

The Catholic Counter-Reformation

Pope Paul III (1534–1549) initiated the Council of Trent (1545–1563), a commission of cardinals tasked with institutional reform, addressing contentious issues such as corrupt bishops and priests, indulgences, and other financial abuses. The Council clearly rejected specific Protestant positions and upheld the basic structure of the Medieval Church, its sacramental system, religious orders, and doctrine. It rejected all compromise with the Protestants, restating basic tenets of the Roman Catholic faith. The Council clearly upheld salvation appropriated by grace through faith *and* works of that faith (not just by faith, as the Protestants insisted) because "faith without works is dead", as the Epistle of St. James states. Transubstantiation, during which the consecrated bread and wine were held to be transformed wholly and substantially into *the body, blood, soul and divinity* of Christ, was also reaffirmed, along with the other six Sacraments of the Catholic Church. Other practices that drew the ire of Protestant reformers, such as pilgrimages, the veneration of saints and relics, and the veneration of the Virgin Mary were strongly reaffirmed as spiritually commendable practices. The Council officially accepted the Vulgate listing of the Old Testament Bible which included the deuterocanonical works (also called the Apocrypha, especially by Protestants) on a par with the 39 books customarily found in the Masoretic Text and the Protestant Old Testament. This reaffirmed the previous council of Rome and Synod of Carthage (both held in the 4th century, A.D.) which had affirmed the Deuterocanon as Scripture.^[3] The Council also commissioned the Roman Catechism, which still serves as authoritative Church teaching (the Catechism of the Catholic Church, issued in 1992, updates modern explications, but does not differ doctrinally).

While the basic structure of the Church was reaffirmed, there were noticeable changes to answer complaints that the Counter-Reformers were, tacitly, willing to admit were legitimate. Among the conditions to be corrected by Catholic reformers was the growing divide between the clerics and the laity; many members of the clergy in the rural parishes, after all, had been poorly educated. Often, these rural priests did not know Latin and lacked opportunities for proper theological training (addressing the education of priests had been a fundamental focus of the humanist reformers in the past). Parish priests were to be better educated in matters of theology and apologetics, while Papal authorities sought to educate the faithful about the meaning, nature and value of art and liturgy, particularly in monastic churches of the secular Renaissance church, epitomized by the era of Alexander VI (1492–1503), exploded in the Reformation under Pope Leo X (1513–1522), whose campaign to raise funds in the German states to rebuild St. Peter's Basilica by supporting use of indulgences was a key impetus for Martin Luther's 95 Theses. But the Catholic Church would respond to these problems by a vigorous campaign of reform, inspired by earlier Catholic reform movements that predated the Council of Constance (1414–1417): humanism, devotionism, legalism and the observantine tradition.

The Council, by virtue of its actions, repudiated the pluralism of the Secular Renaissance which had previously plagued the Church: the organization of religious institutions was tightened, discipline was improved, and the parish was emphasized. The appointment of Bishops for political reasons was no longer tolerated. In the past, the large landholdings forced many bishops to be "absent bishops" who at times were property managers trained in administration. Thus, the Council of Trent combated "absenteeism," which was the practice of bishops living in Rome or on landed estates rather than in their dioceses. The Council of Trent also gave bishops greater power to supervise all aspects of religious life. Zealous prelates such as Milan's Archbishop Carlo Borromeo (1538–1584), later canonized as a saint, set an example by visiting the remotest parishes and instilling high standards. At the parish level, the seminary-trained clergy who took over in most places during the course of the seventeenth century were overwhelmingly faithful to the Church's rule of celibacy, and lived in line with the Church's moral teachings.

Saint Ignatius of Loyola (Basque: *Loiolako Inazio*, Spanish: *Ignacio de Loyola*) (1491 – July 31, 1556) was a Spanish knight from a Basque noble



family, hermit, priest since 1537, and theologian, who founded the Society of Jesus (Jesuits) and became its first Superior General. The Jesuits emerged during the Counter-Reformation in reaction of the Catholic Church against the theology of Protestantism. Loyola's devotion to the Church can be summed up in Rule 13 of the Jesuits' "Rules for Thinking with the Church" by him: "I will believe that the white that I see is black if the hierarchical Church so defines it".

After being seriously wounded at the Battle of Pamplona in 1521, he underwent a spiritual conversion while in recovery. *De Vita Christi* by Ludolph of Saxony inspired Loyola to abandon his previous military life and devote himself to labor for God, following the example of spiritual leaders like Francis of Assisi. He experienced a vision of the Virgin Mary and baby Jesus while at the shrine of Our Lady of Montserrat in March 1522. Thereafter he went to Manresa, where he began praying for seven hours a day, often in a nearby cave, while formulating the fundamentals of the *Spiritual Exercises*. In September 1523, Loyola reached the Holy Land to settle there, but was sent back to Europe by the Franciscans.

Between 1524 and 1537, Ignatius studied theology and Latin in Spain and then in Paris. In 1534, he arrived in the latter city during a period of anti-Protestant turmoil which forced John Calvin to flee France. He and a few followers bound themselves by vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience. In 1539, they formed a permanent union approved as the Society of Jesus in 1540 by Pope Paul III, who also approved his *Spiritual Exercises* in 1548. Loyola also composed the *Constitutions* of the Society. He died in July 1556, was beatified by Pope Paul V in 1609 and canonized by Pope Gregory XV in 1622, and declared patron of all spiritual retreats by Pope Pius XI in 1922. The feast day of Ignatius is celebrated on July 31. Ignatius is a foremost patron saint of soldiers, the Society of Jesus, the Basque Country, and the provinces of Guipúzcoa and Biscay.

Baptists are a group of Christian denominations, churches, and individuals who subscribe to a theology of believer's baptism (as opposed to infant baptism), salvation through faith alone, Scripture alone as the rule of faith and practice, and the autonomy of the local church. They generally practice baptism by immersion (as opposed to affusion or sprinkling) and disavow authoritative creeds. Baptist churches are Protestant, and some churches or individuals further identify with evangelicalism or fundamentalism. Baptists recognize two ministerial offices, pastor-elders and deacons, but not bishops. Diverse from their beginning, those identifying as Baptists today differ widely from one another in what they believe, how they worship, their attitudes toward other Christians, and their understanding of what is important in Christian discipleship.

Historians trace the earliest Baptist church back to 1609 in Amsterdam, with English Separatist John Smyth as its pastor. In accordance with his reading of the New Testament, he rejected baptism of infants and instituted baptism only of believing adults. Baptist practice spread to England. Here, the General Baptists considered Christ's atonement to extend to all people, while the Particular Baptists believed that it extended only to the elect. In 1639, Roger Williams established the first Baptist congregation in the American colonies. In the mid-1700s, the Great Awakening increased Baptist growth.^[4] Baptist missionaries have spread the church to every continent.

Some additional distinctive Baptist principles held by many Baptists include the following:

- The supremacy of the canonical Scriptures as a norm of faith and practice. For something to become a matter of faith and practice, it is not sufficient for it to be merely *consistent with* and not contrary to scriptural principles. It must be something *explicitly* ordained through command or example in the Bible. For instance, this is why Baptists do not practice infant baptism—they say the Bible neither commands nor exemplifies infant baptism as a Christian practice, even though nowhere does the Bible forbid it. More than any other Baptist principle, this one when applied to infant baptism is said to separate Baptists from other evangelical Christians.
- Similarly prominent is their insistence on regenerate ("saved") members who have received Believers' Baptism. To Baptists, the "church universal" is the entire body of those who have personally become partakers of the salvation of Christ.
- Baptists believe that faith is a matter between God and the individual (religious freedom). To them it means the advocacy of absolute liberty of conscience.

- Insistence on immersion as the only mode of baptism. Baptists do not believe that baptism is necessary for salvation. Therefore, they do not consider it to be a sacrament, since it imparts no saving grace.

The following acrostic, spelling BAPTIST, represents a useful summary of Baptists' distinguishing beliefs:

- **B**iblical authority (Matthew 24:35; 1 Peter 1:23; 2 Timothy 3:16-17)
- **A**utonomy of the local church (Matt. 18:15–17; 1 Cor. 6:1-3)
- **P**riesthood of all believers (1 Peter 2:5-9; 1 Timothy 5)
- **T**wo ordinances (believer's baptism and the Lord's Supper) (Acts 2:41–47; 1 Cor. 11:23-32)
- **I**ndividual soul liberty (Romans 14:5–12)
- **S**eparation of Church and State (Matthew 22:15–22)
- **T**wo offices of the church (pastor-elder and deacon) (1 Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1–2)

Most Baptist traditions believe in the "Four Freedoms" articulated by Baptist historian Walter B. Shurden:

- **Soul freedom:** the soul is competent before God, and capable of making decisions in matters of faith without coercion or compulsion by any larger religious or civil body
- **Church freedom:** freedom of the local church from outside interference, whether government or civilian (subject only to the law where it does not interfere with the religious teachings and practices of the church)
- **Bible freedom:** the individual is free to interpret the Bible for himself or herself, using the best tools of scholarship and biblical study available to the individual
- **Religious freedom:** the individual is free to choose whether to practice their religion, another religion, or no religion; Separation of church and state is often called the "civil corollary" of religious freedom

Baptist in North America

Both Roger Williams and John Clarke, his compatriot in working for religious freedom, are variously credited as founding the earliest Baptist church in North America. In 1639, Williams established a Baptist church in Providence, Rhode Island, and Clarke began a Baptist church in Newport, Rhode Island. According to a Baptist historian who has researched the matter extensively, "There is much debate over the centuries as to whether the Providence or Newport church deserved the place of 'first' Baptist congregation in America. Exact records for both congregations are lacking."

The Great Awakening energized the Baptist movement, and the Baptist community experienced spectacular growth. Baptists became the largest Christian community in many southern states, including among the black population.

In 1845, the Baptists congregations in the United States split over the issue of slavery. The Baptists from the Southern states supported slaveholding, and when Northern Baptists tried to prevent slaveholders from being missionaries, the Southern Baptists formed a separate organization, the Southern Baptist Convention. The northern congregations later formed their own umbrella organization

Baptists Today: Today, 46 million Baptists belong to churches cooperating with the Baptist World Alliance. Many Baptist groups, including the Southern Baptist Convention and the Baptist Bible Fellowship do not cooperate with the Alliance. Their number can add up to a total of close to **100 million adherents** in the world through **211 denominations**, making Baptists the largest Protestant denomination in the world.

According to the Barna Group researchers, Baptists are the largest denominational grouping of *born again Christians* in the U.S. A 2009 ABCNEWS/Beliefnet phone poll of 1,022 adults suggests that **fifteen percent** of Americans identify themselves as Baptists.

Besides North America and Europe, large populations of Baptists also exist in Asia, Africa and Latin America, notably in India (2.4 million), Nigeria (2.5 million), Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) (1.9 million), and Brazil (1.7 million).

A large percentage of Baptists in North America are found in five bodies—the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC); National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc. (NBC); National Baptist Convention of America,

Inc.; (NBCA); American Baptist Churches in the USA (ABC); and Baptist Bible Fellowship International (BBFI).

Baptist Beliefs and Practices

The primary external qualification for membership in a Baptist church is baptism. General Baptist churches will accept into membership people who have made a profession of faith but have not been baptized as a believer. These are included as members alongside baptized members in the statistics. Baptist churches do not have an age restriction on membership, but will not accept as a member a child who is considered too young to fully understand and make a profession of faith of their own volition and comprehension. In such cases, the pastor and parents usually meet together with the child to verify the child's comprehension of the decision to follow Jesus. There are instances where persons make a profession of faith but fail to follow through with believers' baptism. In such cases they are considered saved and usually eligible for membership. Baptists do not believe that baptism has anything to do with salvation. It is considered a public expression of one's inner repentance and faith.

Baptists believe that the act of baptism is a symbolic display of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. When a person who believes that he has already been saved and confessed Christ submits to scriptural baptism, he or she is publicly identifying with Christ in His death to old self, burial of past sinful thought and action, and resurrection in newness of life, to walk with Christ the remainder of their days.

Some churches, especially in the UK, do not require members to have been baptized as a believer, so long as they have made a believer's declaration of faith—for example, been confirmed in the Anglican church, or become communicant members as Presbyterians. In these cases, believers would usually transfer their memberships from their previous churches. This allows people who have grown up in one tradition, but now feel settled in their local Baptist church, to fully take part in the day to day life of the church, voting at meetings, etc. It is also possible, but unusual, to be baptized without becoming a church member immediately.

Methodism is a movement of Christianity represented by a number of denominations and organizations, claiming a total of approximately seventy million adherents worldwide. The movement traces its roots to John Wesley's evangelistic revival movement in the Anglican Church. His younger brother Charles was instrumental in writing much of the hymnody of the Methodist Church. George Whitefield, another significant leader in the movement, was known for his unorthodox ministry of itinerant open-air preaching. Wesley, along with his brother and Whitefield, were branded as "Methodist" by opposing clergy within the Church of England. Initially Whitefield and the Wesleys merely sought reform, by way of a return to the gospel, within the Church of England, but the movement spread with revival and soon a significant number of Anglican clergy became known as **Methodists** in the mid eighteenth century. The movement did not form a separate denomination in England until after John Wesley's death in 1795. Although Wesley and most of his followers were decidedly Arminian in their theological outlook, George Whitefield, Howell Harris, , and Selina Hastings (the Countess of Huntingdon) were notable for being Calvinistic Methodists. The influence of Whitefield and Lady Huntingdon on the Church of England was a factor in the founding of the Free Church of England in 1844. Through vigorous missionary activity Methodism spread throughout the British Empire and, mostly through Whitefield's preaching during what historians call the First Great Awakening, colonial America. After Whitefield's death in 1770, however, American Methodism entered a more lasting Wesleyan and Arminian phase of development.

Early Methodists were drawn from all levels of society, including the aristocracy, but the Methodist preachers took the message to labourers and criminals who tended to be left outside of organized religion at that time. Wesley himself thought it wrong to preach outside a church building until persuaded otherwise by Whitefield.

Jacobus Arminius (October 10, 1560–October 19, 1609), the Latinized name of the Dutch theologian **Jakob Harmenszoon** from the Protestant Reformation period, (also known by the Anglicized names of **Jacob Arminius** or **James Arminius**), served from 1603 as professor in theology at the University of Leiden. He

wrote many books and treatises on theology, and his views became the basis of Arminianism and the Dutch Remonstrant movement.

Following his death, his challenge to the Reformed standard, the Belgic Confession provoked ample discussion at the Synod of Dort, which crafted the five points of Calvinism in refutation of Arminius's teaching, though in actuality he objected to only three of the five points: unconditional election, limited atonement, and irresistible grace, and doubted one: perseverance of the saints.

Arminius has arguably become best known as the founder of the school in Protestant theology that attempted to reform Calvinism, and thereby lends his name to a movement — Arminianism — which resisted some of the tenets (i.e., unconditional predestination, limited atonement) of Calvinism. The early Dutch followers of Arminius' teaching became known as Remonstrants after they issued a document containing five points of disagreement with classic Calvinism, entitled *Remonstrantie* (1610). In attempting to defend Calvinistic predestination against the teachings of Dirck Volckertszoon Koornhert, Arminius began to doubt aspects of Calvinism and thus modified some parts of his view. He became a professor of theology at Leiden in 1603, and remained there for the rest of his life.

Arminius taught of a "preventing" (or prevenient) grace that has been conferred upon all by the holy spirit and this grace is "sufficient for belief, in spite of our sinful corruption, and thus for salvation." Arminius stated that "the grace sufficient for salvation is conferred on the Elect, and on the Non-elect; that, if they will, they may believe or not believe, may be saved or not be saved." William Witt states that "Arminius has a very high theology of grace. He insists emphatically that grace is gratuitous because it is obtained through God's redemption in Christ, not through human effort."

The Five Points of Calvinism

Calvinist theology is sometimes identified with the five points of Calvinism, also called the doctrines of grace, which are a point-by-point response to the five points of the Arminian Remonstrance (see History of Calvinist-Arminian debate) and which serve as a summation of the judgments rendered by the Synod of Dort in 1619. Calvin himself never used such a model and never combated Arminianism directly. In fact, Calvin died in 1564 and Joseph Arminias was born in 1560, and so the men were not contemporaries. The Articles of Remonstrance were authored by opponents of reformed doctrine and Biblical Monergism. They were rejected in 1619 at the Synod of Dort, more than 50 years after the death of Calvin.

The five points therefore function as a summary of the differences between Calvinism and Arminianism, but not as a complete summation of Calvin's writings or of the theology of the Reformed churches in general. In English, they are sometimes referred to by the acronym TULIP (see below), though this puts them in a different order than the Canons of Dort.

The central assertion of these canons is that God is able to save every person upon whom he has mercy and that his efforts are not frustrated by the unrighteousness or the inability of humans.

- **"Total depravity"**: The doctrine of total depravity (also called "total inability") asserts that, as a consequence of the fall of man into sin, every person born into the world is enslaved to the service of sin. People are not by nature inclined to love God with their whole heart, mind, or strength, but rather all are inclined to serve their own interests over those of their neighbor and to reject the rule of God. Thus, all people by their own faculties are morally unable to choose to follow God and be saved because they are unwilling to do so out of the necessity of their own natures. (The term "total" in this context refers to sin affecting every part of a person, not that every person is as evil as possible.)
- **"Unconditional election"**: The doctrine of unconditional election asserts that God's choice from eternity of those whom he will bring to himself is not based on foreseen virtue, merit, or faith in those people. Rather, it is unconditionally grounded in God's mercy alone.
- **"Limited atonement"**: Also called "particular redemption" or "definite atonement," the doctrine of limited atonement asserts that Jesus' substitutionary atonement was definite and certain in its design and accomplishment. This implies that only the sins of the elect were atoned for by Jesus' death. Calvinists do not believe, however, that the atonement is limited in its value or power (in other words, God could have elected everyone and used it to atone for them all), but rather that the atonement is limited in the sense that it

is designed for some and not all. Hence, Calvinists hold that the atonement is sufficient for all and efficient for the elect. The doctrine is driven by the Calvinistic concept of the sovereignty of God in salvation and their understanding of the nature of the atonement.

- **"Irresistible grace"**: The doctrine of irresistible grace (also called "efficacious grace") asserts that the saving grace of God is effectually applied to those whom he has determined to save (that is, the elect) and, in God's timing, overcomes their resistance to obeying the call of the gospel, bringing them to a saving faith. This means that when God sovereignly purposes to save someone, that individual certainly will be saved. The doctrine holds that every influence of God's Holy Spirit cannot be resisted, but that the Holy Spirit, "graciously causes the elect sinner to cooperate, to believe, to repent, to come freely and willingly to Christ."
- **"Perseverance of the saints"**: Perseverance (or preservation) of the saints. The doctrine asserts that since God is sovereign and his will cannot be frustrated by humans or anything else, those whom God has called into communion with himself will continue in faith until the end. Those who apparently fall away either never had true faith to begin with or will return. The word "saints" is used in the Biblical sense to refer to all who are set apart by God, not in the technical sense of one who is exceptionally holy, canonized, or in heaven.

Topic	Lutheranism	Traditional Calvinism	Classical Arminianism
Human will	Total Depravity without free will	Total Depravity, the will is only free to choose evil	Total Depravity, but free will by God's grace
Election	Unconditional election to salvation only	Unconditional election to salvation and ones own damnation	Conditional election in view of foreseen faith or unbelief
Justification	Justification of all people completed at Christ's death.	Justification is limited to those elected to salvation from eternity, completed at Christ's death.	Justification made possible for all, but only completed when one chooses faith.
Conversion	Through the means of grace, resistible	Without means, irresistible	Resistible due to the grace of free will
Preservation and apostasy	Falling away is possible, but God gives assurance of preservation.	Perseverance of the saints, The elect will persevere and never fall away	Preservation upon the condition of persevering faith with the possibility of a total and final apostasy.