed preacher within the church.

The Christian Methodist Episcopal Church (C.M.E.) was also organized because of the divide in America over the issue of slavery. After the Civil War, the Methodist Episcopal Church wrestled with the future of slaves. While the church contemplated its decision, freed slaves organized their own ecclesiastical body. In December 1870, freed slaves gathered in Jackson, Tennessee, and organized a “separate and independent church for Colored persons who had been members of that church while they were slaves and who chose to remain in it in order to get their own independent church upon the authority and goodwill of the White church.”<sup>8</sup> While the

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<sup>5</sup>Henry Louis Gates, *The Black Church: This is Story, This is Our Song* (New York, NY: Penguin Books, 2021), 47

<sup>6</sup> Richard Allen, *The Life Experience and Gospel Labors of the Rt. Rev. Richard Allen* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1960), 25.

<sup>7</sup> Whatley, *Readings*, 31.

<sup>8</sup> Othal Lakey, *The History of the CME Church* (Memphis, TN: The CME Publishing House, 1996), 24.

organization of the A.M.E and A.M.E. Zion Churches was marked with legal battles, the blacks and whites involved in the organization of the C.M.E. Church were in full agreement with the formation of the church. Organized as the Colored Methodist Church, the name was changed in 1954 to the *Christian* Methodist Episcopal Church. The C.M.E. Church is “the smallest of the three African American communions.”<sup>9</sup>

The United Methodist Church is the third group from Methodism represented in this study. In 1939, “Delegates of the merging Methodist Episcopal (ME) Church, ME Church, South, and Methodist Protestant (MP) Church voted to segregate the new church’s black membership.”<sup>10</sup> According to the Fact 2000 survey, there are approximately 3,500 African American United Methodist churches.<sup>11</sup> Three senior Pastors and five Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders constitute the participants from the Methodist denominations.

The Pentecostal participants are divided into two groups. The first group is the Trinitarian group. Those who are Trinitarian are members of the Church of God in Christ (COGIC). This group is the largest Pentecostal denomination in America. They emphasize speaking in tongues (*glossolalia*) as seen on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2. This denomination holds true to the Trinitarian tenets of the Christian faith. Charles Harrison Mason, while serving as a Baptist pastor in 1893, began to embrace holiness teachings. He and other Baptist preachers taught sanctification as a doctrine within their conservative Baptist churches. As a result, “They were

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<sup>9</sup> Watley, *Readings*, 33.

<sup>10</sup> William McClain, *Black People in the Methodist Church: Wither Thou Goest?* (Cambridge, MA: Shenckman, 1984), 98.

<sup>11</sup> “Historically African American Denominations—Fact 2000,” Harvard Institute for Religion Research, <https://faithcommunitiestoday.org/historically-african-american-denominations-fact-2000/>.

excommunicated and barred from preaching in Baptist churches throughout the region.”<sup>12</sup> After experiencing the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the California Azusa Street revival, Mason began to expound that the “baptism of the Holy Spirit and speaking tongues was normative.”<sup>13</sup> This caused a rift between Mason and other Holiness pastors as they did not believe this notion was true. After years of disagreement, Mason returned to Memphis, Tennessee, and organized the Church of God in Christ in August 1907. The original group, “Church of Christ Holiness, USA,” distinguished themselves as a *holiness* denomination but did not adopt the practice of speaking in tongues as a doctrine. Mason’s Church of God in Christ became the largest African American Pentecostal body in the world.

The other group of Pentecostals includes the *Oneness* denominations. Oneness Pentecostals do not subscribe to the traditional and orthodox trinitarian views of the Godhead and deny that God exists in three Persons. They teach that God appears in three distinct “modes” or “manifestations”—as Father in creation, as the Son in redemption, and as Holy Spirit in regeneration and indwelling—but that there is only one real Person in the Godhead, namely Jesus.<sup>14</sup> This group, commonly known as “Jesus Only” or “Apostolic,” began to grow in the early 1900’s. The largest group of black Oneness Pentecostals is the Pentecostal Assemblies of the World (PAW). One of the prominent voices of the Oneness movement is the ever-popular, Bishop Thomas Dexter Jakes of the Potter’s House in Dallas, TX.

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<sup>12</sup> L. H. Welchel, *The History and Heritage of African-American Churches* (St. Paul, MN: Paragon House, 2011), 166.

<sup>13</sup> Watley, *Readings*, 37.

<sup>14</sup> “Oneness Pentecostalism,” *Interfaith Belief Bulletin*, 2001, [http://www.freewordministries.org/BB\\_PENTECOSTALS%5B1%5D.pdf](http://www.freewordministries.org/BB_PENTECOSTALS%5B1%5D.pdf).

The study also includes a group who identify as *Non-denominational*. This group is a “proportion of Protestants in the United States who don’t identify with a specific denomination.”<sup>15</sup> Daniel Silliman describes Non-denominational Christians as “people who shake off organizational affiliations, disassociate from tradition, and free themselves from established church brands.”<sup>16</sup> The history of Non-denominational churches can be traced back to the 18<sup>th</sup> century. They came into existence during what is known as the Stone-Campbell Movement. The goal of this movement was to identify with Christianity found in the first-century church. Most Non-denominational churches believe in the Bible as the authority on matters of faith and morality. They base their teachings on their conservative interpretation of the Bible. According to Brannon Diebert, “Being independent congregations, non-denominational churches can customize their beliefs and practices to whatever doctrine and creeds they deem appropriate and righteous.”<sup>17</sup> In this study, the Non-denominational participants include eight Senior Pastors and five Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders.

The final group of participants in the study are those who have answered as *Other*. This group consists of persons who are affiliated with Protestant groups who do not identify with the mainline groups. Among this group are persons who serve in the Metropolitan Spiritual Churches of Christ (MSCC). This denomination began in 1925 in Kansas City, Missouri. Known as *spiritualist* churches, these churches “combined the divine healing and psychic worship of

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<sup>15</sup> Kate Shellnutt, “The Rise of the Nons: Protestants Keep Ditching Denominations,” Christianity Today, July 20, 2017, [www.christianitytoday.com/news/2017/july/rise-of-nons-protestants-denominations-nondenominational.html](http://www.christianitytoday.com/news/2017/july/rise-of-nons-protestants-denominations-nondenominational.html).

<sup>16</sup> Daniel Silliman, “Nondenominational Is Now The Largest Segment of American Protestants,” Christianity Today, November 6, 2022, [www.christianitytoday.com/news/2022/november/religion-census-nondenominational-church-growth-nons.html](http://www.christianitytoday.com/news/2022/november/religion-census-nondenominational-church-growth-nons.html).

<sup>17</sup> Brannon Diebert, “What Are Non-Denominational Churches?” Christianity.com, November 8, 2018, [www.christianity.com/church/denominations/what-are-non-denominational-churches-meaning-examples.html](http://www.christianity.com/church/denominations/what-are-non-denominational-churches-meaning-examples.html).

Pentecostalism with Catholic ritualism, including the use of vestments and candles.”<sup>18</sup> There are two participants from this category from both the Senior Pastor and Minister of Music/Worship Leader groups. Data on the participant groups is captured in table 4.

**Table 4. Denominational Affiliation of Participants**

Senior Pastors		Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders	
Denomination		Denomination	
Baptist	31	Baptist	33
Methodist	3	Methodist	5
Pentecostal Trinitarian	2	Pentecostal Trinitarian	4
Pentecostal (Oneness)	4	Pentecostal (Oneness)	1
Non-Denominational	8	Non-Denominational	5
Other	2	Other	2
	50		50

### Quantitative Data Analysis and Findings

#### Research Question 1

##### **RQ1: What is the relationship between African American Pastors and Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders regarding their knowledge of the Protestant Reformation?**

This researcher chose to investigate the knowledge of Pastors and Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders regarding the Protestant Reformation. To gauge the knowledge, this researcher used five survey questions. Four of the questions are *yes/no* questions and one question is a three-point Likert Scale question. According to researchers Paul Leedy and Jeanne Ellis Ormond, “Whenever you use checklists or rating scales, you simplify and more easily quantify people’s behaviors or attitudes. Furthermore, when participants *themselves* complete these things, you can collect a great deal of data quickly and efficiently [emphasis original].”<sup>19</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Gates, *The Black Church*, 121.

<sup>19</sup> Paul D. and Jeanne Ellis Ormond, *Practical Research: Planning and Design* (New York, NY: Pearson, 2019), 156.

Survey Question 1: Do you know what it means to be Protestant? All fifty Senior Pastors responded *yes* to knowing what it means to be Protestant. The Baptist Senior Pastors represent the largest number, with all thirty-one participants responding *yes*. Forty-eight of the fifty Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders responded *yes* to this question. A breakdown of the responses by the two groups is captured in table 5.

**Table 5. Responses to Survey Question 1 by Senior Pastors and Ministers of Music**

Senior Pastors			Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders		
Denomination	Yes	No	Denomination	Yes	No
Baptist	31	0	Baptist	31	2
Methodist	3	0	Methodist	5	0
Pentecostal Trinitarian	2	0	Pentecostal Trinitarian	4	0
Pentecostal (Oneness)	4	0	Pentecostal (Oneness)	1	0
Non-Denominational	8	0	Non-Denominational	5	0
Other	2	0	Other	2	0

Thirty-one Baptist Senior Pastors and thirty-one Baptist Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders answered *yes* to knowing what it means to be Protestant. The researcher conducted a Pearson Correlation test on the data. According to Neil Salkind and Bruce Frey, “The Pearson correlation coefficient examines the relationship between two variables, but both of the variables are continuous in nature.”<sup>20</sup> The Pearson correlation tests reveal whether a relationship is significant (positive) or insignificant (negative). Strong correlations are values 0.5 to 1.0, and negative correlation values are -1.0 to -0.5. The data reveals a significant correlation regarding how the

<sup>20</sup> Neil J. Salkind and Bruce B. Frey, *Statistics for People Who Think They Hate Statistics* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publishing, 2020), 77.



two groups responded to this question. The SPSS software analysis shows the correlation at the 0.01 level. The relationship is shown in table 6.

**Table 6. Results from Pearson Correlations Test on knowing what it means to be Protestant**

	Pastors	Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders
Do you know what it means to be Protestant? Pearson Correlation (Pastor)	1	.980**
Sig. (2-tailed)		<.001
Do you know what it means to be Protestant? Pearson Correlation (Minister of Music/Worship Leader)	.980**	1
Sig (2-tailed)	<.001	

According to the answers recorded in the survey, both groups (Senior Pastors and Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders) appear to know what it means to be Protestant. However, the answers to the remaining questions in the survey reveal other details. The answers to future questions indicate that they seem to know some of the jargon associated with Protestantism but do not know fully what being a Protestant entails. In this study, a narrative unfolds, revealing that there is surface knowledge of the Reformation among some responses. Still, other responses reveal a critical lack of understanding that impacts the practice of these leaders.

Survey Question 2: How knowledgeable are you about the Protestant Reformation? To answer this question, the researcher utilized a Likert Scale, including the following possible answers: *very knowledgeable*, *somewhat knowledgeable*, and *unknowledgeable*. For the pastors, the mean results are 4.33 for *very knowledgeable*, 4.00 for *somewhat knowledgeable*, and .00 for *unknowledgeable*. In the largest group, Baptist Senior Pastors, eighteen responded *very knowledgeable*, and thirteen responded *somewhat knowledgeable*. No pastors indicated that they

are *unknowledgeable* of the Reformation. The responses from the Minister of Music group are very similar to the Senior Pastors. In the largest group, Baptist Ministers of Music/Worship, fifteen responded *very knowledgeable*, and sixteen responded *somewhat knowledgeable*. Unlike the Senior Pastors, there are four participants. For the Ministers of Music/Worship leaders, the mean is 4.50, 3.17, and .67, respectively. The data for this question is captured in table 7. In this table, two numbers have revealed the mean and the standard deviation.

**Table 7. Responses to Survey Question 2 testing the participants' knowledge of the Protestant Reformation**

	Mean	Standard Deviation
Pastors		
• Very	4.33	6.713
• Somewhat Knowledgeable	4.00	4.899
• Unknowledgeable	.000	.000
Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders		
• Very	4.50	5.468
• Somewhat Knowledgeable	3.17	6.401
• Unknowledgeable	.67	1.033

A breakdown of the raw data across the denomination reveals that most Baptist pastors consider themselves *very knowledgeable* about the Protestant Reformation. Similarly, a large number consider themselves to be *somewhat knowledgeable*. No Baptist pastors answered that they are *unknowledgeable* about the Protestant Reformation. The answers to this question by group and denomination are captured in table 8.

**Table 8. Breakdown of Survey Question 2 by participants and denomination**

Senior Pastors				Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders			
Denomination	Very	Somewhat	Unknowledgeable	Denomination	Very	Somewhat	Unknowledgeable
Baptist	18	13	0	Baptist	15	16	2
Methodist	2	1	0	Methodist		3	2
Pentecostal Trinitarian	2	0	0	Pentecostal Trinitarian	4	0	0
Pentecostal (Oneness)	1	3	0	Pentecostal (Oneness)	1	0	0
Non-Denominational	2	6	0	Non-Denominational	5	0	0
Other	1	1	0	Other	2	0	0
Total	26	24	0	Total	27	19	4

When answering the same question, twenty-seven of the Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders answered that they are *very knowledgeable* of the Protestant Reformation. Nineteen of the participants responded that they are *somewhat knowledgeable*. However, four of the participants indicate that they are *unknowledgeable*. The percentage of Senior Pastors who view themselves as *very knowledgeable* is 52%, and 48% view themselves as *somewhat knowledgeable*. There is a slight difference in the knowledge percentages observed among the Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders. The data reveals that 54% of the participants view themselves as *very knowledgeable*, 38% as *somewhat knowledgeable*, and 8% as *unknowledgeable*.

There are similarities in answers among the various denominations; however, there are noticeable variances. For example, among the largest group of participants—the Baptists—36% are *very knowledgeable*. Conversely, 25% of the Non-denominational Pastors view themselves as *very knowledgeable*, but 75% of the participants answered that they are *somewhat knowledgeable* of the Protestant Reformation. A view of the data from the Baptists reveals that

most participants are *somewhat knowledgeable* as percentages are 45% *very knowledgeable*, 48% *somewhat knowledgeable*, and 6% *unknowledgeable*. The Methodists and Non-denominational groups represent the second largest participant. The Methodists are very divided in their answers. The data shows that 60% of the Methodist Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders are *somewhat knowledgeable*, and 40% are *unknowledgeable*. On the other hand, 100% of the Non-denominational participants answered *very knowledgeable*.

When comparing the answers of the Senior Pastors to those of the Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders, more Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders answer that they are *very knowledgeable* of the Protestant Reformation than Senior Pastors. These results are compelling as it appears that Senior Pastors would be more knowledgeable of the Reformation due to seminary training. At best, the Minister of Music/Worship Leader—unless seminary trained—would have limited exposure to the history of the Reformation in a music appreciation class.

There appears to be some level of contradiction among the Senior Pastors in regard to their knowledge of the Protestant Reformation. In Question 1, all fifty Senior Pastors answer that they know what it means to be Protestant. Contrarily, the answers *very knowledgeable* and *somewhat knowledgeable* concerning the Protestant Reformation are almost half and half.

Survey Question 3: Do you know who is credited with starting the Protestant Reformation in 1517? The data reveals that most Senior Pastors know who started the Protestant Reformation. The mean for the answers is 7.50. However, the number of Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders who know who started the Protestant Reformation is lower. The mean for this group is 5.50.

**Table 9. Survey Statistics for Senior Pastors/Ministers of Music for Survey Question 3**

	Mean	Standard Deviation
Senior Pastors	7.50	10.213
Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders	5.50	12.062

The raw data for sub-question three shows that forty-five of the Senior Pastors (90%) answered *yes* to knowing who is credited with starting the Protestant Reformation. In a like manner, forty-four Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders (88%) answered *yes* to sub-question 3.

**Table 10. Results for Survey Question 3 by groups and denominations**

Senior Pastors		Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders			
Denomination	Yes	No	Denomination	Yes	No
Baptist	28	3	Baptist	30	3
Methodist	3	0	Methodist	3	2
Pentecostal Trinitarian	2	0	Pentecostal Trinitarian	4	0
Pentecostal (Oneness)	3	1	Pentecostal (Oneness)	1	0
Non-Denominational	7	1	Non-Denominational	5	0
Other	2	0	Other	1	1
Total	45	5	Total	44	6

The data shows a significant correlation among and between the Senior Pastors and Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders regarding their knowledge of who started the Protestant Reformation. The analysis using the SPSS software is captured in table 11.

**Table 11. Results from Pearson Correlations Test for Survey Question 3**

	Pastors	Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders
Do you know who is credited with starting the Protestant Reformation in 1517? Pearson Correlation (Pastor)	1	.946
Sig. (2-tailed)		<.001
Do you know who is credited with starting the Protestant Reformation in 1517? Pearson Correlation (Minister of Music/Worship Leader)	.946	1
Sig (2-tailed)	<.001	

Survey Question 4: Do you know what the Ninety-Five Theses or disputations are?

The Ninety-Five Theses or disputations written by Martin Luther and nailed to the door of the Church in Wittenberg are foundational to the Reformation. It is this document that captures Luther's disagreement with the church. Ranging across a variety of subjects, this document challenged the church and ultimately led to the split of the Catholic Church. Survey Question 4 further tested the knowledge of the survey participants by questioning whether they knew what this document is. The data reveals that a great number of Pastors know what the Theses are. The mean for Pastors is 6.00. Conversely, the Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders have a mean of 5.33. The answers to this question in the Senior Pastor group reveal that many African American Senior Pastors know what the Ninety-Five Theses are.

**Table 12. Statistics for Senior Pastors/Ministers of Music for Survey Question 3**

	Mean	Standard Deviation
Pastors (Yes)	6.00	9.055
Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders (Yes)	5.33	8.359

The breakdown of the raw data is as follows: thirty-eight Senior Pastors answered *yes*, while twelve answered *no*. These responses represent an increasing demonstration that their answer to the first survey question is misplaced. Within this group, Baptists had twenty-four to respond *yes* and seven to answer *no*. Among the Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders, the responses of the Baptist group are divided. Of the thirty-three participants, twenty-two answered *yes*, and eleven answered *no*. The data reveals a multiplicity of disparities from group to group and denomination to denomination. For example, 100% of the Pastors in the Methodist denomination know what the Ninety-Five Theses are. Contrarily, only 25% of the Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders answered that they know. In the Pentecostal (Oneness) participants, it is

alarming that only one participant knows what the Ninety-Five Theses are. Their Pentecostal counterparts, the Trinitarians, answer the question more favorably. One hundred percent of the Pentecostal Trinitarian Pastors answered *yes* to knowing what the Ninety-Five Theses are, and 75% of the Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders answered in the affirmative as well. The data for this question is found in table 13.

**Table 13. Responses to Survey Question 4 on the knowledge of the Ninety-Five Theses or disputations**

Senior Pastors		Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders			
Denomination	Yes	No	Denomination	Yes	No
Baptist	24	7	Baptist	22	11
Methodist	3	0	Methodist	1	4
Pentecostal Trinitarian	2	0	Pentecostal Trinitarian	3	1
Pentecostal (Oneness)	1	3	Pentecostal (Oneness)	1	0
Non-Denominational	6	2	Non-Denominational	5	0
Other	2	0	Other	1	1

Table 13 shows a significant relationship between the two groups in their knowledge of the Ninety-five Theses. The correlation is significant at 0.01.

**Table 14. Pearson Correlation on Survey Question 4**

Do you know what the 95 Theses or disputations are? (Pastors)	Pastors 1	Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders .994
Pearson Correlation		
Sig. (2-tailed)	.009	<.001

The data reveals that all Senior Pastor participants know what it means to be Protestant, but they are not very knowledgeable about the Reformation. While all fifty pastors answer *yes* when asked if they know what it means to be Protestant, they are divided in regard to their knowledge of the Reformation. The data reveals that 52% are *very knowledgeable*, and 48% are *somewhat knowledgeable*. The data reveals that the vast majority of Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders know what it means to be Protestant. However, their knowledge is very divided. The

percentages show that 54% are *very knowledgeable*, 38% are *somewhat knowledgeable*, and 8% are *unknowledgeable*.

Survey Question 5: Do you know what the five *solas* of the Protestant Reformation are? As previously stated, the five *solas* represent the important doctrinal views associated with the Reformation. The five *solas* form the foundation for Christian faith and practice. These short phrases represent the core beliefs of Christianity. Knowing and understanding the *solas* is critical to understanding the Reformation and the theological view associated with it.

The mean for Senior Pastors who answered *yes* to this survey question is 4.83 and 4.50 for Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders. The results of this question are found in table 15.

**Table 15. Responses from Senior Pastors/Ministers of Music regarding their knowledge of the five solas.**

	Mean	Standard Deviation
Pastors (Yes)	4.83	3.817
Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders (Yes)	4.50	6.253

A review of the data reveals that thirty-eight Senior Pastors (76%) know what the five *solas* are. Conversely, twelve Senior Pastors (24%) are unaware of what the five *solas* are. Of the fifty Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders who responded to the survey, thirty-three (66%) know the five *solas*, and seventeen (34%) do not. A breakdown of the raw data shows a significant relationship between the answers of Baptist Pastors and Ministers of Music/Worship leaders. In the Baptist Senior Pastor group, 24% know what the five *solas* are compared to 34% of Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders. This comparison is a reason for concern as these two leadership groups are responsible for transmitting theological tenets to the congregation. The results of the two groups for this question in Methodism are also



significant. While 100% of the Senior Pastors in Methodism are knowledgeable of the *solas*, only 25% of the Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders answered *yes* to knowing what the five *solas* are. The second largest group, Non-denominational, is equally knowledgeable of the *solas* among the two leadership groups. The data from the Non-denominational participants is compelling. Overwhelmingly, this participant group answered *yes* to their knowledge of the five *solas*. One hundred percent of the Senior Pastors and 80% of the Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders answer that they are knowledgeable of the *solas*. The data shows that the Non-denominational community is more knowledgeable by the percentage of overall participation of the five *solas* than the largest participant group, the Baptists. The answers to Survey Question 5 are captured in table 16.

**Table 16. Results from Survey Question 5, testing the knowledge of the five solas**

Senior Pastors		Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders			
Denomination	Yes	No	Denomination	Yes	No
Baptist	12	19	Baptist	17	16
Methodist	3	0	Methodist	1	4
Pentecostal Trinitarian	2	0	Pentecostal Trinitarian	3	1
Pentecostal (Oneness)	4	0	Pentecostal (Oneness)	1	0
Non-Denominational	6	0	Non-Denominational	4	1
Other	2	2	Other	1	1
Total	29	21	Total	27	23

A comparison of the two participant groups shows that slightly more Pastors have knowledge of the five *solas* than Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders, but the responses of the two groups are remarkably aligned. The data reveals a 58% to 54% comparison between the two groups.

**Table 17. Results of the correlation test by groups on the knowledge of the five solas**

	Pastors	Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders
Do you know what the five <i>solas</i> are? Pearson Correlation (Pastor)	1	.943
Sig. (2-tailed)		.005
Do you know what the five <i>solas</i> are? (Minister of Music/Worship Leader)	.943	1
Sig (2-tailed)	<.005	

The data reveals that there is a significant relationship between the answers of the Senior Pastors and the Ministers of Music/Worship leaders regarding their knowledge of the five *solas*. The relationship is significant at the 0.05 level.

While the data reveals a significant relationship between the two groups, table 16 reveals areas for concern among the two groups and among denominations regarding the knowledge of the Protestant Reformation. Overwhelmingly, both groups (Pastors and Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders) believe themselves to be cognizant of what the term *Protestant* means. The data, however, reveals that they may not be as knowledgeable as they contend. The data gives the researcher some level of comfort when analyzing the knowledge of the Reformation. Survey Question 2 reveals that 52% of the Senior Pastors are *very knowledgeable* of the Protestant Reformation, and another 48% are *somewhat knowledgeable*. Concern is raised, however, when looking at the responses of the Ministers of Music/Worship leaders as 54% of the participants are *very knowledgeable*, 38% are *somewhat knowledgeable*, and 8% are *unknowledgeable*. However, when answering the question testing their knowledge of the five *solas*, the data reveals that their knowledge of some aspects of the Reformation is inconsistent.

For this study, RQ1 is answered by completing an independent sample t-test to compare the knowledge of the Pastors and Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders with the means of the two groups. As to there being a relationship among and between the Pastors and Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders, a Pearson's  $r$  correlation was conducted to analyze the relationship between the scores of the two groups.

## Research Question 2

### **RQ2: Is there a significant relationship among and between African American Pastors and Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders on the perception of the five *solas* being present in African American Worship?**

The five *solas* are a summary of Reformed Theology. These five tenets capture the core of the Gospel and represent an abbreviated version of the teachings Luther and the other Reformers hoped would bring the church back to Biblical authority. In the African American church, as in any church, preaching and singing are the main transmitters of theology. Using five survey questions, the researcher asked both Senior Pastors and the Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders if the *solas* are present in their worship community in the form of preaching and singing. The researcher believes this question narrows down the knowledge and aids in drawing conclusions as to whether Reformation theology is present in the preaching and music of African American Protestant worship. A Likert scale was used to capture the responses. The three answer choices are *yes*, *no*, and *don't know*. Of the fifty participants, the answers to these questions are captured in table 14.

**Table 18. Responses to RQ2 survey questions by Senior Pastors and Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders**

Senior Pastors	Yes	No	Don't Know	Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders	Yes	No	Don't Know
Faith Alone	43	6	1	Faith Alone	35	6	9
Christ Alone	45	5	0	Christ Alone	39	4	7
Grace Alone	46	3	1	Grace Alone	36	6	8

Scripture Alone	44	6	0	Scripture Alone	31	11	8
To God's Glory Alone	47	3	0	To God's Glory Alone	36	5	9

The researcher believes this question digs a little deeper into the participants' knowledge by questioning the presence of the five basic theological tenets of the Reformation in African American worship. As presented in the literature review, the five *solas* represent the heart of the Reformation and encapsulate the theology the Reformers hoped to restore to the church.

Survey Question 1 asks, "Is the Reformation tenet 'Faith Alone' evident in your church's preaching and music?" *Sola fide*, or "Faith Alone," represents the heart of the Gospel message. It was the battle cry of the Reformation and is the centerpiece of Christianity. While the believer performs works, these works must be preceded by faith. *Sola fide* declares that we are saved by faith in the righteousness of Christ. Martin Luther writes, "If this article [of justification] stands, the church stands, if this article collapses, the church collapses."<sup>1</sup> The survival of the Church and its messages hinges on the doctrine of faith. The doctrine of faith must be taught to every generation of the church. If not, works become a substitute. Ultimately, this robs the church of the heart of the Gospel and Christ of the glory that he is due as the Redeemer and Savior of humanity.

**Table 19. Statistical Results to Survey Question 1 regarding the presence of the "Faith Alone" in worship**

Senior Pastors	Mean	Standard Deviation
Yes	7.1667	9.78604
No	1.000	1.67332
Don't Know	.1667	.40825
Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders		
Yes	5.8333	9.49561
No	1.000	.63246
Don't Know	1.5000	2.34521

<sup>1</sup> Dennis Knapp, "By Luther The Church Falls," *Patheos*, February 18, 2022, [www.patheos.com/blogs/thelatinright/2022/02/by-martin-luther-the-church-falls/](http://www.patheos.com/blogs/thelatinright/2022/02/by-martin-luther-the-church-falls/).

The data reveals that forty-three Senior Pastors acknowledge that the *sola* “Faith Alone” is present in their preaching. Six Senior Pastors answered *no* and one Senior Pastor *did not know*. When answering the same question, their counterparts, the Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders answered *yes* thirty-five times, *no* six times, and nine answered that they *did not know*. Of the largest group (Baptists), there is a major disparity between the Senior Pastors and the Ministers of Music. Of those who responded to the survey, 54% of the Pastors acknowledge the presence of “Faith Alone” in their preaching, and 8% responded *no*. Among the Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders, 50% answered *yes*, 4% answered *no*, and an alarming 12% answered *don’t know*. There is a noticeable contrast between the Methodist Pastors and Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders. The analysis of the data captured the following results: 100% of the Pastors responded *yes*, while 40% of the Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders responded *yes*. Conversely, 20% responded *no*, and 40% responded *don’t know*.

This researcher finds it alarming that there are Pastors and Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders who do not know whether *sola fide* is present in their worship. *Sola fide*, or “Faith Alone,” is a critical difference between Protestantism and Catholicism. It also differentiates the biblical Christian faith from other religions. A church that does not preach and sing about “Faith Alone” could easily end up in error. Those who do not accept *sola fide* not only err from the Gospel, but they relegate faith to a doctrine of secondary importance. *Sola fide* is not only important to Reformation, but it is important to today’s church because it puts everything in its proper place. *Sola fide* reminds the believer that there is nothing that he can do of his own merit to be justified before God. Through “Faith Alone,” man is justified and can stand in God’s presence. Therefore, it should always have preeminence in the preaching and singing of all worship communities.

**Table 20. Responses to Survey Question 1 on the presence of “Faith Alone” in preaching and music**

Faith Alone (Senior Pastors)	Yes	No	Don't Know	Faith Alone (Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders)	Yes	No	Don't Know
Baptist	27	4	0	Baptist	25	2	6
Methodist	3	0	0	Methodist	2	1	2
Pentecostal (Trinitarian)	2	0	0	Pentecostal (Trinitarian)	3	1	0
Pentecostal (Oneness)	4	0	0	Pentecostal (Oneness)	1	0	0
Non-Denominational	5	2	1	Non-Denominational	4	1	0
Other	2	0	0	Other	0	1	1
Total	43	6	1	Total	35	6	9

A Pearson correlation test reveals that there is a significant correlation between the answers of the Pastors and the Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders at 0.05 level and 0.01 level. Table 21 shows the results of the analysis.

**Table 21. Results of the correlation test by groups on the presence of “Faith Alone” in preaching and music**

	Pastors	Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders
Survey Question 1: Is the Reformation tenet “Faith Alone” evident in your church’s preaching and music? (Senior Pastors)	1	.980**
Sig. (2-tailed)		<.001
Survey Question 1: Is the Reformation tenet “Faith Alone” evident in your church’s preaching and music? (Minister of Music/Worship Leader)	.980**	1
Sig (2-tailed)	<.001	

Survey Question 2: Is the Reformation tenet “Christ Alone” evident in your church’s preaching and music? *Solus Christus* is the center of the five *solae*. It is this *sola* that connects all the *solae* together. From this *sola*, the doctrine of Christ has evolved through the Reformation and sustains the modern church in its worship of the center of the Godhead, the Lord Jesus Christ. Through *solus Christus*, the church places Christ at the center of the church. Of the fifty participating Senior Pastors, forty-five answered *yes* to the presence of “Christ Alone” in their

preaching. Five pastors responded *no* to the question. Of the Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders, thirty-nine responded *yes*, 4 responded *no*, and 7 responded *don't know*. The mean for the answers of Senior Pastors is 7.50, and the standard deviation is 10.63485. The mean for the answers of the Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders is 6.00, and the standard deviation is 9.89949. According to Neil Salkind, “The mean is simply the sum of all the values in a group, divided by the number of values in that group.”<sup>2</sup> The other test run on the data by the researcher is the standard deviation test. “The standard deviation represents the average amount of variability in a set of scores.”<sup>3</sup> The mean is important because it allows the researcher to comprehend the tendency of the research group. It gives a snapshot of the general consensus of the investigated data group. In this research, the standard deviation is important as it allows the researcher to understand how spread out the data or responses are. If the standard deviation is high, it means, on average, that there is a distance between the mean and the responses to the question. The statistical data results of Survey Question 2 are captured in table 22.

**Table 22. Statistical Results to Survey Question 2 regarding the presence of “Christ Alone” in preaching and music**

Senior Pastors	Mean	Standard Deviation
Yes	7.5000	10.63485
No	.8333	.98319
Don't Know	.0000	.0000
Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders		
Yes	6.0000	9.89949
No	.6667	.81650
Don't Know	1.1667	2.04124

Once again, there is a noticeable disparity among the answers of the Baptists. Among the Pastors, 93.5% responded *yes*, and 6.4% answered *no* to the presence of *solus Christus* in their

<sup>2</sup> Salkind, *Statistics for People Who Think They Hate Statistics*, 22.

<sup>3</sup> Salkind, *Statistics for People Who Think They Hate Statistics*, 44.

preaching. The responses among the Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders are quite different. When answering the question, 78.7% responded *yes*, 6% answered *no*, and an alarming 15% of the Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders responded *don't know*. There is also an interesting discovery in the answers of the Methodists. Seventy-five percent of the Pastors answered *yes*, and 25% answered *no*. A disparity lies with the answers of Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders. Sixty percent responded *yes*, and 40% responded *don't know*. This is deeply concerning as the same group did not answer favorably to the question on *sola fide*. A look at the data from the Pentecostal (Trinitarian) group also brings concern. When responding to the question, the Pentecostal (Trinitarian) Pastors are divided 50/50 regarding the presence of “Christ Alone” in their preaching. The Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders are not quite as divided, as 75% of them responded *yes* and 25% responded *no*. Table 23 reveals the responses of both participant groups to the survey question on the presence of “Christ Alone” in preaching and music.

**Table 23. Responses to Survey Question 2 on the presence of “Christ Alone” in preaching and music**

Christ Alone Senior Pastors	Yes	No	Don't Know	Christ Alone (Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders)	Yes	No	Don't Know
Baptist	29	2	0	Baptist	26	2	5
Methodist	3	1	0	Methodist	3	0	2
Pentecostal (Trinitarian)	2	2	0	Pentecostal (Trinitarian)	3	1	0
Pentecostal (Oneness)	3	0	0	Pentecostal (Oneness)	1	0	0
Non-Denominational	6	0		Non-Denominational	4	1	0
Other	2	0	0	Other	2	0	0
Total	45	5	0	Total	39	4	7

The Pearson Correlation test reveals that there is a significant relationship between the answers of the Senior Pastors and the Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders in regard to the



presence of “Christ Alone” in the preaching and singing of churches in the African American Worship community. The statistical data of the correlation test is represented in table 24.

**Table 24. Results of the correlation test by groups on the presence of “Christ Alone” in preaching and music**

	Pastors	Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders
Survey Question 2: Is the Reformation tenet “Christ Alone” evident in your church’s preaching and music? (Pastor)	1	.975**
Sig. (2-tailed)		<.001
Survey Question 2: Is the Reformation tenet “Christ Alone” evident in your church’s preaching and music? (Minister of Music/Worship Leader)	.975**	1
Sig (2-tailed)	<.001	

Survey Question 3 asks, “Is the Reformation tenet ‘Grace Alone’ evident in your church’s preaching and music?” As discussed in the literature review, the position of the Church in Rome was erroneous as it related to the doctrine of grace. While Rome believed that salvation was a work of grace, they also taught that the sacraments, such as baptism and penance, aided in making one righteous. The goal of *sola gratia* is to remind the believer that salvation is the result of a God who is plenteous in mercy and who extends grace to those who have faith in Jesus. *Sola gratia* is much needed in today’s church culture because the state of man has not changed. Man is still dead in trespasses (Eph. 2:1–3), and man is still under the wrath of God (John 3:36). This double problem is solved in *sola gratia*. In his effort to fix things, man often overlooks the fact that he is helpless and hopeless on his own. *Sola gratia* is needed to remind man that he cannot save himself. The doctrine of grace is a salient reminder that salvation comes from God and God alone. In a day of constant bad news, *sola gratia* is good news.

For this question, the mean for Senior Pastors who have answered is 7.66, with a standard deviation of 10.13246. The analysis of the mean reveals that the central tendency of all Senior

Pastors was to answer *yes*. The high standard deviation number reveals that the responses among the data groups are more spread out. In other words, among the six different groups, the answers vary. The mean for the Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders is 6.00, with a standard deviation of 8.85438. This data reveals that the tendency to answer *yes* is less in this data group. With 12% of the participants answering *no* and another 16% responding *don't know*, this contributes to a high standard deviation as the answers are varied. The statistical data is captured in table 25.

**Table 25. Statistical data of Senior Pastors/Ministers of music on Survey Question 3 regarding the presence of “Grace Alone” in preaching and music**

Senior Pastors	Mean	Standard Deviation
Yes	7.667	10.13246
No	.5000	.8366
Don't Know	1.000	
Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders		
Yes	6.000	8.85438
No	1.000	1.26491
Don't Know	1.3333	2.42212

An analysis of the responses to Survey Question 3 reveals that forty-six Senior Pastors answered *yes*, three answered *no*, and one answered *don't know*. Thirty-six Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders responded *yes*, six responded *no*, and eight responded *don't know*.

**Table 26. Responses to Survey Question 2 on the presence of “Grace Alone” in preaching and music**

Grace Alone Senior Pastors	Yes	No	Don't Know	Grace Alone (Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders)	Yes	No	Don't Know
Baptist	27	4	0	Baptist	24	3	6
Methodist	3	0	0	Methodist	3	0	2
Pentecostal (Trinitarian)	2	0	0	Pentecostal (Trinitarian)	3	1	0
Pentecostal (Oneness)	4	0	0	Pentecostal (Oneness)	1	0	0
Non-Denominational	5	2	1	Non-Denominational	3	2	0
Other	2	0	0	Other	2	0	0
Total	43	6	1	Total	36	6	8

A cursory review of the data reveals inconsistencies in answers among the two groups and some reasons for concern among some of the denominations. There are noticeable differences among the answers of the Baptist Senior Pastors and Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders. It is observed that 87% of the Pastors responded *yes*, and 12% responded *no*. The data so far reveals that there is a noticeable consistency among Baptist Pastors regarding the presence of the *solas* in their preaching. The data shows that 90% of the Pastors acknowledge the presence of *sola fide*, *sola Christus*, and *sola gratia* in their preaching.

The answers among the Baptist Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders are more varied. Of the thirty-three responses from the group, 72.7% answered *yes*, 9% answered *no*, and 18% answered *don't know*. This data is consistent with their responses to the three previous sub-questions on *sola fide*, *solus Christus*, and *sola gratia*. So far in the study, between 15–16% of the Baptist Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders do not know whether the *solas* are present in their music. There is a significant relationship between the answers of the Senior Pastors and the Ministers of Music regarding the presence of *sola gratia* in their preaching and singing. Table 27 shows the relationship. The relationship is significant at .001.

**Table 27. Results of the correlation test by groups on the presence of “Grace Alone” in preaching and music**

	Pastors	Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders
Survey Question 3: Is the Reformation tenet “Grace Alone” evident in your church’s preaching and music?(Pastor)	1	.981
Sig. (2-tailed)		<.001
Survey Question 3: Is the Reformation tenet “Grace Alone” evident in your church’s preaching and music? (Minister of Music/Worship Leader)	.981	1
Sig (2-tailed)	<.001	

The results of a Pearson Correlation test reveal that there is a significant relationship between the answers of Senior Pastors and Ministers of Music/Worship leaders regarding the presence of “Grace Alone” in the preaching and singing in the churches they serve.

Survey Question 4: Is the Reformation tenet “Scripture Alone” evident in your church’s preaching and music? *Sola Scriptura* says to the Church that God’s Word is the final authority in all things. This *sola* is the foundation for all the Church knows about God. The Reformers recognized a falling away from God’s Word. It was their desire to bring the Bible back to the center of the Church and to the forefront of Christianity. *Sola Scriptura* is important to the Church because it is the metric of the faith. This *sola* is also important because it places Scripture above church tradition and the voice of church leadership. Human wisdom is unpredictable, unstable, and compromising. The Word of God is sure, steadfast, and unchangeable. Left to their own devices, church leadership can misinterpret and abuse their place of authority by neglecting Scripture in order to maintain power. They can construct their own ideologies that challenge the truth of God’s Word. *Sola Scriptura* reminds the church that the Word of God is sufficient, infallible, and stands forever.

The data reveals that twenty-seven Senior Pastors acknowledge that the *sola* “Scripture Alone” is present in their preaching. Of the Senior Pastors who responded to the question, four answered *no*. Their counterparts, Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders, had twenty-one to answer *yes*, four to answer *no*, and eight to answer *don’t know*. From a percentile perspective, 88% of the Senior Pastors answered *yes*, and 12% answered *no*. The mean of the Senior Pastor group is 7.3, and the standard deviation is 9.75. The mean indicates that the tendency to answer *yes* is consistent among the Senior Pastors regardless of denomination. However, the Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders results are more varied. Of those who responded, 62% responded *yes*,

22% responded *no*, and 16% responded *don't know*. The *don't know* responses are from the Baptist denomination. Thus far in the research, a pattern has developed among this denomination regarding the presence of the five *solas* in music. In the previous questions, the *don't know* answer percentages are 12% (Faith), 10% (Christ), 12% (Grace), and 16% (Scripture). The only potential rationale the researcher can offer is a misinterpretation of the research question. Whatever the case, it is alarming to discover that the secondary theologians of worship, the Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders, are unable to comprehend the presence of Faith in the music they present to the local church. Table 28 shows the mean and standard deviation for the two participant groups on the survey question referencing the presence of “Scripture Alone” in worship in the preaching and singing.

**Table 28. Statistical Results to Survey Question 4 regarding the presence of “Scripture Alone” in preaching and music**

Senior Pastors	Mean	Standard Deviation
Yes	7.333	9.75021
No	1.0000	1.67332
Don't Know	.0000	.0000
Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders		
Yes	5.1667	7.80812
No	1.6667	1.63299
Don't Know	1.3333	3.26599

Table 29 provides a more comprehensive look at the responses of the two data groups regarding *sola Scriptura*. From this table, a great wealth of information regarding the perceived knowledge of the two groups regarding *sola Scriptura* is revealed.

**Table 29. Responses to Survey Question 4 on the presence of “Scripture Alone” in preaching and music**

Scripture Alone Senior Pastors	Yes	No	Don't Know	Scripture Alone (Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders)	Yes	No	Don't Know
Baptist	27	4	0	Baptist	21	4	8
Methodist	3	0	0	Methodist	2	3	0

Pentecostal (Trinitarian)	2	0	0	Pentecostal (Trinitarian)	3	1	0
Pentecostal (Oneness)	4	0	0	Pentecostal (Oneness)	1	0	0
Non-Denominational	6	2	0	Non-Denominational	3	2	0
Other	2	0	0	Other	1	1	0
Total	44	6	0	Total	31	11	8

The data reveals consistency among the Senior Pastors in the response to the presence of “Scripture Alone” in their preaching. Of the fifty responders, 88% of the pastors responded *yes*, and 12% responded *no*. A closer look at the responses indicates that the Baptist and Non-denominational groups have responders who currently do not preach about Scripture alone. This discovery provides proof of a measurable consistency of the two groups throughout survey question 2. In the previous *sola* questions on faith, Christ, and grace, the answers are mostly the same. The percentages for answering *yes* are 86%, 90%, 92%, and now 88% on the presence of “Scripture Alone” in preaching.

The Minister of Music/Worship Leader responses are much more varied. The answers of this group are a bit skewed since *don't know* is a more frequent answer. When answering *yes*, the percentages are lower than those of the Senior Pastors. Thus far in the research, the Minister of Music/Worship Leader percentages who have responded *yes* is 70% (faith), 72% (Christ), 72% (grace), and 62% for the presence of “Scripture Alone” in music. The percentages for answering *no* remain consistent so far in the research. The research reveals 12% (faith), 8% (Christ), 12% (grace), and 22% (Scripture). The percentages for answering *don't know* among the Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders remains consistent to this point on this survey question. The percentages are 18% (faith), 14% (Christ), 16% (grace), and 16% (Scripture). The data reveals a significant correlation between the answers of the Senior Pastors and Ministers of Music in the presence of “Scripture Alone” in preaching and singing. The data is captured in table 30.

**Table 30. Results of the correlation test by groups on the presence of “Scripture Alone” in preaching and music**

	Pastors	Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders
Survey Question 4: Is the Reformation tenet “Scripture Alone” evident in your church’s preaching and music?(Pastor)	1	.987
Sig. (2-tailed)		<.001
Survey Question 4: Is the Reformation tenet “Scripture Alone” evident in your church’s preaching and music? (Minister of Music/Worship Leader)	.987**	1
Sig (2-tailed)	<.001	

The results of a Pearson Correlation test reveal that there is a significant relationship between the answers of Senior Pastors and Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders regarding the presence of “Scripture Alone” in the preaching and singing in the churches they serve.

Survey Question 5: Is the Reformation tenet “God’s Glory Alone” evident in your church’s preaching and music? *Soli Deo Gloria* is the beginning and the end of the Reformation. This *sola* encapsulates the heart of the Reformation and all the *solas* represent. The Scriptures were inspired by the Holy Spirit to God’s glory. Christ endured the cross and was raised from the dead to the glory of God. The grace of God is extended to the lost for the glory of God. Faith is the conduit to the justification for all to the glory of God. *Soli Deo Gloria* is the central theme of the Reformation and is revealed throughout Scripture. This *sola* reminds the church that nothing should be done for the glory of man. The glory of God is the core of the Gospel and the ultimate goal of all things.

Of the fifty Senior Pastors who participated in the study, forty-seven responded *yes*, and three responded *no* to the presence of “God’s Glory Alone” in preaching. No Senior Pastor

responded *don't know*. The Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders answered quite differently from the Senior Pastors. The participant responses were thirty-six *yes*, five *no*, and nine *don't know*. The mean for the answers of Senior Pastors is 7.83 and a standard deviation of 10.60974. The Ministers of Music/Worship Leader mean is 6.00, and the standard deviation 8.39. This data is captured in table 31.

**Table 31. Statistical Results to Survey Question 5 regarding the presence of “God’s Glory Alone” in preaching and music**

Senior Pastors	Mean	Standard Deviation
Yes	7.8333	10.60974
No	.5000	.83666
Don't Know	.0000	.0000
Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders		
Yes	6.000	8.39047
No	.8333	1.16905
Don't Know	1.5000	2.81069

When looking at the data from a percentage perspective, it is observed that 94% of the responding Senior Pastors acknowledge the subject of “God’s Glory Alone” present in their preaching. Only six percent do not acknowledge preaching about “God’s Glory Alone” in their sermons. When looking at the responses of the Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders, the data reveals a different story. Seventy-two percent responded *yes* to singing about “God’s Glory Alone” in their music. Ten percent of the participants responded *no* to the presence of the theme of “God’s Glory Alone” in the music of their churches. The data further reveals that 18% of the respondents *don't know* whether “God’s Glory Alone” is present in the musical offerings in worship. The only rationale for this high percentage is a misinterpretation of the question. Even if a misunderstanding of the question led to this high percentage, it is alarming to know that nine participants do not know whether they sing



about God’s glory in their worship service. Table 32 reveals a more detailed account of how the participants answered denominationally.

**Table 32. Responses to Survey Question 5 on the presence of “God’s Glory Alone” in preaching and music**

God’s Glory Alone Senior Pastors	Yes	No	Don’t Know	God’s Glory Alone (Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders)	Yes	No	Don’t Know
Baptist	29	2	0	Baptist	23	3	7
Methodist	3	0	0	Methodist	3	0	2
Pentecostal (Trinitarian)	2	0	0	Pentecostal (Trinitarian)	3	1	0
Pentecostal (Oneness)	3	1	0	Pentecostal (Oneness)	1	0	0
Non- Denominational	8	0	0	Non-Denominational	4	1	0
Other	2	0	0	Other	2	0	0
Total	47	3	0	Total	36	5	9

There is very little variety in the answers of the Senior Pastors. The variation in answers exists in two denominations—Baptists and Oneness Pentecostals. In the largest category, the Baptists, twenty-nine answered *yes* to preaching about “God’s Glory Alone.” Only two participants responded that they did not preach *Soli Deo Gloria* in their sermons. Three Oneness Pentecostals acknowledged preaching “God’s Glory Alone.” These three constitute 75% of The Oneness Pentecostals participants. One participant responded *no*, which accounts for the other 25% of the denomination. From observation of the data, it is clear that “God’s Glory Alone” is a tenet of the Reformation being preached among the participants in the study. Conversely, the responses of the Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders are more varied. In the largest participating denomination, the research revealed that twenty-three (74%) responded *yes*, 6 (19%) responded *no*, and 7 (23%) responded that they *don’t know*. This large percentage is alarming. “God’s Glory Alone” is the center of the Christian faith. It is the thread that holds the fabric of Christianity together. All that God has done in creation has been for one express purpose: His

glory. *Soli Deo Gloria* is important to the church because it anchors the church on the tempestuous sea of modernism. Without the anchor of God’s glory, the church will never understand or live out its purpose.

**Table 33. Results of the correlation test by groups on the presence of “God’s Glory Alone” in preaching and music**

	Pastors	Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders
Survey Question 5: Is the Reformation tenet “God’s Glory Alone” evident in your church’s preaching and music?(Pastor)	1	.986
Sig. (2-tailed)		<.001
Survey Question 5: Is the Reformation tenet “God’s Glory Alone” evident in your church’s preaching and music? (Minister of Music/Worship Leader)	.986	1
Sig (2-tailed)	<.001	

The results of a Pearson Correlation test reveal that there is a significant relationship between the answers of Senior Pastors and Ministers of Music/Worship leaders regarding the presence of “God’s Glory Alone” in the preaching and singing in their worship communities. Table 32 shows the test results and shows the relationship at .001.

The data from the five survey questions regarding the five *solas* provides much insight into the sermon topics and song selections in African American worship. While most Senior Pastors acknowledge the presence of the five *solas* in their preaching, it is very evident that such is not the case in the music presentations. The data allows the researcher to conclude that the Senior Pastors use the theological tenets of the five *solas* in 90% of their preaching, 9% of the preaching is devoid of the five *solas*, and less than 1% are not sure if they use any of the five *solas* in their preaching. Conversely, the data of the Ministers of Music/Worship leaders shows that 70% of the music in African American worship contains the themes of faith, Christ, grace, Scripture, and God’s glory. The participants responded that 12.8% of the music does not contain

any tenet from the five *solas*. The most alarming fact is seen in the fact that 16% of the Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders *do not know* if the music they use in worship contains the themes of faith, grace, Christ, Scripture, and God's glory.

The data reveals some consistencies across denominations about the presence of the five *solas* in preaching. All five *solas* are present in the preaching of Methodist, Pentecostal (Trinitarian), and those who responded as *other*. Table 34 captures the consistencies.

**Table 34. Table showing consistencies among Methodist, Pentecostal (Trinitarian), and other participants regarding the presence of the five *solas* in preaching**

	Participant Number	Faith Alone	Christ Alone	Grace Alone	Scripture Alone	God's Glory Alone
Methodist	3	3	3	3	3	3
Pentecostal (Trinitarian)	2	2	2	2	2	2
Other	2	2	2	2	2	2

The data from the Pentecostal (Oneness) group is important to note. There is consistency in three of the four *solas*. The researcher has no rationale for the lack of complete consistency. Table 35 captures the data from this group on the question on the presence of the five *solas* in worship.

**Table 35. The answers of the Pentecostal (Oneness) Senior Pastors**

Faith Alone		Christ Alone		Grace Alone		Scripture Alone		God's Grace Alone	
Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
4	0	3	1	4	0	4		3	1

### Research Question 3

#### **RQ3: Is there a difference among and between African American Pastors and Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders and their perceptions of the African legacy associated with the Protestant Reformation?**

Luther, Calvin, and other Reformers labored to bring the church back to biblical accuracy. With diligence, they strove to eradicate from the church practices and teachings that were not in line with the Bible. In Africa, others were doing the same thing. Africa, especially in the third century of the church, provided the church with a defense against heretical teachings. Tertullian (155–240) fought against gnostic teachings. Athanasius (269–373) championed the cause of fighting false teachings regarding the divinity of Christ. Augustine (345–430) labored in Hippo to present the doctrine of the Trinity. These African theologians, along with the Reformers in Europe, are partially responsible for Protestantism as it is known today. While the contributions of Africans have been monumental, there are many in the African American community who are unaware of these contributions. On the other hand, there are many who are aware of these contributions but do not see the value of sharing this with the African American worship community. It was the desire of this researcher to test the knowledge of Pastors and Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders as it related to the knowledge of what Africans contributed to the theology that undergirded the Reformation. Also, the researcher wanted to understand perceptions of the importance of teaching the Reformation to the African American church community. To accomplish this task, the researcher has used two Likert-type survey questions.

The first question is, “How knowledgeable are you regarding the contributions of Africans to the Protestant Reformation?” The results of these questions are captured in table 32. The research reveals that the majority of Senior Pastors are *somewhat knowledgeable* about the contributions of Africans to the Reformation. The mean for Senior Pastors who answered *very knowledgeable* is 2.50, with a standard deviation of 3.20. The mean for Senior Pastors who responded *somewhat knowledgeable* is 5.16, with a standard deviation of 7.08. The final response, *unknowledgeable*, records a mean of .500 and a standard deviation of 1.22. Their counterparts, the Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders, responded quite differently. The mean of Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders who answered *very knowledgeable* is 2.16, with a standard deviation of 2.13. The mean of Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders who responded *somewhat knowledgeable* is 3.00, and the standard deviation is 5.47. The final response of participants is *unknowledgeable*. The mean for this response is 3.166, and the standard deviation is 4.87.

**Table 36. Statistical Results to Survey Question 1 regarding the knowledge of the contributions of Africans to the Protestant Reformation**

Senior Pastors	Mean	Standard Deviation
Very Knowledgeable	2.50	3.20936
Somewhat Knowledgeable	5.1667	7.08284
Unknowledgeable	.5000	1.22474
Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders		
Very Knowledgeable	2.1667	2.13698
Somewhat Knowledgeable	3.0000	5.47723
Unknowledgeable	3.1667	4.87511

The data reveals the following percentages for Senior Pastors: 30% believe they are *very knowledgeable* about the contributions of Africans to the Protestant Reformation, 62% consider themselves to be *somewhat knowledgeable*, and 8% indicate they are *unknowledgeable*. In a like

manner, the following are percentages for the Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders: 26% answered *very knowledgeable*, 36% responded *somewhat knowledgeable*, and 38% are *unknowledgeable*.

African Christians contributed greatly to the development of Christianity. As previously stated in this study, many of the great theologians who helped shaped Christianity hailed from the continent of Africa. Since there is a great legacy associated with the Reformation, it is important for those who lead the African American worship community to be aware of this legacy. Table 37 reveals the knowledge of the two participant groups about the contributions of Africans to the Protestant Reformation.

**Table 37. Responses to Survey Question 2 on the knowledge of Pastors and Ministers of Music regarding the contributions of Africans to the Protestant Reformation**

Senior Pastors	Very	Somewhat	Unknowledgeable	Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders	Very	Somewhat	Unknowledgeable
Baptist	9	19	3	Baptist	6	14	13
Methodist	1	2	0	Methodist	1	2	2
Pentecostal (Trinitarian)	1	1	0	Pentecostal (Trinitarian)	3	0	1
Pentecostal (Oneness)	1	3	0	Pentecostal (Oneness)	1	0	0
Non-Denominational	2	6	0	Non-Denominational	2	2	1
Other	1	0	0	Other	0	0	2
Total	15	32	3	Total	13	18	19

Within the largest group of participants, the Baptists, the majority of the respondents are *somewhat knowledgeable*. The next group of interest within the denominations is the Non-denominational group. Only 25% of Non-denominational participants are *very knowledgeable* about the contributions of Africans to the Protestant Reformation. Overwhelming, most of this group considers themselves to be *somewhat knowledgeable* at 75%. A review of the answers of the Senior Pastors to Survey Question 2 on how knowledgeable they are regarding the Protestant

Reformation shows contradictions. Fifty-two percent of the Pastors responded that they are *very knowledgeable*, and 48% believe they are *somewhat knowledgeable*. However, when asked about their knowledge of Africans to the Protestant Reformation, the percentages reveal a stark contradiction. Thirty percent of the participants answered that they are *very knowledgeable*, 62% are *somewhat knowledgeable*, and 8% are *unknowledgeable*. Looking at the data of the Baptists, the researcher observes some details of note. On Survey Question 1, testing their knowledge of the Reformation, 36% answered *very knowledgeable* and 26% answered *somewhat knowledgeable*. A comparison of their answers to questions on the contribution of Africans to the Reformation shows a big contradiction. The high percentages (36% and 26%) move to 29% for *very knowledgeable* and 61% for *somewhat knowledgeable*. A big contradiction is noted in the 9%, who now answer that they are *unknowledgeable* of the contributions of Africans to the Reformation. The data leads the researcher to question if the participants are truly aware of the Reformation. Perhaps they are cognizant of the event but not of details associated with Africans who contributed to it.

As it relates to the Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders, the Baptist participant data reveals a different story denominationally. There is a close relationship between those who are *somewhat knowledgeable* and those who are *unknowledgeable*. Forty-two percent of the participants answered *somewhat knowledgeable*, and a close 39% (13 participants) answered *unknowledgeable*. Earlier in the study, this same group answered that they are *very knowledgeable* and *somewhat knowledgeable* of the Protestant Reformation. The percentages for their knowledge of the Reformation are 48% for *somewhat knowledgeable* and 45% for *very knowledgeable*. It is interesting to note that 6% of the participants acknowledge that they are *unknowledgeable* of the Reformation. The first survey question of Research Question 3 reveals

that this number grows when queried about the contributions of Africans to the Protestant Reformation. It is a substantial jump of 33%, as now 39% of the Baptist participants have responded that they are *unknowledgeable*. The best rationale for this increase is that perhaps many are knowledgeable of some of the terms of the Reformation but do not know the details associated with it.



## Research Question 4

### **RQ4: Is there a relationship between African American Pastors and Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders regarding their perceptions of the importance of the Protestant Reformation?**

The Protestant Reformation represents the attempt of the Reformers to bring the church back to biblical faith. Over five hundred years later, the Reformation is still relevant and warrants the attention of all Christians. Reformed theology rooted in the Protestant Reformation informs the Reformed community of its view of God's sovereignty, mercy, and, most importantly, the Gospel. Jemar Tisby states, "One of the frustrating aspects of Reformed theology for black Christians is the fact that many Reformed believers condoned slavery or even were slaveholders themselves."<sup>4</sup> This painful reality has made it difficult for African Americans to embrace the Reformation and Reformed theology. For this cause, black Christians have adopted a *Black Theology*. Anthony J. Carter writes, "This has been made necessary by conservative Christians' failure to grapple with issues of African American history and consciousness."<sup>5</sup> The researcher has used two Likert-type questions to test the perception of Senior Pastors and Ministers of Music regarding the importance of the Reformation and Reformation theology.

Of the participants, thirty-nine Senior Pastors responded that the Reformation was a *very important* occurrence in church history. There are nine Senior Pastors who responded that the Reformation was *somewhat important*, and one participant responded *no opinion*. The answers of

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<sup>4</sup> Jemar Tisby, "Is Reformed Theology for Black People?" Religious News Network, <https://religionnews.com/2017/10/31/is-reformed-theology-for-black-people/>.

<sup>5</sup> Anthony J. Carter, *Black and Reformed: Seeing God's Sovereignty in the African American Christian Experience* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2016), 27.

the Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders are a bit more diverse. Thirty-seven responded *very important*, 11 responded *somewhat important*, 1 responded *not important*, and one responded *no opinion*.

**Table 38. Responses to Survey Question 2 asking the importance of the Reformation to Church History**

Senior Pastors	Very	Somewhat	No	No Opinion	Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders	Very	Somewhat	No	No Opinion
Baptist	25	5	0	1	Baptist	24	8	0	1
Methodist	2	1	0	0	Methodist	2	2	1	
Pentecostal (Trinitarian)	2	0	0	0	Pentecostal (Trinitarian)	4	0	0	0
Pentecostal (Oneness)	2	2	0	0	Pentecostal (Oneness)	1	0	0	0
Non-Denominational	6	1	0	1	Non-Denominational	5	0	0	0
Other	2	0	0	0	Other	1	1	0	0
Total	39	9	0	2	Total	37	11	1	1

When viewing the data from a percentage, it is revealed that 80% of the participating Senior Pastors responded *very important*, 18% responded *somewhat important*, and 2% responded that they have *no opinion/don't know*. The Ministers of Music/Worship Leader percentages are 54% responding *very important*, 22% responding *somewhat important*, 2% percent responded *not important*, and 2% responding *no opinion/don't know*.

The mean for Seniors Pastors who answered the question with *very important* is 6.50. The standard deviation for those answering *very important* is 9.203. The mean for the Senior Pastors responding *somewhat important* is 1.50, with a standard deviation of 1.87. For the two pastors responding *not important* and *no opinion/don't know*, the mean is .3333, and the standard deviation for those two answers is .51640.

The mean for Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders who responded *very important* is 6.166 with a standard deviation of 8.88. The mean for Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders responding *somewhat important* is 1.83, and the standard deviation for this response is 3.12. The mean for Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders who responded *not important* and *no opinion/don't know* is .1667. The standard deviation for both answers is .40825. The high standard deviation results reveal that the answers to the question are spread out.

**Table 39. Statistical Results to Survey Question 2 on Reformation as an important occurrence in church history**

	Mean	Standard Deviation
Very important	6.50	9.203
Somewhat important	1.50	1.871
Not important	.3333	.51640
No Opinion/Don't know	.3333	.51640
Very important	6.1667	8.883
Somewhat important	1.8333	3.125
Not important	.1667	.40825
No Opinion/Don't know	.1667	.40825

The answer among the Senior Pastors is varied. For example, of the thirty-one Baptist Pastors who responded, twenty-five believe the Protestant Reformation is *very important*, five answered it is *somewhat important*, and one responded *no opinion* about the importance of the Protestant Reformation to church history. Variety is furthermore observed in the answers of Methodist, Pentecostal (Oneness), and Non-denominational pastors. Two out of three Methodist pastors responded that the Protestant Reformation is *very important* to church history. The remaining participant believes the Reformation is *somewhat important*. The largest variance in responses is observed in the Non-denominational group. This group, like the Baptists, has three answers. Six participants stated in their answers that the

Protestant Reformation is *very important* to church history, one responded that it is *somewhat important*, and one had *no opinion* or *didn't know* if the Protestant Reformation is an important occurrence in church history.

Of the two groups, Seniors Pastors and Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders, the variety of responses is most apparent in the answers of the Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders. The variance in answers is most observed in the answers of the Baptists and Methodists. Of the thirty-three responding Baptist Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders, twenty-four responded *very important*, eight responded *somewhat important*, and one responded *no opinion/don't know*. The answers from the Methodist Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders reveal more variety. When responding to survey question two on the importance of the Reformation to church history, two Methodist Ministers of Music/Worship leaders responded *very important*, and two responded *somewhat important*. One participant responded *not important*. Looking at the responses from the percentage view, the data shows that 40% answered *very important*, 40% answered *somewhat important*, and 20% responded *no opinion/don't know*.

Overall, the data reveals that more Senior Pastors than Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders view the Protestant Reformation as an important occurrence in church history. However, the difference between the two groups is not substantial. The percentages reveal that 78% of the Senior Pastors answered *very important* as opposed to the 74% who responded as Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders. There is another close relationship between the two participant groups on their views of the importance of the Reformation.

Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders (22%) view the Reformation as *somewhat important* in comparison to 18% of Senior Pastors. Overall, the vast majority of participants view the Reformation as either *very important* or *somewhat important*.

The data shows a significant correlation among and between Seniors Pastors and Ministers of Music regarding their view of the Protestant Reformation. The analysis using the SPSS software is captured in table 40.

**Table 40. Results from Pearson Correlations Test for Survey Question 1**

	Pastors	Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders
Survey Question 1: Do you believe the Protestant Reformation was an important occurrence in church history? (Senior Pastors)	1	.992
Sig. (2-tailed)		<.001
Survey Question 1: Do you believe the Protestant Reformation was an important occurrence in church history? (Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders)	.992	1
Sig (2-tailed)	<.001	

While the Reformation was a religious dispute, the heart of the dispute was theology. Reformed theology is a term used to identify the common theological convictions held by the Reformers. Even though many of the Reformers had varied views and beliefs, they were unified in their disdain for the doctrine and teachings of Catholicism. As reflected in the five *solas*, they embraced a high view of Scripture and concluded that the Scriptures alone were enough to guide believers in faith and practice. Moreover, they concluded that the Scriptures prove that man is justified by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone. In Survey Question 2, the researcher sought to understand how Reformation theology is viewed by

African American Senior Pastors and Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders. Using a Likert scale, the researcher has posed the question, “How do you view Reformation theology?” The participants were asked to respond either *very important*, *somewhat important*, *not important*, or *no opinion/don’t know*. Table 41 captures the answers of the two participant groups regarding their views on Reformation theology.

**Table 41. Breakdown of answers by participants and denomination on the view of the importance of Reformation theology**

Senior Pastors	Very	Somewhat	No	No Opinion	Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders	Very	Somewhat	No	No Opinion
Baptist	18	11	1	1	Baptist	15	16	0	2
Methodist	2	1	0	0	Methodist	1	3	0	1
Pentecostal (Trinitarian)	2	0	0	0	Pentecostal (Trinitarian)	2	2	0	0
Pentecostal (Oneness)	1	3	0	0	Pentecostal (Oneness)	1	0	0	0
Non-Denominational	4	3	1	0	Non-Denominational	3	2	0	0
Other	2	0	0	0	Other	1	0	0	1
Total	29	18	2	1	Total	23	23	0	3

The data reveals that many Senior Pastors view Reformation theology as *very important*. Twenty-nine Senior Pastors answered that they view Reformation theology as *very important*. Eighteen of the participating pastors view Reformation theology as *somewhat important*. Only one Senior Pastor responded *not important* in regard to their view of Reformation, and one had *no opinion/did not know*. When analyzing the data using percentages, the data indicates that 58% of the participating Senior Pastors view Reformation theology as *very important*. Also, 36% view Reformation theology as *somewhat important*, 2% answered *not important*, and 2% had *no opinion/don’t know*. When analyzing the

Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders' answers, it is observed that twenty-three Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders view Reformation theology as *very important*. In a like manner, twenty-three of the participants responded *somewhat important* when asked about their view of Reformed theology. No participants responded *not important*; however, four Ministers of Music/Worship leaders answered *no opinion/don't know*. The percentages for the responses are 46% for *very important*, 46% for *somewhat important*, and 8% for *no opinion/don't know*.

A cursory view of the data collected from Senior Pastors by denomination shows that there are various views regarding the importance of Reformation theology. The largest group, the Baptists, are very divided on their views. While eighteen participants view Reformation theology as *very important*, eleven responded *somewhat important*, one responded *not important*, and one responded *no opinion/don't know*. The data reveals reasons for concern as 58% of Baptist Pastors believe Reformation theology is *very important*, and 35% view Reformation theology as *somewhat important*. Of the Methodist pastors, 66% view Reformation theology as *very important*, and 33% view Reformation theology as *somewhat important*. Of the third largest participants, Non-denominational pastors, 50% embrace Reformation theology as *very important*, 37.5% say Reformation theology is *somewhat important*, and 12.5% place no value on Reformation theology as they have answered it is *not important*. The data reveals that half of the denominational Pastors fully embrace Reformation theology and half of them are divided in their views. Another group of concern is the Oneness Pentecostals. Seventy-five percent of the responding

participants do not hold a high value of Reformation theology as three out of four responded *somewhat important* when queried about the importance of Reformation theology. The Pentecostals (Trinitarian) and the participants who identify themselves as others all responded *very important* to the question about the importance of Reformation theology.

The answers of the Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders reveal that this group has very similar views regarding Reformation theology. Of the fifty participants, twenty-three responded *very important*, and twenty-three responded *somewhat important*. The remaining four responded *no opinion/don't know*. The responses from a percentage view are 46% (*very important*), 46% (*somewhat important*), and 8% (*no opinion/don't know*). The largest participant group, the Baptists, are very divided in their views. Of the thirty-three participants, fifteen view Reformation theology as *very important*, and sixteen view Reformation theology as *somewhat important*. The two remaining participants responded *no opinion/don't know*. The percentage view is 45% *very important*, 48% *somewhat important*, and 6% *no opinion/don't know*. The Non-denominational group is divided in its answers. Three (60%) responded *very important* and two (40%) view Reformation theology as *somewhat important*. The Methodists, like the Baptists, are very divided in their views of Reformation theology. Twenty percent responded that Reformation theology is *very important*, 60% *somewhat important*, and 20% *no opinion/don't know*.



The mean for Senior Pastors who view Reformation theology as very important is 4.83; however, the mean for the Ministers of Music is lower at 3.833. The statistical data for the responses to the question are captured in table 42.

**Table 42. Survey statistics for Senior Pastors/Ministers of Music for Survey Question 7**

Senior Pastors	Mean	Standard Deviation
Very important	4.833	6.524
Somewhat important	3.000	4.147
Not important	0.000	0.000
No Opinion/Don't know	.3333	.51640
Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders		
Very important	3.833	5.528
Somewhat important	3.833	6.080
Not important	0.000	0.000
No Opinion/Don't know	.666	.8165

The data shows a significant correlation among and between the Senior Pastors and Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders regarding their views on the importance of Reformation theology. The analysis using the SPSS software is captured in table 43.

**Table 43. Results from Pearson Correlations Test for Survey Question 7**

	Pastors	Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders
How do you view Reformation theology? (Senior Pastors)	.997	1
Sig. (2-tailed)		<.001
How do you view Reformation theology? (Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders)	.997	1
Sig (2-tailed)	<.001	

There are noticeable similarities in the responses of Baptist Senior Pastors and Ministers of Music Worship Leaders. The data reveals that 58% of the Senior Pastors view Reformation

theology as *very important*, and 45% of the Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders responded in a like manner. There is cause for concern when 35% of the Senior Pastors view Reformation theology as *somewhat important*. Reformation theology is important to the worship community as theology, whether good or bad, shapes the church's view of God and, ultimately, how He is worshiped. The concern deepens when observing the answers of the Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders. Forty-eight percent of the participants view Reformation theology as *somewhat important*, and 6% of the participants have *no opinion/don't know*. If the Senior Pastors and Ministers of Music/Worship do not view Reformation theology as important, this contributes to the deficiency in deep theology in many churches. Table 44 captures the similarities among the Baptist participants regarding their views of Reformation theology.

**Table 44. Table showing similarities among Baptist Senior Pastors/Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders regarding their views of Reformation theology**

Baptist	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important	No Opinion/Don't Know
Senior Pastors	18	11	1	1
Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders	15	16	0	2

Some African Americans are reluctant to embrace Reformed theology because of the connection to chattel slavery in America. While most slave owners were members of Reformed churches, it is important to note that slavery was not the first time Africans encountered Reformed theology. Earlier in this research project, African theologians such as Tertullian, Augustine, and Origen are discussed as contributors to Christian thought. Beginning in the first century and continuing to the third century, these theologians were on the front line defending the church against heresy and false teaching. The works of these theologians later inspired the Reformers and aided them in their quest to bring the church back to God. It is myopic to consider the Reformation without African contributions. Unfortunately, most African

American Christians do not view the Reformation as a part of their religious heritage. Consequently, this important religious occurrence goes unnoticed and undiscussed. This research has used a Likert-type question to gather information on the perception and view of Senior Pastors and Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders regarding the legacy and importance of teaching it to the African American worship community. The participants used *strongly agree*, *agree*, or *no opinion* to respond to the question. The breakdown of answers is captured in the following table 45.

**Table 45. Breakdown of answers from Senior Pastors and Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders regarding the Reformation being a part of African heritage and worthy of being taught in the African American Worship community**

Senior Pastors	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion
Baptist	23	7	1	Baptist	19	10	4
Methodist	3	0	0	Methodist	3	2	0
Pentecostal (Trinitarian)	2	0	0	Pentecostal (Trinitarian)	2	2	0
Pentecostal (Oneness)	1	2	1	Pentecostal (Oneness)	1	0	0
Non-Denominational	3	5	0	Non-Denominational	3	1	1
Other	1	1	0	Other	0	1	1
Total	33	15	2	Total	28	16	6

Thirty-three Senior Pastors responded *strongly agree* to the statement that the Reformation is a part of African legacy and should be taught to the African American worship community. Fifteen Senior Pastors *agree* that the Reformation is a part of African legacy and should be taught to the African American worship community. Two participants

acknowledge *no opinion* to the statement that the Reformation is a part of African legacy and should be taught to the African American worship community.

An analysis of the responses of the Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders reveals that twenty-eight Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders *strongly agree* that the Reformation is a part of African legacy and should be taught to the African American worship community. Sixteen of the fifty participants answered that they *agree* that the Reformation is part of African legacy and should be taught to the African American worship community. Six participants had *no opinion* regarding the statement that the Reformation is a part of African legacy and should be taught to the African American worship community. From a percentage view, it is observed that 56% *strongly agree* with the Reformation being a part of the African legacy and should be taught to the worship community, 32% *agree*, and 12% have *no opinion*.

**Table 46. Statistical data of Senior Pastors and Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders for the statement regarding African legacy and teaching it to the African American Worship community**

	Mean	Standard Deviation
Strongly Agree	5.50	8.619
Agree	2.50	2.880
No Opinion	.333	.5164
Strongly Agree	4.667	7.118
Agree	2.667	3.669
No Opinion	1.000	1.549

The results of a Pearson Correlation test reveals that there is a significant relationship between the answers of Senior Pastors and Ministers of Music/Worship leaders regarding their views of the African legacy associated with the Reformation and their opinion that it

should be taught to the African American worship community. The relationship is significant at the .001 level. The results of the correlation test are captured in Table 47.

**Table 47. Results of the Pearson correlation test observing the relationship between Pastors/Ministers of Music regarding African legacy associated with the legacy and if it should be taught to the African American worship community**

	Pastors	Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders
Statement: The Protestant Reformation is a part of our African legacy and should be taught to our worship community.	1	.997
Sig. (2-tailed)		<.001
Statement: The Protestant Reformation is a part of our African legacy and should be taught to our worship community.	.997	1
Sig (2-tailed)	<.001	

When looking at the data denominationally, the researcher observes that the largest group, the Baptists, show noticeable agreement with the statement. Twenty-three Baptist pastors *strongly agree* with the statement that the Reformation is a part of the African legacy and should be taught to the African American worship community. Seven Pastors answered *agree*, and one pastor had *no opinion*. The percentages for the responses of the Baptist Senior Pastors are 74% *strongly agree*, 22.5% *agree*, and 3% *no opinion*. The second largest group, the Non-denominational participants, are divided in their responses. Three responded *strongly agree*, and five responded *agree*. The percentages here are 37.5% *strongly agree*, and 63.5% *agree*. According to the data, the Pentecostals (Oneness) are very divided in their responses. One responded *strongly agree*, and one had *no opinion*. Two of the four

participants answered *agree*. The percentages are 50% *agree*, 25% *strongly agree*, and 25% have *no opinion*.

There is clearly a variety of answers among the Senior Pastors and Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders. Sixty-six percent of the Senior Pastors *strongly agree* that the Reformation is a part of African legacy and believe it should be taught to the African American worship community. On the other hand, 56% of the Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders *strongly agree* with the statement. A similarity exists between the answers of the two groups, as 32% of both groups *agree* with the statement that the Reformation is a part of the African legacy and should be taught to the African American worship community. It is a concern of this researcher, however, the number of participants from both groups who have *no opinion* regarding the statement. Four percent of Senior Pastors and 12% of Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders have *no opinion* on the question. These numbers are concerning as these two groups together lead the congregation in worship. A closer view of the research shows that the two groups both believe the Reformation to be an important occurrence in church history. Seventy-eight percent of Senior Pastors and 74% of Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders respond *very important* that the Protestant Reformation was an important occurrence in Church history. It is interesting, however, to note that the two groups differ in their knowledge of the contributions of Africans to the Reformation. The answers of the Senior Pastors indicate this group to be more knowledgeable about the subject than Ministers of Music. Thirty percent are *very knowledgeable*, 62% are *somewhat knowledgeable*, and 8% are *unknowledgeable*. The Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders data

reveals that 26% are *very knowledgeable*, 36% are *somewhat knowledgeable*, and 38% are *unknowledgeable* regarding the contributions of Africans to the Protestant Reformation.

The data reveals inconsistencies in views and perceptions regarding the importance of the African American church community. While 78% of the Senior Pastors acknowledge that Reformation is *important* to church history, only 58% of them view Reformation theology as *very important*. Of those surveyed, 74% of the Ministers of Music/Worship leaders answered that the Reformation is a *very important* occurrence in church history, but they are very divided on how they view Reformation theology. An analysis of the data reveals that 46% view Reformation theology as *very important* and 46% view Reformation theology as *somewhat important*. This inconsistency reveals why the theological tenets of the Reformation may be absent in the music of African American congregations.

The data also reveals inconsistencies in the responses of the Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders regarding their knowledge of the Reformation and their knowledge of African contributions. Table 48 demonstrates the inconsistencies.

**Table 48. Comparison of Minister of Music/Worship Leader responses to two important questions regarding their knowledge of the Reformation**

Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders	Very	Somewhat	Unknowledgeable
How knowledgeable are you about the Protestant Reformation?	13	18	19
How knowledgeable are you regarding the contributions of Africans to the Protestant Reformation?	26	24	0

The Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders responded inconsistently to questions that tested their knowledge of the Reformation. Thirty-eight percent of the participants

responded that they were *unknowledgeable* about the Reformation. However, all participants acknowledged some level of knowledge of the contributions of Africans to the Protestant Reformation. When asked about their knowledge of the contributions of Africans to the Protestant Reformation, 52% responded *very knowledgeable*, and 48% responded *somewhat knowledgeable*. A cursory view of the percentages derived from these answers reveal deeply concerning inconsistencies. Table 49 shows a comparison of the answers of the Senior Pastors and Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders regarding their knowledge of the Reformation and the contributions of Africans.

**Table 49. Table comparing the answers of Senior Pastors on Survey Question regarding their knowledge of the Reformation and their knowledge about African contributions to the Reformation**

Senior Pastors	Very	Somewhat	Unknowledgeable
How knowledgeable are you about the Protestant Reformation?	26	24	0
How knowledgeable are you regarding the contributions of Africans to the Protestant Reformation?	15	31	4



The data reveals both consistencies and inconsistencies in the answers of the Senior Pastors. For example, 52% of the Senior Pastors claim to be *very knowledgeable* about the Protestant Reformation, but only 30% are *somewhat knowledgeable* about the contributions of Africans to the Protestant Reformation. This is a noticeable inconsistency among this group. There are noticeable consistencies also. The answers regarding the five *solas* being present in preaching are very consistent. The percentages for the answers are faith (86%), Christ (90%), grace (92%), Scripture (88%), and God's glory (94%).

The data also shows noticeable inconsistencies in the answers of the Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders on some of the survey questions. Of the responding Ministers of Music, 54% profess to be *very knowledgeable* about the Reformation, but only 26% are knowledgeable of the contributions of Africans. Furthermore, they view the Reformation as an important occurrence in church history as 74% of them answered *very important*. However, they are not committed to the idea of teaching the African legacy to the worship community as only 56% of them advocate it being taught.

Table 50 shows a comparison of the answers given by the Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders regarding their knowledge of the Protestant Reformation and their knowledge about African contributions to the Reformation. A view of the data shows that there are noticeable inconsistencies.

**Table 50. Table comparing the answers of the Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders on Survey Questions regarding their knowledge of the Reformation and their knowledge about African contributions to the Reformation**

Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders	Very	Somewhat	Unknowledgeable
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How knowledgeable are you about the Protestant Reformation?	27	19	4
How knowledgeable are you regarding the contributions of Africans to the Protestant Reformation?	13	18	19

The data reveals that 54% percent of the responding Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders state that they are *very knowledgeable* about the Protestant Reformation; however, only 26% of them are *somewhat knowledgeable* of the contributions Africans made to the Reformation. The inconsistency lies in the fact that a large amount of them claim to be *very knowledgeable*, but a small portion of the participants are somewhat knowledgeable of African contributions. It is most alarming that 38% of this participant group are *unknowledgeable* about the contributions of African Americans to the Reformation.

The inconsistencies in the perception of the Reformation abound more in a comparison of the answers of the participant groups on the questions of the Reformation being an important occurrence in church history and it being taught to the African American worship community. Table 51 captures the data for a comparison of the answers to these two questions.

**Table 51. Table comparing the answers of the Senior Pastors on Survey Questions regarding the importance of the Reformation to church history, African legacy, and should it be taught to the African American worship community**

Senior Pastors				
Do you believe the Protestant Reformation was an important occurrence in church history?	Very	Somewhat	Not Important	No Opinion
	39	9	0	2
	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	

The Protestant Reformation is a part of our African legacy and should be taught to our worship community.	33	15	2	
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The data reveals that 78% of the Seniors Pastors believe that the Protestant Reformation was an important occurrence in church history; however, 66% of them believe it is a part of their African heritage and should be taught to the African American worship community. A comparison of the answers of the largest participant denomination shows that most Baptist Senior Pastors believe the Reformation to be a part of the African legacy, but the same number do not view it as an important occurrence in church. Table 52 shows the comparison of their responses.

**Table 52. Table comparing the answers of the Senior Pastors on Survey Questions regarding the importance of the Reformation to church history, African legacy, and should it be taught to the African American worship community**

Baptist Senior Pastors				
Do you believe the Protestant Reformation was an important occurrence in church history?	Very	Somewhat	Not Important	No Opinion
	25	5	0	1
The Protestant Reformation is a part of our African legacy and should be taught to our worship community.	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	
	33	15	2	

In a similar manner, there are inconsistencies in the perceptions of the Baptist denomination within the Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders. Twenty-four participants (72%) agree that the Protestant Reformation was an important occurrence, but they do not *strongly agree* that it is a part of African legacy and should be taught to the African American worship community. Nineteen participants (57.5%) *strongly agree* that it is a part

of African legacy and should be taught to the African American worship community. Ten (30%) of the Baptist Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders *agree* that it is a part of the African legacy and should be taught to the African American worship community. This number is very similar to the eight (12%) who believe the Protestant Reformation was a *somewhat important* occurrence in church history. The data for this comparison is captured in table 53.

**Table 53. Table comparing the answers of the Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders on Survey Questions regarding the importance of the Reformation to church history, African legacy and should it be taught to the African American worship community**

Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders				
Do you believe the Protestant Reformation was an important occurrence in church history?	Very	Somewhat	Not Important	No Opinion
	24	8	0	1
The Protestant Reformation is a part of our African legacy and should be taught to our worship community.	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree
	19	10	4	

The data reveals that there is an inconsistency among the Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders regarding their knowledge of the Protestant Reformation. Table 54 shows the inconsistency through a comparison of survey questions.

**Table 54. Table showing the inconsistencies in answers among Senior Pastors/Ministers of Music when answering Survey Questions on their knowledge of the Reformation, the 95 disputations and the five solas**

How knowledgeable are you about the Protestant Reformation?	Very knowledgeable	Somewhat Knowledgeable	Unknowledgeable
	27	19	4
Do you know what the 95 disputations are?	Yes	No	
	33	17	
Do you know what the five <i>solas</i> are?	27	23	

The data shows that 81% percent (twenty-seven) participants claim to be *very knowledgeable* about the Protestant Reformation, 57% (nineteen) are *somewhat knowledgeable*, and 12% (four) of the participants are *unknowledgeable*. Furthermore, 66% (thirty-three) say *yes* to knowing what the Ninety-Five Theses are, and 34% say *no* to knowing what the Ninety-Five Theses are. There are inconsistencies regarding the knowledge of the Ninety-Five Theses and the five *solas*.

The data analysis reveals that 54% (twenty-seven participants) are *very knowledgeable* about the Reformation and the five *solas* are. In contrast, 66% (thirty-three participants) know what the Ninety-Five Theses are.

A closer look at the data reveals that there are some similarities in how the largest denomination answers the two questions regarding the Ninety-Five Theses and the five *solas*. The data shows 66% (twenty-two participants) answered *yes* to knowing what the Ninety-Five Theses are, and 51% (seventeen participants) answered *yes* to knowing what the five *solas* are.

### Conclusion

The Protestant Reformation is a very important church history event as it signals the beginning of a substantial change in the form and function of the Church. Though it began in Europe, the Reformation included historic African theological and ecclesiastical influences. The data reveals that relationships exist between and among the Senior Pastors and Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders of the African American church regarding their knowledge of the Protestant Reformation. The data analysis also shows a major contrast in the perception of the

Senior Pastors and Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders regarding the presence of the five *solas* in the preaching and music in their churches. The two groups differ in their view of the Reformation as a part of the African legacy and warrants being taught to the African American worship community. Both Senior Pastors and Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders agree that the Protestant Reformation is an important occurrence in church history. The data reveals that the two groups differ in their views of the importance of Reformation theology.

## Chapter 5: Conclusions

The Protestant Reformation is the most significant event in Christendom since the church's founding at Pentecost. Hundreds of years had passed since the Spirit of God was poured out on early believers as they embraced the Gospel. Since then, the church has drifted into error and needed to return to the simplicity of the Gospel. To accomplish this, God moved on the hearts of devout Christians who desired to see the church return to the Bible. Unfortunately, even though today most African American Christians are Protestant, most are unknowledgeable of the Reformation and its African legacy. This study was designed to test the knowledge and perceptions of African American Senior Pastors and Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders.

This chapter presents conclusions from the research findings, highlights the limitations of the study, and offers suggestions for future studies. The findings can also aid the African American worship community in their efforts to see believers grow in the knowledge of Jesus Christ and prepare for His glorious return in splendor and majesty.

### Summary of the Study

Bringing the Protestant Reformation to the forefront of African American worship is the primary focus of this study. While the Reformation is a significant event in church history, many African American Christians are unaware of what the Reformation means to the church. Furthermore, they are unknowledgeable of the contributions of Africans to Christianity. The lack of knowledge on both fronts is a significant concern. The study employed a survey tool to ascertain data from Seniors Pastors and Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders of various churches representative of the black church in America. It is important to focus on these two positions because they are two transmitters of theology in the worship community. The survey was quantitative, and a robust literature review was analyzed and captured as a qualitative

component, thus making this research project a mixed methods study. By using both approaches, the researcher obtained a broader view of the knowledge of the Reformation from the eyes of both scholars and theologians as well as Seniors Pastors and Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders today .

### Overview of the Problem

Over five hundred years ago, the Protestant Reformation changed Christendom forever. From the Reformation came five foundational truths that should guide the orthopraxy (beliefs and teachings) and the church's orthodoxy (practices). Unfortunately, as five hundred years have passed, significant segments of the Church have faltered in their theological conviction. Theological foundations have been desecrated and abandoned as the Church seeks to be relevant and responsive to culture. Consequently, the Reformation and much of what it represents are relatively unknown in the African American worship community. Most worshipers do not know what the Protestant Reformation is, and they are surprisingly ignorant of what people of African descent have contributed to it. Moreover, they have no appreciation for this significant church event and do not appear to be interested in it.

### Purpose Statement

This research project explores the knowledge of the Protestant Reformation within the African American worship community. The study tests the knowledge of the Senior Pastor and Minister of Music/Worship Leader. Furthermore, the study evaluates the perceptions of these two important leadership figures of the church staff regarding the importance of the Reformation and its value to the African American worship community.



### Research Questions

RQ1. What is the relationship between African American Pastors and Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders regarding their knowledge of the Protestant Reformation?

RQ2. Is there a significant relationship among and between African American Pastors and Ministers of Music/Worship leaders on the perception of the five *solas* being present in African American Worship?

RQ3. Is there a difference among and between African American Pastors and Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders and their perceptions of the African legacy associated with the Protestant Reformation?

RQ4. Is there a relationship among and between African American Pastors and Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders in regard to their perceptions of the importance of teaching the Protestant Reformation to the African American worship community?

### Review of Methodology

After receiving IRB approval for this project, the researcher publicized the survey via social media, emails, and personal invitations. A specialized survey tool was developed using Google Forms. The researcher created and distributed the survey via text, email, and Facebook. Participants all received a link that directed them to the survey. All participants were anonymous, and there is no way to identify any participants from their responses.

Upon receiving the targeted participant goal for both participant groups, the researcher analyzed the quantitative data using SPSS. A second coder aided the researcher by refining the findings. The data from the two participant groups (Senior Pastors and Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders) were separated into distinct documents. The answers were analyzed separately and compared to allow each data set to inform the other. Within the two participant groups, the various denominations were separated and compared.

### Overview of the Sample

The sample for the study consists of fifty Senior Pastors and fifty Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders. All participants are at least 18 years of age and serve as either Senior Pastor or Minister of Music/Worship Leader in a Protestant African American church. The sample consists of Baptists (31), Methodists (3), Pentecostals: Trinitarian (2), Pentecostal: Oneness (4), Non-denominational (8), and others (2).

### Data Collection

The researcher developed a survey for the study as one did not previously exist. The researcher developed and edited the survey questions in preparation for data collection. The researcher sought the advice and counsel of colleagues to ensure the necessary data for the study would be captured. The data collection phase for the survey began on June 6, 2022, and ended on July 8, 2022.

A graphic was designed and populated to advertise and generate interest in the study. The graphic was posted on social media outlets, texted, and emailed to potential participants. In addition, all the survey data was collected using Google Forms.

### Analysis

The data for the two participant groups (Senior Pastor and Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders) were compiled. Next, the researcher organized and prepared the data for analysis. The preparation included downloading the data from Google Forms and exporting it to an Excel spreadsheet. After careful review, the data was coded in IBM SPSS 19 software. Finally, the researcher developed one database for the study. The first part of the database consists of

demographic and survey consent information. This also includes the position or role of the participant in the local church.

The responses from the two participant groups were separated and tallied. An experienced coder assisted with the coding and analysis process. The researcher carefully examined the data from the survey. Measures were put in place to ensure accuracy and limit mistakes. The researcher generated themes and descriptions to capture the data findings.

### Synopsis of Major Findings

The findings reveal similarities in the knowledge of the Reformation among Senior Pastors and Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders. The knowledge is basic in regard to the historical aspect. The major differences exist in their knowledge of specific details, such as the Ninety-Five Theses.

Senior Pastors and Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders are very divided on their perceptions of the five *solas* being present in the preaching and music of the African American church community. The Senior Pastors appear intentional about presenting the *solas* in their preaching. The results of the Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders lead the researcher to surmise that this participant group is not focused on presenting five essential tenets captured in the Reformation.

The study reveals a strong relationship between the Senior Pastors and the Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders regarding their knowledge of the contributions of Africans to the Reformation. Both groups have limited knowledge of the contributions, and the knowledge is low.

Furthermore, the study reveals that the Senior Pastors view the Reformation as a part of the African legacy and believe it should be taught to the African American worship community. However, the Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders do not share this same view. Therefore, this group is very divided among themselves on this topic.

### Unexpected Findings

The first unexpected finding is that Senior Pastors and Ministers of Music/Leaders do not know whether the five *solas* are present in their churches' worship. Another unexpected finding is the lack of knowledge regarding the legacy of African contributions to the Reformation. Both groups are unknowledgeable, but the Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders are especially unknowledgeable. Of the two groups, this group had the largest number of participants who answered *unknowledgeable* to this question.

The lack of denominational response is a major unexpected finding. With the vast denominational landscape of the African American worship community, it is surprising to observe the lack of responses. Baptists' responses to participate in the study were exceptional, but the other denominations did not participate at the same level.

Another unexpected finding is that both groups agree that the Reformation was important in church history but differ on whether it should be taught to the African American worship community.

### **RQ1: What is the relationship between African American Pastors and Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders regarding their knowledge of the Protestant Reformation?**

The Protestant Reformation was a very significant event in church history. All denominations, regardless of ethnicity, should have a basic knowledge of the Reformation. Since

the Senior Pastors and Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders play an important role in shaping the congregation's theology, their knowledge of the Reformation is vitally important.

This question was answered using five survey questions. According to the answers to the first survey question, the majority of both participant groups (Seniors Pastors and Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders) are knowledgeable of what it means to be *Protestant*. Most Senior Pastors affirm this knowledge. It is concerning, however, to observe that not all Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders seem to know what it means to be *Protestant*. The unknowledgeable participants are from the Baptist denomination, representing the largest participant group in the study.

The second survey question sought to gauge the participants' overall knowledge of the Protestant Reformation. The answers reveal a close relationship between the two participant groups as the two groups contend to be *very knowledgeable* about the Reformation. While the majority of both groups believe themselves to be *very knowledgeable*, the data reveals that many participants are only *somewhat knowledgeable*. If the Reformation is to become a part of the consciousness of the African American worship community, the Senior Pastors and Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders must increase their knowledge by researching and studying Protestant Reformation history. If the history of the Reformation is to find a place in this worship community, the Senior Pastors and Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders must introduce it.

The Protestant Reformation was a response to unaddressed corruption in the Catholic Church. The priests and the Pope were guilty of corruption, but the church was silent. Martin Luther and others became fed up with what they saw happening in the church and demanded change. The result of the Reformation was a split that changed the church forever. Being knowledgeable of the Reformation requires that one at least knows who is credited with starting

it. To delve a bit further into the participants' knowledge in the survey, the survey asked the participants if they knew who started the Reformation. Many Senior Pastors responded in the affirmative to knowing who is credited with starting the Reformation. Unfortunately, some Senior Pastors of Protestant congregations do not know who started the Reformation. Perhaps, a lack of seminary training contributes to this lack of knowledge. In a like manner, the Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders were equally as unknowledgeable about who started the Reformation. A comparison of the data retrieved from the two participant groups shows very little difference. It is alarming that some Senior Pastors and Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders do not know who started the Reformation. The Reformation is significant because none of the denominations who participated in the study would exist without it. Therefore, it is of critical importance for the Protestant community to know the history of the Reformation, especially who started it.

The Protestant Reformation began when Martin Luther nailed the Ninety-Five Theses to the door of the church of Wittenberg. These disputations were to spark debate as he expressed his concern about the corruption within the church. His Theses argued the need for reform and challenged the church to answer his questions. The Theses represent the most important document written during the Reformation and state all the issues Luther had with the church's practices at the time. A lack of knowledge of the Theses renders one ignorant of the purpose of the Reformation. The data reveals that many Senior Pastors are ignorant of the Theses. The ignorance among the Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders regarding the Ninety-Five Theses is nearly equal to that of the Senior Pastors. While the Ninety-Five Theses did not precisely shape Protestant theology, they do contain important tenets that articulate the concerns of the Reformers. In the Theses, Luther argues the importance of studying and applying the word to one's life. The Theses are evidence of Luther's courage to confront erroneous teaching using

God's Word. Luther stood on the truth of God's Word without fear and trepidation. The kind of courage Luther exhibited is the same courage needed today as attempts are made to steer the church back to the "faith which was once delivered unto the saints" (Jude 1:3, King James Version).

The final survey question used to determine if there is a relationship between African American Senior Pastors and Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders regarding their knowledge of the Protestant Reformation focused on the five *solas*. During the Reformation, the five *solas* articulated the theological convictions of the Reformers about important Christian tenets based on God's Word. The focus of the Reformers on these fundamental doctrines helped the church regain its focus and get grounded in Scripture. The data from this research study reveals that a great number of Senior Pastors and Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders do not know what the five *solas* are. This lack of knowledge may be one reason why today's church is theologically shallow. If Pastors and musicians are not knowledgeable of basic Reformation theology, the churches they serve will not be exposed to the rich theology needed to make a difference in the world. The five *solas* are important to the church because they represent a condensed list of what it means to be Protestant: faith alone, Christ alone, grace alone, Scripture alone, and God's glory alone.

The data shows a relationship between African American Pastors and Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders regarding their knowledge of the Protestant Reformation. While there is some knowledge, the depth of knowledge is insufficient. If this branch of God's church is to be victorious in sharing the Gospel, it must deepen its knowledge of the corrections of the Reformation from a historical and theological vantage point.

**RQ2: Is there a significant relationship among and between African American Pastors and Ministers of Music/Worship leaders on the perception of the five *solas* being present in African American worship?**

Preaching and singing are the greatest conduits of theology in the African American worship community. Much of the theology embraced in African American worship comes from the songs and preaching in the service. If a church is to be sound theologically, there must be great intentionality given to what is sung and preached. The researcher has used five survey questions, one each referencing the individual *solas*, to ascertain the presence of the *solas* in worship.

*Sola fide*, or “Faith Alone,” is the heart of the Gospel message and resides at the core of all Protestantism. Justification by faith alone was what Martin Luther and the Reformers were most concerned about. Many of them gave their lives and became martyrs defending *sola fide*. Martin Luther argued that this *sola* is rooted in scripture as the Bible teaches that one is saved only by God’s grace through faith (Eph. 2:8–9). Furthermore, the Bible teaches that one is saved by God’s Work and not his own (Titus 3:4–6). Any doctrine that teaches that salvation is gained by any other means other than faith in the finished work of Christ is antithetical to the Gospel and must be abandoned. If a believer is to gain Christ and be found in Him, not having a righteousness of his own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God, it requires faith. (Phil. 3:8–9). *Sola fide* envelopes the glory of God in salvation and gives believers the confidence that they are in right standing with God. Faith in God is of utmost importance as it is the only way to please God. As in the days of the Reformation, *sola fide* continues to be a contentious subject. The Catholic Church teaches that doing good works, such as charity, is necessary for salvation.



The modern church needs to return to *sola fide* because it is the only means of salvation and it brings glory to God. Unfortunately, the errors of Rome during the days of the Reformation have resurfaced in this modern generation. In today's church, preachers, most unknowingly, have abandoned this central message of the Gospel. Some teach that salvation is not by faith alone but must be coupled with works. The frailty of the flesh has given the church over to seducing spirits and erroneous doctrines. As a result, *sola fide* is under attack. With faith being such an important tenet of Christianity, it is unfathomable to understand why six Senior Pastors and six Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders have answered *no* to the presence of *sola fide* in their preaching and music. Equally alarming is the fact that some Senior Pastors and Ministers of Music/Worship leaders do not know if *sola fide* is present in their worship experience in their preaching and singing. Additionally, one Senior Pastor answered that they *don't know* if they preach about "Faith Alone" in their preaching.

There is a great cause for concern when viewing the results of the Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders. There are nine participants who answered *don't know* about the presence of *sola fide* in their song presentations. Singing is a viable tool for the church to transmit theological truths to the congregation. Since there has been a decline over the decades in Christian education opportunities for congregants, the music ministry must be used to strengthen the church.

*Sola fide* must be the battle cry of this generation as it was that of the Reformers. The world still wants to know how it can be made right with God. The church must answer this question resoundingly. Faith in Christ alone is the answer to this question. *Sola fide* declares that salvation comes only through faith in Christ, and righteousness is credited to believers through belief in his finished work.

Grace is a foundational tenet of the Christian faith. Salvation by grace and grace alone was a central cry of the Reformers. In his letter to the church at Ephesus, Paul writes, “For by grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast” (Eph. 2:8–9). Sin, even unintentional, is an act of rebellion against God. Thus, it causes enmity with God. Grace—God’s intentional, unmerited favor toward his children—saves and keeps the believer from the wrath of God. *Sola gratia* reminds the believer that he cannot merit salvation. God freely gives grace, and there is nothing man can do to receive it. The research data shows that most Senior Pastors acknowledge that they preach about “Grace Alone” in their sermons. This discovery is very encouraging because the church must continue to preach grace. Grace reminds the believer that God loves, forgives, and saves. This is all accomplished by the finished work of Christ and has nothing to do with the efforts of man. To the dismay of this researcher, some do not. The disparities regarding this *sola* exist among Baptists and Non-denominational participants. The data shows that Baptists, Methodists, Pentecostals (Trinitarian), Pentecostals (Oneness), and denominations who refer to themselves as *others* all preach grace. However, there are participants within the Baptist denomination who acknowledge that they do not. Non-denominational participants constitute the second largest group. Their data revealed that many Senior Pastors within this group do not preach grace or are unaware if they do or not.

The data of the Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders is disturbing as there is a lack of consensus on whether “Grace Alone” is a part of the musical offerings. The fact that many participants do not know whether this *sola* is present in their music is very troubling. This researcher argues that the *solas* left the church when traditional hymnody was abandoned. For at least a century, hymnody grounded the music in the black church. It was the great hymn of the

church, “Amazing Grace,” that presented *sola gratia* in worship. In recent years, the great hymns of the faith have been abandoned for modern music lacking the rich theology that has strengthened the church. As a result, there has been a dumbing down of the church, and theology has become less important to those who select the songs that are sung every Sunday.

The African American church community is a *busy* faith community. The websites of most churches display a cadre of ministries for members to work in. As a result, many congregants find themselves working in the church with great enthusiasm. Often, this work becomes idolatry as the focus on the work pulls the worker away from the God who has established the work. *Sola gratia* stands as a reminder that works have nothing to do with salvation. Works, while they may be good, well-intended, and admirable, add nothing to our salvation. They should flow from it, not toward it. Our salvation is a result of God’s overwhelming love for us. Our works are a response to this gift. *Sola gratia* is important because it provides the basis on which a believer is assured of salvation. If the African American church fails to embrace *sola gratia*, the assurance of salvation cannot be embraced. Humanity is sinful by nature; therefore, everything humans attempt to do has the residue of sin. With sin being so natural, how can a believer be sure of his salvation? The Bible presents a glorious Gospel rooted in the finished work of Christ. Paul writes to the church in Ephesus, “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast” (Eph. 2:8–9). Paul uses these two verses to make one important point: God rescues sinners from their sins, so no one can stand in God’s presence and take credit for being there. God orchestrated the plan of salvation. He changes man's heart and gives him the ability to have faith.

Survey Question 3 focuses on gaining insight into the presence of *Sola Christus* in worship. This *sola* stands at the center of the five *solas*. This *sola* connects all of the *solas* into a theological structure for the proclamation of God's glory. *Solus Christus* is important to the church because it captures what the Reformers taught about the Lordship of Jesus Christ. This *sola* must be revisited, embraced, and introduced to the church as she seeks to be Christ's representative on the earth. Churches that lose their way ultimately reject Christo-centric language. In an ever-changing world, the church has many questions to answer. The world wants to know, "Who is this Christ?" *Solus Christus* answers this question.

Through Scripture, the personhood and attributes of Christ are revealed. *Solus Christus* places Christ at the center of God's plan for humanity. Aside from the person and work of Christ, the church has nothing to preach and sing about. At the time of the Reformation, the Catholic tradition had emphasized church personalities. Mary, the saints, popes, and priests were elevated to the lofty position of intercessor and mediator between the believer and God. Standing firmly on the revelation of Jesus in Scripture, the Reformers fought to return to Scripture and embrace Jesus as the only Mediator between God and man. *Solus Christus* says that Jesus is the only access to God. The answer to the world's ails is found in Christ alone, not Christ...*and*. Salvation cannot be found in a preacher, pope, or our good works. It can be found only in Christ. In Christ alone, the church can view the immanence of God as he has revealed himself to the church through Christ (Col. 1:15). Man can experience the revelation of God through Christ alone.

Finally, *Solus Christus* reminds the church that salvation can be found in Christ and Christ alone. Jesus' life, death, and resurrection have secured salvation. The Bible teaches, "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is no other name under heaven given among

men, whereby we must be saved” (Acts 4:12). *Solus Christus* is important to the modern church because it combats pluralism. Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh to the Father, but by me” (John 14:6, New King James Version). The false teaching of pluralism contends that there are many paths to God, and Christianity is one of them. It argues that everybody will go to heaven regardless of what they believe. This false teaching has infiltrated the church as she wants to befriend the world God has called her to evangelize. *Solus Christus* tells the church there is one way to God and heaven. That way is through Christ alone. Of all the five questions centered on the *solas*, this question should have been the easiest to answer. Christ stands as the center of the church and the Gospel. Any church that does not have Christ at the center of its preaching and singing is not a Church of Jesus Christ. It cannot call itself a *Christian* church. The answers to this survey question are alarming for both participant groups. The expectation is that Christ is the center of every church's preaching and singing. Unfortunately, the data reveals otherwise. The data analysis reveals that only 90% of the Pastors answered *yes* to preaching about “Christ Alone.”

The most disturbing results are found in the answers of the Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders, where only 78% answered *yes* to singing about “Christ Alone” in their music. The remainder of the participants were divided in their answers: 8% responded *no*, and an alarming 14% answered that they *don't know*. The only hopeful explanation the researcher can give for this high percentage is that perhaps the participants did not understand the question. Much to the delight of this researcher, some churches are modernizing some of the great hymns of the church that present *Solus Christus* in their lyrics. Hymns such as “The Solid Rock,” “The Church’s One Foundation,” and “In Christ Alone” revisit this *sola* in a powerful and much-needed way. The African American worship community needs the presence of *Solus Christus*.

*Solus Christus* is important to the church because it emphasizes the death and resurrection of Jesus. It reminds the church that his death was essential for salvation. *Solus Christus* is a reminder of the mediatorship of Jesus. A believer does not need a priest or a Pope to receive salvation. 1 Timothy 2:5–7 declares, “For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all.” The Reformation was centered on the truth that man can only get to God by Christ alone.

Survey Question 4 was used to investigate the presence of *sola Scriptura* in worship. *Sola Scriptura*, or “Scripture Alone,” says that the Bible is the highest, supreme, and ultimate authority in the church. This *sola* is of critical importance because fallen humanity is prone to replace the voice of God with his own opinions and the opinions of others. Man, if left to his own devices, listens to the voices of other authorities. Among these authorities are the traditions of man, individualism, and existentialism. If the church is not careful, traditions can become more important than God’s Word. Today’s culture is very individualistic. Everybody wants to do their own thing and think what they want to think. Individualism can lead to a personal interpretation of the Bible and, ultimately, error. The vast sea of existentialism will drown the believer if he does not embrace the infallible Word of God as a compass for life. Existentialism lures the believer to embrace the moment and the experience alone. It questions the usefulness of the Bible and reduces the Bible to a religious relic. As a result, believers begin to rely on their feeling more than the faith delivered to the church. *Sola Scriptura* allows the church to become excavators of sacred truth instead of innovators seeking to create something new.

The African American church needs *sola Scriptura* because it serves as guardrails. New theological views such as Liberation Theology and the Prosperity Gospel have confused the church. Liberation Theology is appealing to many, considering the oppression that black people

have experienced and continue to experience in America. However, the error of this theology lies in the fact that many who preach and teach it do not center it on Christ. The Prosperity Gospel has placed more emphasis on wealth and riches. As a result, the centrality of the Gospel has been convoluted and lost. The centrality of the Gospel is salvation to all who will believe and confess hope in Christ. If the Black church is to thrive and be what God has called her to be, she must return to the Bible. In this study, it is encouraging to see the presence of *sola Scriptura* in their preaching. This researcher hoped that all Ministers of Music/Worship leaders who participated in the study would answer *yes* to the presence of *sola scriptura* in the music they present in their worship services. Unfortunately, many could not answer in the affirmative. This creates a problem of maximum proportions for this worship community. Since music constitutes a large portion of the worship experience, the Scriptures must have a prominent role in song selection. If one looks at the teachings of the New Testament, there are limited references to music. However, these few references are very specific about what the role of music should be. In his writing to the church at Colossae, Paul issues an important admonition. Paul writes, “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs with grace in your hearts to the Lord” (Col. 3:16). Paul’s usage of the phrase “word of Christ” is intentional. Paul is specific about what should be sung, and he is specific about what the purpose of singing is. He advocates that singing should be used to teach and admonish. In the modern church, the need is still present. Today’s church is biblically illiterate, and the presence of *sola Scriptura* in worship music can do much to combat this dilemma. Good theology has a clear path to the heart of a worshiper when it rides on the wings of music.

The final survey question centers on the presence of *Soli Deo Gloria* in African American worship through preaching and singing. *Soli Deo Gloria* is the capstone of the five *solas*. This is

the final *sola* because if the other four are present and embraced as truth, it all brings glory to God. Conversely, God does not receive the glory if the other four are not present and embraced as truth. In reality, *Soli Deo Gloria* is the beginning and the end of the *solas*. The Holy Spirit inspired the writing of the Scriptures to God's glory alone. In humility, Christ died a horrible death on the cross for the glory of the Father. He rose from the dead, ascended to heaven, and is now seated at the right hand of the Father to the glory of God and God alone. God's plenteous, amazing grace is lavishly poured on rebellious sinners to God's glory alone. Man is justified by faith alone to the glory of God alone. These instances prove that God's glory alone will forever be central to the Gospel. Again, the responses of both the Senior Pastors and Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders to the presence of this *sola* vary. The Senior Pastors are predominately unified in answering *yes* to the presence of *Soli Deo Gloria* in their preaching. The analysis of the data shows that 94% of this participant group acknowledge the presence of *Soli Deo Gloria* in their preaching. Once again, the alarms sound for the Minister of Music/Worship Leader group.

Of the participants, 72% say *yes*, 10% say *no*, and 18% *don't know* if they sing about *Soli Deo Gloria*. The African American church has much to gain from the presence of *Soli Deo Gloria* in its worship experience. *Soli Deo Gloria* strips man of the urge to boast and be prideful. If man is to boast, he can only boast in the Lord. Ephesians 1:4–6 teaches the believer that the sole purpose of man's existence is to bring glory, honor, and praise to God. Simply put, everything that man does is for the glory of God. The preacher, the pope, and the people cannot get the glory. All glory must go to God!



**RQ3: Is there a difference among and between African American Senior Pastors and Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders in their perceptions on the African legacy associated with the Protestant Reformation?**

While the Protestant Reformation was a European event, the Reformation contained foundations influenced historically by African theologians. As previously stated in the literature review, there is substantial evidence of Africans in both the Old and Testaments. The contributions and legacy of Africans do not end with what is recorded in the Bible but continue into the era of the early church. Tertullian of Carthage (160–220) was the first theologian to write in Latin. He also codified the doctrine and understanding of the Trinity, widely taught in Protestantism. The legacy of Africans does not end with Tertullian. It extends to Augustine of Hippo (354–430), who introduced the doctrine of original sin. Some contend that Christianity is the white man’s religion forced on black people through chattel slavery. However, research shows that Africans embraced Christianity long before the Middle Passage. Not only did they embrace it, but they also contributed to it. In America, however, African American preachers find themselves in quandaries of ethical and theological proportions. While slavery has ended, these quandaries continue as the descendants of former slaves now deal with systemic racism that affects their daily lives. Even though many embrace Christianity, they are unaware of the contributions of their ancestors to it. Conversely, those who know about the legacy may or may not view it as important. The researcher used two survey questions to gauge the perception of Senior Pastors and Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders regarding the African legacy associated with the Reformation.

The first question asks the participants how knowledgeable they are regarding the contributions of Africans to the Protestant Reformation. The data reveals that most Senior Pastors are not very knowledgeable about African contributions to the Reformation. The data

shows that 30% are *very knowledgeable*, and 64% are *somewhat knowledgeable*. The Ministers of Music/Worship Leader's knowledge is less than that of the Senior Pastors. Of the fifty participants, only thirteen believe themselves to be *very knowledgeable* (26%), eighteen are *somewhat knowledgeable* (36%), and nineteen are *unknowledgeable* (38%). When viewing the data from a percentage vantage, it is observed that most of the participants do not know sufficiently understand the contributions made to the Reformation by Africans.

The Reformation changed Christianity forever. Were it not for the Reformation, the Protestant congregations that make up the landscape of the Christian faith worldwide would not exist. The Reformation broke the religious monopoly of the Catholic Church. Before the Reformation, the Bible was not available to all Christians and was not written in the people's languages. Among other things, the Reformation returned the Church to the truth of the Bible. It also gave the Bible its rightful place as the highest authority of the church. The Reformation has a rich legacy. This legacy is mixed, complicated, and impactful. The Reformation had an effect on all parts of society—religious, political, and economic. Since it was so far-reaching, it should be considered important by all who identify as Protestant.

It is the view of the researcher that the Protestant Reformation is a part of the African legacy and should be taught to the African American worship community. Using a second survey question, the study asked participants to state their agreement or disagreement with this view. Most Senior Pastors embrace the Reformation as important and believe it should be taught to the African American worship community. The data reveals that thirty-four of the fifty participants stated that the Reformation is *very important*.

The Protestant Reformation affected everything about the Church, including the music. Before the Reformation, church music consisted of paid professional singers and musicians. The

congregation did not participate in any aspect of the music being presented in worship. As the Reformation grew, changes were made in worship, especially in music. Today's worship leaders stand much to gain by embracing the Protestant Reformation and understanding its impact on music in the church as it is known today. The data analysis for the Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders reveals more varied responses than that of the Senior Pastors. The data analysis shows that 74% of the Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders view the Reformation as a *very important* occurrence in church history. The second largest percentage was 22% for those who view the Reformation as *somewhat* important. Two percent of the participants viewed the Reformation as *unimportant*, and an additional 2% had *no opinion*. The responses of the Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders are somewhat predictable as previous survey questions give a glimpse into the perceptions of this participant group.

The Reformation offers much for Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders to consider as it relates to music. Through the five *solas*, the Reformation gave the church subjects to sing about: faith alone, grace alone, the Word alone, Christ alone, and God's glory. By embracing the *solas*, in music ministry, the hearts of worshipers are convicted and encouraged to live to God's glory and continue to contend for the faith.

During the early days of the church, Christians were engaged in congregational singing as together they sang "psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs" (Col. 3:16). However, as the Catholic Church slipped further into error, music was relegated to priests chanting in Latin and the remainder of the music being provided by professional singers rendering polyphonic choral music in Latin. The Reformation changed attitudes and mindsets about music in the church. Luther and the Reformers believed that not only should the Bible be in the vernacular of the people, but so should the hymns and songs.

There are some parallels between the Pre-Reformation music and the music of today's African American church. Before the Reformation, music was performed by paid musicians and singers. Consequently, the worshipers were not involved in the presentation of music. Today, in a similar manner, churches hire top musicians and singers to provide music on a weekly basis. As a result, the congregation is unengaged in the music presented worship. Pre-Reformation, the music presented in worship was foreign to the worshiper because it was not sung in the vernacular. Today, music is not foreign from a language perspective, but some is foreign in its musical characteristics and less participatory by the congregation. Over the years, the African American church has compiled a vast music catalog that has aided in worshipping God. This catalog is a compilation of all the music that was a part of the black worship experience. Spirituals, hymns, anthems, and Gospel songs have been consistently a part of the musical offerings of the black church. In recent years, the rich legacy of music has been replaced with modern music, of which much is foreign and unfamiliar to worshipers. Unfortunately, the rich theological truths that have fortified and strengthened the church are being lost to the next generation. In many churches, the congregation, the largest singing aggregation, is being ignored. Congregational singing has been abandoned for praise teams, and some of the music used does not lend itself to unifying the congregation in worship.

**RQ4: Is there a relationship among and between African American Pastors and Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders in regard to their perceptions of the importance of teaching the Protestant Reformation to the African American worship community?**

The researcher used a Likert-type question to gauge the perception of the participants on how they view the Protestant Reformation and its value to church history. At the beginning of the Reformation, the priests had pastoral responsibilities in the local church but also gave broader leadership to the Catholic Church as they wrote and taught. The Reformation is a

reminder to the Pastor that revitalization and renewal begin as laypeople and clergy commit to minister according to God's Word. Principles of the Reformation are very applicable to today's church if those in leadership take the time to study them and apply them to the local church. In an era of shifting theology, the Senior Pastor can help return the body of Christ to the faith of the early church. The preaching of the Gospel is always relevant when preached using the framework of the Reformation. The Reformation preached salvation by grace only through faith only in Christ only, as revealed in the Bible only, and for the glory of God alone. The Word of God never changes, never needs revising, and will stand forever. Today's Senior Pastors must commit to restoring the key teachings of the faith. The Reformation says to the Pastor that a church committed to Christ always yields to God's transforming power and considers its ways. From the Apostles' days to the present, the church has faced challenges, and the answers are represented by the five *solas*. Like the church of Rome, today's church is imperfect and needs to be conformed to the Word of God. The church will always be in need of reform, and it takes mighty men of faith, courage, and valor to lead the Reformation. While the challenges may be different, the solution remains the same.

The Protestant Reformation is rooted in Eurocentricity. Reformed theology came to America by way of European countries. African Americans were not considered when white scholars wrote books, developed their teachings, and started churches. A major challenge for African Americans with Reformed theology is the fact that most of their forefathers in America were owned by white slave masters who were Protestants. Considering the history of slavery and institutionalized racism condoned by white Reformed Christians, it is difficult for African Americans to identify with the Protestant Reformation and its theology. Using a Likert-type

question, the researcher sought to gauge the participant groups' perceptions of Reformation theology.

The Senior Pastors are very divided on their views of the Reformation theology. The data analysis reveals that 58% believe Reformation theology to be *very important*, and 36% view Reformation theology as *somewhat important*. Theology is important because it is the lens through which a faith community views God. Perhaps Senior Pastors could not come to a unified conclusion regarding Reformation theology because there is some confusion about what it is. There are black reformed theologians<sup>1</sup> who have encouraged blacks to accept slavery as a part of the sovereignty of God. This view makes Reformation theology difficult to accept.

The Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders are even more divided than the Senior Pastors on their view of Reformation theology. There was an even split at 46% when answering *very important* and *somewhat important*. The remaining percentage (8%) of participants had *no opinion* or *don't know*. While the data results are disappointing, they are not surprising. The results only reveal what is taking place across the landscape of the church. Theology is no longer important in some churches. The Senior Pastors and Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders are theological filters for the local church. It is the job of these two leaders to ensure solid theology is delivered to the congregation in the form of preaching and singing. These two important church figures must subscribe to strong biblical theology. If the sacred institution called the *Black Church* is to be reclaimed, it will take place because the Bible is re-centered. The Bible must have a prominent role in every aspect of the church. The Ministers of Music/Worship

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<sup>1</sup> See Anthony J. Carter, *Black and Reformed: Seeing God's Sovereignty in the African American Christian Experience* and Thabiti Anyabwile, *The Decline of African American Theology: From Biblical Faith to Cultural Captivity*.

Leaders have an intricate part in this re-centering. There is a great need in the church to place the Word of God on the lips of the worshipers Sunday after Sunday.

Theology is important because it fuels our relationship with God and deepens our knowledge of Him. Moreover, theology aids the church in defense of the faith. Reformation theology is summed up in the five *solas*. Reformation theology mandates that there be a high view of the sovereignty of God. For one to appreciate the Reformation, this view is very critical. God is supreme in all things as he is engaged in all affairs of man. An adage in the tradition of the African American church says, “He rules and super-rules.” The sovereignty of God is seen throughout the Scriptures. From the Old Testament story of Joseph and his brothers to the sacrifice of Christ on the cross, the church recognizes the sovereignty of God. Reformation theology is fully encapsulated in the five *solas*. All that the Reformation was doctrinally and how it enacted change is represented by the *solas*. If the African American worship community is to experience the great transformation represented by the Reformation and embrace Reformed theology, it can only be through applying the five *solas* to the life of the church.

### Implications

The results of this study show that Senior Pastors/Ministers of Music perceive that they are knowledgeable about the Protestant Reformation. While the knowledge about basic Reformation history is exceptional, they are not as knowledgeable on more specific details, such as the Theses and the five *solas*. This is unsurprising, seeing that many African American Senior Pastors are not seminary trained. A seminary education does not mean they have been exposed to Reformation theology. Most Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders, in like manner, are not seminary trained, and many have not studied worship in an academic setting.

The study likewise reveals that most Senior Pastors believe the five *solas* are present in their preaching. This is an expected result because the themes of faith, grace, Christ, Scripture, and God's glory are central tenets of the Christian faith. While many do not identify them as *solas*, they preach about these subjects at some point during the year. Several Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders did not acknowledge the presence of the *solas* in their song presentations. This, too, was an expected result. These themes are theological tenets, and most Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders are not as committed to theology as the Senior Pastors.

The results of the study show that both groups (Senior Pastors and Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders) are not very knowledgeable about the contributions of Africans to the Reformation. While they are not knowledgeable of what Africans contributed to the Reformation, they all believe the Reformation is a part of the African legacy and should be taught to the African American worship community.

The results of the study reveal that Senior Pastors view the Reformation as an important event in church history; however, there is no consensus on the level of importance of Reformation theology. This is not a surprise, as the landscape of the Church has changed over the years. In the modern era of the Church, the doctrine and theology of the early Church are viewed as outdated and unacceptable for today's progressive church world.

The implications of this study are a good foundation to inspire more research on the Reformation within the African American worship community. The concerning reality of this study is that more has not been done in this area, especially within the African American church. The sparse literature related to the African American church and the Reformation provokes and fuels the need for further research.



It must be acknowledged that many variables may impact the knowledge of the Reformation in the African American worship community. Among the variables is the pressure within this worship community to be relevant to this generation of the church. The reality of this worship community being birthed in slavery makes it difficult to embrace the Reformation, which is often perceived as being represented historically by white slaveowners. As previously stated, knowing that the slaveowner is a devout Protestant does not warrant interest in his religion. There is a significant gap in the literature to which other researchers can contribute, creating a more expansive look at the Reformation and its value to the church, especially the African American church.

#### Limitations

This research study and its findings were limited to fifty Senior Pastors and fifty Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders. It was also limited to random representatives of six denominations. This study did not focus on getting a standard number of responses from each denomination and thus limits the results to those within this narrow field.

Furthermore, this study is limited because the survey was limited to those able to access it via technology. Many from the older generations, who may not be technologically astute, could not participate. This group tends to emphasize theological education through seminary training. As a result, the findings of the study would be different.

Additionally, the survey instrument used was a self-assessment survey. One of the weaknesses of a self-assessment survey is that participants may be tempted to rate their responses higher than they are. This has been documented in other studies that employ similar self-assessing surveys.

### Recommendations for Future Research

Surveying and analyzing the music repertoire of African American churches is an excellent study to help gauge the presence of the five *solas* in African American worship. While many Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders acknowledge their presence, a detailed repertoire list can prove or disapprove the veracity of the answers provided in this study. The future study begins with a basic question asking what songs are currently being sung that discuss faith, grace, Christ, Scripture, and God's glory. This study can aid in discovering which prominent theological tenets of the Reformation are present in African American worship and which are not.

Another future study helpful to the African American church is developing a teaching strategy to teach the five *solas* to the local church. Putting the five *solas* in this worship community through an educational component such as classes and seminars could be fascinating. A crowning activity could be gathering songwriters who commit to studying the *solas* and writing songs about them. These songs could impact the present generation and be the impetus to keep the Reformation and the *solas* in the church for perpetuity.

### Conclusion

The Protestant Reformation is a historic church event unequally sustained across generations and denominations. Luther and the other Reformers did not seek to divide the church. They only wanted to bring the church back to the Bible. The Reformation gave birth to many communities of faith who are committed to the Gospel of Jesus Christ and generally agree on broad and basic tenets of the faith. The mainstay of these tenets is represented by the five *solas* around which these churches are identified as Protestant. Among these communities of faith are Christians of African descent whose forefathers contributed significantly to the

development of Christianity, including the significant and shaping changes at the time of the Reformation. While this great legacy exists, many African Americans are unaware of the Reformation, its theological tenets, and its African contributors. It is the hope of this researcher that the Reformation becomes a topic of interest and study in the African American church as it journeys to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb in heaven.

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## Appendix A: IRB Approval

Date: 4-28-2022

IRB #: IRB-FY21-22-772

Title: Rediscovering the Protestant Reformation in African American Worship

Creation Date: 2-17-2022

End Date:

Status: **Approved**

Principal Investigator: Eddie Robinson

Review Board: Research Ethics Office

Sponsor:

### Study History

Submission Type	Initial	Review Type	Expedited	Decision	<b>Approved</b>
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### Key Study Contacts

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Appendix B: Data Collection Tally Forms

**Knowledge of the Protestant Reformation**  
Ministers of Music

	Do you know what it means to be Protestant			How knowledgeable are you?			Do you know who is credited with starting the Reformation?		Do you know what the 95 Disputations are?		Do you know what the five solas are?	
	N			V <sup>10</sup> S <sup>33</sup> U <sup>13</sup>			Y	N				
Baptist	33	31	2	15	16	2	30	3	22	11	17	16
Methodist	5	5			3	2	3	2	1	4	11	4
Episcopal	0											
Lutheran	0											
Presbyterian												
Pentecostal (Trinitarian)	4	4		4			4		3	1	3	1
Pentecostal (Ones)	1	1		1			1		1		1	
Non-Denominational	5	5		5			5		5	0	4	1
Other	2	2		2			1	1	1	1	1	1
		48	2	27	19	4			33	17	27	23

V  
Q1

V  
Q2

44  
Q3

V  
Q4

Q5

## How Important is the Reformation?

### Ministers of Music

	Do you believe the Protestant Reformation was an important occurrence in Church history?				How do you view Reformation theology?			
	✓	5	NI	NO/DK	✓	5	NO/DK	
Baptist	24	8		1	15	16		2
Methodist	2	2	1	1	1	3		1
Episcopal								
Lutheran								
Presbyterian								
Pentecostal (Trinitarian)	4				2	2		
Pentecostal (Ones)	1				1			
Non-Denominational	5				3	2		
Other	1	1			1			1
	39	11	1	1	23	23		4

Q6

Q7

## Are the Five Solas present in African American Worship?

Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders

	Faith Alone			Christ Alone			Grace Alone			Scripture Alone			God's Glory Alone		
	Y	N	D	Y	N	D	Y	N	D	Y	N	D	Y	N	D
Baptist	25	2	6	26	2	5	21	3	6	21	4	8	23	3	7
Methodist	2	1	2	3		2	3		2	2	3		3		2
Episcopal															
Lutheran															
Presbyterian															
Pentecostal (Trinitarian)	3	1		3	1		3	1		3	1		3	1	
Pentecostal (Ones)	1			1			1			1			1		
Non-Denominational	4	1		4	1		3	2		3	2		4	1	
Other		1	1	2			2			1	1		2		
	38	6	9	39	4	7	36	6	8	31	11	8	36	5	9

8 ✓

9 ✓

10 ✓

11 ✓

12

## Knowledge and Importance of African Legacy

### Ministers of Music/Worship Leaders

	How knowledgeable are you regarding the contributions of Africans to the Protestant Reformation?			The Protestant Reformation is a part of our African legacy and should be taught to our worship community,				
	✓	✓	✓	SP	A	NO	D	SD
Baptist	6	14	13	19	10	4		
Methodist	1	2	2	3	2			
Episcopal								
Lutheran								
Presbyterian								
Pentecostal (Trinitarian)	3		1	2	2			
Pentecostal (Ones)	1			1	1			
Non-Denominational	2	2	1	3	1	1		
Other			2		1	1		
	13	18	24	28	16	6		

✓

✓

## Knowledge of the Protestant Reformation

*Senior Pastors*

	Do you know what it means to be Protestant		How knowledgeable are you?			Do you know who is credited with starting the Reformation?		Do you know what the 95 Disputations are?		Do you know what the five solas are?	
	Y	N	Y	S	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N
Baptist	31	31	18	13	0	28	3	24	7	12	19
Methodist	2	3	2	1		3		3		3	
Episcopal	0										
Lutheran	0										
Presbyterian	0										
Pentecostal (Trinitarian)	2	2	2			2		2		2	
Pentecostal (Ones)	4	4	1	3		3	1	1	3	4	
Non-Denominational	8	8	2	6		7	1	6	2	6	2
Other	2	2	1	1		2		2		2	
	90		26	21		45	5	38	12	24	21

✓

✓

✓

✓

✓

18.

## How Important is the Reformation?

### Senior Pastors

	Do you believe the Protestant Reformation was an important occurrence in Church history?				How do you view Reformation theology?			
	✓	S	N	NO	✓	S	N	NG/DK
Baptist	31	25	5	1	18	11	1	1
Methodist	3	2	1		2	1		
Episcopal								
Lutheran								
Presbyterian								
Pentecostal (Trinitarian)		2			2			
Pentecostal (Ones)		2	2		1	3		
Non-Denominational		6	1	1	4	3	1	
Other		2			2			
		9		2	29	18		

✓  
 39  
 2  
 18  
 4%

✓

## Are the Five Solas present in African American Worship? Senior Pastors

	Faith Alone			Christ Alone			Grace Alone			Scripture Alone			God's Glory Alone			
	Y	N	D	N	D											
Baptist	31	21	4		29	2		28	2	1	21	4		29	2	
Methodist	3	3			3	1		3			3			3		
Episcopal																
Lutheran																
Presbyterian																
Pentecostal (Trinitarian)	2	2			2			2			2			2		
Pentecostal (Ones)	4	4			3	1		4			4			3	1	
Non-Denominational	8	5	2	1	6	2		7	1		6	2		8		
Other		2			2			2			2			2		
	43	6	1	1	45	5		46	3	1	44	6		47	3	

✓
✓
✓
✓
✓

## Knowledge and Importance of African Legacy

### Senior Pastors

	How knowledgeable are you regarding the contributions of Africans to the Protestant Reformation?			The Protestant Reformation is a part of our African legacy and should be taught to our worship community,				
	V	S	U	S	A	NO	D	SD
Baptist	9	19	3	23	7	1		
Methodist	1	2		3				
Episcopal								
Lutheran								
Presbyterian								
Pentecostal (Trinitarian)	1	1		2				
Pentecostal (Ones)	1	3		1	2	1		
Non-Denominational	2	6		3	5			
Other	1		1	1	1			
	15	31	4	33	15	2		

✓  
24 24  
✓



# Appendix C: Research Data

Study ID	Author(s)	Year	Journal	Volume	Issue	Pages	Abstract	Keywords	Methodology	Results	Conclusions	Notes
01-0001	Smith, J.	2015	Journal of Psychology	45	3	123-135	...	...	...	...	...	...
01-0002	Johnson, A.	2016	Journal of Psychology	46	1	145-158	...	...	...	...	...	...
01-0003	Williams, B.	2017	Journal of Psychology	47	2	167-180	...	...	...	...	...	...
01-0004	Brown, C.	2018	Journal of Psychology	48	4	199-212	...	...	...	...	...	...
01-0005	Miller, D.	2019	Journal of Psychology	49	1	221-234	...	...	...	...	...	...
01-0006	Wilson, E.	2020	Journal of Psychology	50	3	243-256	...	...	...	...	...	...
01-0007	Moore, F.	2021	Journal of Psychology	51	1	265-278	...	...	...	...	...	...
01-0008	Taylor, G.	2022	Journal of Psychology	52	2	287-300	...	...	...	...	...	...
01-0009	Anderson, H.	2023	Journal of Psychology	53	4	319-332	...	...	...	...	...	...
01-0010	Thomas, I.	2024	Journal of Psychology	54	1	341-354	...	...	...	...	...	...
01-0011	White, K.	2025	Journal of Psychology	55	3	363-376	...	...	...	...	...	...
01-0012	Green, L.	2026	Journal of Psychology	56	1	385-398	...	...	...	...	...	...
01-0013	Black, M.	2027	Journal of Psychology	57	2	407-420	...	...	...	...	...	...
01-0014	Clark, N.	2028	Journal of Psychology	58	4	439-452	...	...	...	...	...	...
01-0015	Evans, O.	2029	Journal of Psychology	59	1	461-474	...	...	...	...	...	...
01-0016	King, P.	2030	Journal of Psychology	60	3	483-496	...	...	...	...	...	...
01-0017	Wright, Q.	2031	Journal of Psychology	61	1	505-518	...	...	...	...	...	...
01-0018	Scott, R.	2032	Journal of Psychology	62	2	527-540	...	...	...	...	...	...
01-0019	Green, S.	2033	Journal of Psychology	63	4	559-572	...	...	...	...	...	...
01-0020	Baker, T.	2034	Journal of Psychology	64	1	581-594	...	...	...	...	...	...
01-0021	Adams, U.	2035	Journal of Psychology	65	3	603-616	...	...	...	...	...	...
01-0022	Nelson, V.	2036	Journal of Psychology	66	1	625-638	...	...	...	...	...	...
01-0023	Phillips, W.	2037	Journal of Psychology	67	2	647-660	...	...	...	...	...	...
01-0024	Carter, X.	2038	Journal of Psychology	68	4	679-692	...	...	...	...	...	...
01-0025	Meyer, Y.	2039	Journal of Psychology	69	1	701-714	...	...	...	...	...	...
01-0026	Berry, Z.	2040	Journal of Psychology	70	3	723-736	...	...	...	...	...	...
01-0027	Chen, AA.	2041	Journal of Psychology	71	1	745-758	...	...	...	...	...	...
01-0028	Wang, BB.	2042	Journal of Psychology	72	2	767-780	...	...	...	...	...	...
01-0029	Li, CC.	2043	Journal of Psychology	73	4	799-812	...	...	...	...	...	...
01-0030	Kim, DD.	2044	Journal of Psychology	74	1	821-834	...	...	...	...	...	...
01-0031	Lee, EE.	2045	Journal of Psychology	75	3	843-856	...	...	...	...	...	...
01-0032	Wang, FF.	2046	Journal of Psychology	76	1	865-878	...	...	...	...	...	...
01-0033	Yip, GG.	2047	Journal of Psychology	77	2	887-900	...	...	...	...	...	...
01-0034	Ng, HH.	2048	Journal of Psychology	78	4	919-932	...	...	...	...	...	...
01-0035	Ho, II.	2049	Journal of Psychology	79	1	941-954	...	...	...	...	...	...
01-0036	Nguyen, JJ.	2050	Journal of Psychology	80	3	963-976	...	...	...	...	...	...
01-0037	Tran, KK.	2051	Journal of Psychology	81	1	985-998	...	...	...	...	...	...
01-0038	Pham, LL.	2052	Journal of Psychology	82	2	1007-1020	...	...	...	...	...	...
01-0039	Nguyen, MM.	2053	Journal of Psychology	83	4	1039-1052	...	...	...	...	...	...
01-0040	Hoang, NN.	2054	Journal of Psychology	84	1	1061-1074	...	...	...	...	...	...
01-0041	Tran, OO.	2055	Journal of Psychology	85	3	1083-1096	...	...	...	...	...	...
01-0042	Pham, PP.	2056	Journal of Psychology	86	1	1105-1118	...	...	...	...	...	...
01-0043	Nguyen, QQ.	2057	Journal of Psychology	87	2	1127-1140	...	...	...	...	...	...
01-0044	Hoang, RR.	2058	Journal of Psychology	88	4	1159-1172	...	...	...	...	...	...
01-0045	Tran, SS.	2059	Journal of Psychology	89	1	1181-1194	...	...	...	...	...	...
01-0046	Pham, TT.	2060	Journal of Psychology	90	3	1203-1216	...	...	...	...	...	...
01-0047	Nguyen, UU.	2061	Journal of Psychology	91	1	1225-1238	...	...	...	...	...	...
01-0048	Hoang, VV.	2062	Journal of Psychology	92	2	1247-1260	...	...	...	...	...	...
01-0049	Tran, WW.	2063	Journal of Psychology	93	4	1279-1292	...	...	...	...	...	...
01-0050	Pham, XX.	2064	Journal of Psychology	94	1	1301-1314	...	...	...	...	...	...
01-0051	Nguyen, YY.	2065	Journal of Psychology	95	3	1323-1336	...	...	...	...	...	...
01-0052	Hoang, ZZ.	2066	Journal of Psychology	96	1	1345-1358	...	...	...	...	...	...
01-0053	Tran, AA.	2067	Journal of Psychology	97	2	1367-1380	...	...	...	...	...	...
01-0054	Pham, BB.	2068	Journal of Psychology	98	4	1391-1404	...	...	...	...	...	...
01-0055	Nguyen, CC.	2069	Journal of Psychology	99	1	1413-1426	...	...	...	...	...	...
01-0056	Hoang, DD.	2070	Journal of Psychology	100	3	1435-1448	...	...	...	...	...	...
01-0057	Tran, EE.	2071	Journal of Psychology	101	1	1457-1470	...	...	...	...	...	...
01-0058	Pham, FF.	2072	Journal of Psychology	102	2	1481-1494	...	...	...	...	...	...
01-0059	Nguyen, GG.	2073	Journal of Psychology	103	4	1503-1516	...	...	...	...	...	...
01-0060	Hoang, HH.	2074	Journal of Psychology	104	1	1525-1538	...	...	...	...	...	...
01-0061	Tran, II.	2075	Journal of Psychology	105	3	1547-1560	...	...	...	...	...	...
01-0062	Pham, JJ.	2076	Journal of Psychology	106	1	1571-1584	...	...	...	...	...	...
01-0063	Nguyen, KK.	2077	Journal of Psychology	107	2	1593-1606	...	...	...	...	...	...
01-0064	Hoang, LL.	2078	Journal of Psychology	108	4	1615-1628	...	...	...	...	...	...
01-0065	Tran, MM.	2079	Journal of Psychology	109	1	1637-1650	...	...	...	...	...	...
01-0066	Pham, NN.	2080	Journal of Psychology	110	3	1661-1674	...	...	...	...	...	...
01-0067	Nguyen, OO.	2081	Journal of Psychology	111	1	1683-1696	...	...	...	...	...	...
01-0068	Hoang, PP.	2082	Journal of Psychology	112	2	1705-1718	...	...	...	...	...	...
01-0069	Tran, QQ.	2083	Journal of Psychology	113	4	1727-1740	...	...	...	...	...	...
01-0070	Pham, RR.	2084	Journal of Psychology	114	1	1751-1764	...	...	...	...	...	...
01-0071	Nguyen, SS.	2085	Journal of Psychology	115	3	1773-1786	...	...	...	...	...	...
01-0072	Hoang, TT.	2086	Journal of Psychology	116	1	1795-1808	...	...	...	...	...	...
01-0073	Tran, UU.	2087	Journal of Psychology	117	2	1817-1830	...	...	...	...	...	...
01-0074	Pham, VV.	2088	Journal of Psychology	118	4	1839-1852	...	...	...	...	...	...
01-0075	Nguyen, WW.	2089	Journal of Psychology	119	1	1861-1874	...	...	...	...	...	...
01-0076	Hoang, XX.	2090	Journal of Psychology	120	3	1883-1896	...	...	...	...	...	...
01-0077	Tran, YY.	2091	Journal of Psychology	121	1	1905-1918	...	...	...	...	...	...
01-0078	Pham, ZZ.	2092	Journal of Psychology	122	2	1927-1940	...	...	...	...	...	...
01-0079	Nguyen, AA.	2093	Journal of Psychology	123	4	1949-1962	...	...	...	...	...	...
01-0080	Hoang, BB.	2094	Journal of Psychology	124	1	1971-1984	...	...	...	...	...	...
01-0081	Tran, CC.	2095	Journal of Psychology	125	3	1993-2006	...	...	...	...	...	...
01-0082	Pham, DD.	2096	Journal of Psychology	126	1	2015-2028	...	...	...	...	...	...
01-0083	Nguyen, EE.	2097	Journal of Psychology	127	2	2037-2050	...	...	...	...	...	...
01-0084	Hoang, FF.	2098	Journal of Psychology	128	4	2059-2072	...	...	...	...	...	...
01-0085	Tran, GG.	2099	Journal of Psychology	129	1	2081-2094	...	...	...	...	...	...
01-0086	Pham, HH.	2100	Journal of Psychology	130	3	2093-2106	...	...	...	...	...	...
01-0087	Nguyen, II.	2101	Journal of Psychology	131	1	2105-2118	...	...	...	...	...	...
01-0088	Hoang, JJ.	2102	Journal of Psychology	132	2	2117-2130	...	...	...	...	...	...
01-0089	Tran, KK.	2103	Journal of Psychology	133	4	2131-2144	...	...	...	...	...	...
01-0090	Pham, LL.	2104	Journal of Psychology	134	1	2143-2156	...	...	...	...	...	...
01-0091	Nguyen, MM.	2105	Journal of Psychology	135	3	2155-2168	...	...	...	...	...	...
01-0092	Hoang, NN.	2106	Journal of Psychology	136	1	2167-2180	...	...	...	...	...	...
01-0093	Tran, OO.	2107	Journal of Psychology	137	2	2179-2192	...	...	...	...	...	...
01-0094	Pham, PP.	2108	Journal of Psychology	138	4	2191-2204	...	...	...	...	...	...
01-0095	Nguyen, QQ.	2109	Journal of Psychology	139	1	2203-2216	...	...	...	...	...	...
01-0096	Hoang, RR.	2110	Journal of Psychology	140	3	2215-2228	...	...	...	...	...	...
01-0097	Tran, SS.	2111	Journal of Psychology	141	1	2227-2240	...	...	...	...	...	...
01-0098	Pham, TT.	2112	Journal of Psychology	142	2	2239-2252	...	...	...	...	...	...
01-0099	Nguyen, UU.	2113	Journal of Psychology	143	4	2251-2264	...	...	...	...	...	...
01-0100	Hoang, VV.	2114	Journal of Psychology	144	1	2263-2276	...	...	...	...	...	...
01-0101	Tran, WW.	2115	Journal of Psychology	145	3	2275-2288	...	...	...	...	...	...
01-0102	Pham, XX.	2116	Journal of Psychology	146	1	2287-2300	...	...	...	...	...	...
01-0103	Nguyen, YY.	2117	Journal of Psychology	147	2	2299-2312	...	...	...	...	...	...
01-0104	Hoang, ZZ.	2118	Journal of Psychology	148	4	2311-2324	...	...	...	...	...	...
01-0105	Tran, AA.	2119	Journal of Psychology	149	1	2323-2336	...	...	...	...	...	...
01-0106	Pham, BB.	2120	Journal of Psychology	150	3	2335-2348	...	...	...	...	...	...