

# TRUTH *matters*

April 2001

Volume 1 Issue 1

“Remember the Alamo,” “Remember the Maine,” “Remember Pearl Harbor,” “Sola Scriptura,” Sola Scriptura? What is this doing among three of the great battle cries of all times? Not only have most of us never heard *Sola Scriptura*, but when we do we don't know what it means.

*Sola Scriptura* should be known by all Protestants from all over the world. On December 8, 1941, President Roosevelt told Congress that the previous day was a day that would "live in infamy." October 31, 1517, is a day that should be remembered by all Protestants. This is the day that Martin Luther nailed his 95 theses to the door of the church in Wittenberg, Germany, and launched the Reformation. We should be celebrating this as one of the great days of all history; instead many Evangelicals take their children "trick or treating."

As the early Reformers began to grapple with the truths of Scripture, many things began to happen. In this issue we will learn of one of the great stands that they made regarding faith and the Scriptures. Four other aspects of belief that we as modern day evangelicals take for granted will be emphasized in following articles in *Truth Matters*.

On July 4, 1519, two years after Luther had created havoc in the Roman Church he was

in Leipzig, Germany, involved in a debate with John Eck, one of the top Roman Catholic theologians.

The debate revolved around two issues:

1. The authority of the Pope, and
2. The infallibility of church councils.

Luther denied both, and the debate went on for several days. As the saying goes, "there was more heat than light."

During the debate, Eck warned Luther that he was very close to being a Hussite. The Roman Catholic Church had burned John Huss at the stake in 1415. Huss denied the infallibility of the Pope and the infallibility of church councils. This was a dangerous charge by Eck, because to be associated with a heretic meant that you could undergo the same punishment that he had received, so Luther was receiving a serious

warning.

Luther asked for a break and immediately went to the library to read regarding Huss. Upon returning from the break he stood in front of the entire group of men assembled and said aloud, "Ich bin ein Hussite" (I am a Hussite).

Pandemonium broke out! Luther had declared that he believed as Huss, and was thus to be

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Louis & Kay standing in front of the door of the church in Wittenberg, Germany where Luther nailed his 95 Thesis

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declared a heretic.

When it was over Luther realized that he had denied all authority that he had previously thought was authority and was now down to one authority only—The Scriptures.

The first "Battle cry of the Reformation" came out of this debate...

**1. Sola Scriptura. Scripture alone is our final authority.**

This meant that Scripture is to be the final authority which determines decisions in our lives, not popes, not the church, nor the traditions of the church. At this we can all say yes...yes...yes, but it also means something else. It also means that our personal feelings and our subjective reasoning's do not count when it comes to the teachings of Scripture.

This does not mean that the church can't help with our decisions, or that church history and traditions are worth nothing. In fact, the contrary is true. The Reformers held that tradition was a useful guide, that the Trinitarian and Christological statements of Nicea and the great teachers of the church provided valuable instruction in theology, but it always needs to be evaluated in light of Scripture. We must not ignore church tradition, but that is all that it is, and it must not be the final authority.

In America today many times the church is guided by the culture. Marketing strategies and the beat of entertainment has more to teach about Christianity than the pastor in the pulpit. The culture and the entertainment world may be way off base, but they have the largest voice in what is being said.

In many cases, Pastors have neglected their rightful oversight of the worship, and this includes the doctrinal content of the music sung in the church.

In today's culture, many times anyone with a guitar can stand in front of the church and teach doctrine by the songs that they write and sing.

The church must, I repeat, must, be the institution that stands against the culture and continues to preach that men are condemned under the law, and that they must turn from their sins if they are to be saved.

Luther was under the death penalty for 25 years because he refused to yield to the church, or its traditions. In his view the church was teaching things that were not biblical.

Christian America has become so "Politically Correct" that we have a tendency to say that almost all teachings of Scripture are correct no matter how divergent they might be. The Bible does not contradict itself, but we will respond to two different people who teach two different things and say yes to both because our culture demands that we not claim that we are right and they are wrong.

We have churches who claim to be "seeker" friendly when the Bible is very clear that no one seeks after God (Rom. 3:10). In many cases it is these churches

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## Our Purpose...

**The Purpose of  
Reformed Discipleship Ministries  
is to bring the truth  
of the Reformation  
to a discipling ministry...**

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that are growing, and the churches where Christ is preached in the correct way are not growing. The pressure on these pastors has got to be tremendous. Who would not want to have a big church, but what do we sacrifice to get it?

During the Reformation the pulpit was moved to the center of the stage so that it might symbolize that the preaching of the word is the center of our worship.

In teaching and preaching what I believe is the truth of God's Scripture, I find that some disagree and will say to me, "Do you think you are right and I am wrong?" When this happens I consistently ask myself, "Is this a trick question?" "Of course I think you are wrong and I am right; do you think I am teaching something that I believe is wrong?" The issue here is not who is right or wrong, but the idea that someone will or would take a stand and tell someone else that they believe they are wrong. How politically incorrect can you get?

Many men and women have lost their freedom and their lives because they believed in the Scripture alone (*Sola Scriptura*) as their final authority. **Do You?**

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## ON A PERSONAL NOTE...

You are reading the newest ministry tool from *Reformed Discipleship Ministries (RDM)*. **TRUTHmatters** is a teaching tool that we hope will broaden our discipling ministry into areas where we do not currently have ministry. Teaching has always been part of our vision for equipping the saints. We teach man-to-man, in small groups, in conferences, via tapes, and now through the printed page. It is our desire that **TRUTHmatters** will also educate and spark interaction on key topics. Hopefully you will respond to what you read.

Regularly you will receive **TRUTHmatters** as an ongoing effort to equip the saints for the work of service. This publication will be reflective of Reformed Discipleship Ministries in several ways. It will reflect our Reformed theological heritage. It will also be very familiar for those with a Navigator background because of our emphasis on training and equipping. We intend to stay practical and relevant. The mission of **RDM** is "*to bring the truth of the Reformation to a discipling ministry.*"

The ministry is going very well and Kay and I are encouraged. At present, Kay is teaching a course at the church dealing with women's issues and she is getting very good results from the young ladies involved in the class. I am teaching six bible studies per week, and meeting with up to 13 men per week. I am also teaching a course on, "The Life of Christ" at New Geneva Seminary. This has been a great challenge and joy for me. As usual, I hope that the students are getting as much from the course as I am getting from teaching it.

Our daughter, son-in-law, and grandchildren are living with us as Ken transfers from the military, to being a pilot with United Airlines. It has been a great joy to have them with us. This morning I woke at 6:00AM to get ready for a meeting with a man at 7:00. As I was taking a shower at 6:15, I heard a knock on the bathroom door. My grandson said, "Poppy can you fix me breakfast, I'm hungry." It brought back fond memories of the days when my own children were that age.

Printed on the last page of this newsletter, you will find a **Pledge Card** in which you can be involved in our financial and prayer support. God is blessing what we are doing, and making it possible for us to continue. Would you pray about being involved with us in a financial and prayerful way. Kay and I are committed in helping others grow in Christ but it requires people like you who are willing to help. Please fill out the form, send it in, and become part of our ministry team.

Also you may not be aware that Reformed Discipleship Ministries began a **Tape of the Month Club**. This has several benefits. It helps **RDM** financially, it provides you with a monthly message that you can listen to as you drive, and you can share it with a friend. I hope you will consider joining this monthly effort to help us meet our needs, as we are currently receiving less than our monthly expenses. I pray that as you receive **RDM's** biblical teaching, that it will help you understand, in a practical way, our Christian faith, and be better equipped to share it with others. The cost is \$10.00 a month to receive your tape.

I will be writing more in the months to come,

Louis

## MINISTRY *update:*

As My wife and I look back over the last two years, we have been so very blessed of God, by Dr. and Mrs. Hill. Our eyes and ears have been opened to the call of a modern day reformation. The evangelical church seems to have lost its moorings, and has drifted into a dangerous chasm. If not for the sound doctrine and teaching of the Reformed churches, and ministries like RDM, we might still be languishing in, subjective emotionalism, taking in only the milk of the Word, instead of solid meat. Recently Dr. Hill began teaching a small group in our home. We are learning the Shorter Catechism with the aid of G.I. Williamson's book of the same name.

I can't tell you enough, with Dr. Hill's exposition on these great truths, how this has blessed *all* of us. I thank God for this ministry and its goal to teach and preach the Gospel of Christ. **Praise God from whom all blessing flow!**

*Peter and Lee Mowers*

### Pledge card (please print and mail to the address below)

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# Historical Facts



## Beginning of the Dark Ages

In 402 AD the Roman army had a defensive perimeter across Europe that was so large it was impossible to defend. The barbarian hordes from the north began to break through the defensive perimeters. The Roman Calvary was sent north to repel the invaders. The men invading from the north were tremendous horsemen, it was said of them that “their country was the back of a horse.” The battle raged for eight years and the superior horsemanship began to take a toll. August 24, 410 AD the eternal city of Rome fell.

Looting, burning and the killing of Roman citizens was rampant. The marauding men of the north burned libraries, took great paintings from the walls, burned them, then melted them down to get the lead and metal for their weapons. The world sunk into a period that was to last for 1000 years.

In the year 1500, the best roads in all of Europe were those built by the Romans prior to the time of Christ, and it was these roads that Paul walked on in his day. This was a time of great superstition. Werewolves and vampires filled the minds of the people. This superstition was so great that if a person had a new and innovative idea, he was accused of being demon possessed and was usually burned alive. In the five hundred year period between Seven hundred and Eleven hundred AD, literally nothing changed. There was no scientific, social, or medical changes. It was if time stood still.

These were the days of the fabled King Arthur and the round table and the time of the crusades to free the Holy Land from the Muslims.

Education was almost non-existent in the local people and very poor in the lives of the kings and princes and almost as bad with the clergy. Many priests were awarded doctorate degrees of the Bible, who had never read the Bible completely through.

The Roman Church fell into hands of men who were extremely superstitious and ultimately placed the tradition of the church on a par with scriptures. The Pope claimed spiritual powers for himself and the most important power was the ability to excommunicate and thus condemn to hell people for all eternity.

The need for the Reformation and the consequent separation from the Roman church is seen in two areas:

1. **Transubstantiation:** The Fourth Lateran Council of 1215 declared that it was the official dogma of the church. This taught that when an ordained Catholic priest celebrated the Lord’s Supper that a miracle took place and the bread **actually** became the body of Christ and the wine **actually** became the blood of Christ. Please understand, according to the Roman church, when you ate them, and when you eat now, you are actually eating the real body of Christ. The Lord’s supper actually crucifies Christ every time “Mass” is observed. This is why in the Roman church the cross still has Christ on the Cross and on the Protestant Cross, He is absent.

2. **Purgatory:** This doctrine holds that all who die at peace with the church, but who are not perfect must undergo penal and purifying suffering in an intermediate realm. This is known as Purgatory.

All believers except the Christian martyrs, but including even the highest clergy must go to purgatory to pay penalty for sins committed after baptism.

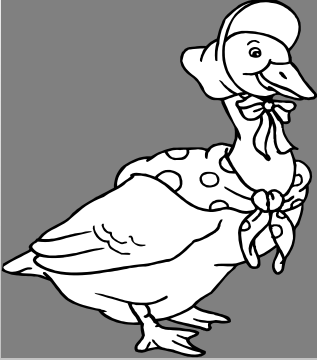
“The souls of those who have died in the state of grace suffer for a time of purging that prepares them to enter heaven and appear in the presence of the beatific vision. It is an intermediate state in which the departed soul can atone for un-forgiven sins before receiving their final reward.”

**“The pains of Purgatory are very severe, surpassing anything endured in this life.” “The least pain in Purgatory surpasses the greatest suffering in this life. Nothing but the eternal duration makes the fire of hell more terrible than that of Purgatory.” (Manual of Purgatorial Society)**

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## MOTHER • GOOSE



We are all familiar with the “Mother Goose” nursery rhymes, but who was Mother Goose and what did these nonsensical rhymes mean?

Three persons have been declared to be Mother Goose.

1. According to some scholars it was the Queen of Sheba of the Bible.
2. Queen Bertha of France, the mother of Charlemagne.
3. In 1692 Elizabeth Foster married a man named Isaac Goose and immediately became the mother of a large brood of children since Mr. Foster already had ten children. Mr. and Mrs. Goose had another six children together.

A year later their son-in-law, Thomas Fleet, published the rhymes he had heard Elizabeth recite to entertain her grandchildren. The book was called *Mother Goose’s Melodies*, but no copies exist today. It is certain that many of the rhymes go further back than “Mother Goose.”

As we look at the rhymes of Mother Goose we will discover that they had hidden meanings for the events of the day.

We know full well that they do not make sense but yet we learned them, and taught them to our children. The reason that they do not make sense is that they were hidden messages of the events surrounding the Reformation.

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# SHORTER CATECHISM

The Westminster Shorter Catechism was completed in 1647 by the Westminster Assembly and continues to serve as part of the doctrinal standards of many Presbyterian churches. The biblical proof texts included in this edition are those prepared by a special committee of the General Assembly of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church in 1978.

**Q. 1. What is the chief end of man?**

A. Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever.

**Q. 2. What rule hath God given to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him?**

A. The Word of God, which is contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, is the only rule to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him.

**Q. 3. What do the Scriptures principally teach?**

A. The Scriptures principally teach what man is to believe concerning God, and what duty God requires of man.

**TRUTH***matters*



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