

An Introduction to the Reformed Faith

Nov. 5. Introduction

Nov. 12. History and variations

Nov. 19. Heidelberg Catechism

Nov. 26. Westminster Standards

Dec. 3. Salvation, Election, Predestination, Providence

Dec. 10. Covenant; Christ as Prophet, Priest, & King

Dec. 17. Culture and Society

From the 1540s: Reformed groups led Protestant expansion, because

- (A) Lutherans suffered setbacks.
- (B) Local church leaders were able to take control, or struggled to take control of, Christian teachings and practice in their regions (as opposed to monarchs, bishops, the pope).
- (C) Reformed emphases (salvation by divine initiative, Scripture as rule, mixture of “democratic” and “aristocratic” organization) won adherents.
- (D) Reformed teachings provided coherence. An example was the Geneva Confession of 1536: Scripture as story of redemption and as explicit guide (Par. 1)¹; God’s law to govern all of life (Par. 3)²; Civil Government to follow God’s law (Par. 21)³
- (E) Local control allowed for differences. Important confessions or catechisms: Helvetic (1536), Scots (1560), Belgic (1561), Heidelberg (1564), Second Helvetic (1566), Dordt (1619), Westminster (1646)
- (F) In some areas Reformed piety proved crucial: examples, the Geneva Psalter, the Heidelberg Catechism

Eventually. Reformed perspectives became dominant in Geneva and other Swiss cantons, Scotland, and New England. They were also influential in France, SW Germany, the Netherlands, Hungary, and England.

Adaptable. 16th and 17th-century Europe generally (early capitalist, Renaissance [ad fontes = to the sources], printing, politically reforming Reformed).

--France, Scotland, the Netherlands, England (resistance and nationalistic Reformed).

--Puritan New England (wilderness Reformed).

--United States (church-state separation Reformed).

--Korea (shamanistic Reformed).

--China (Confucian Reformed).

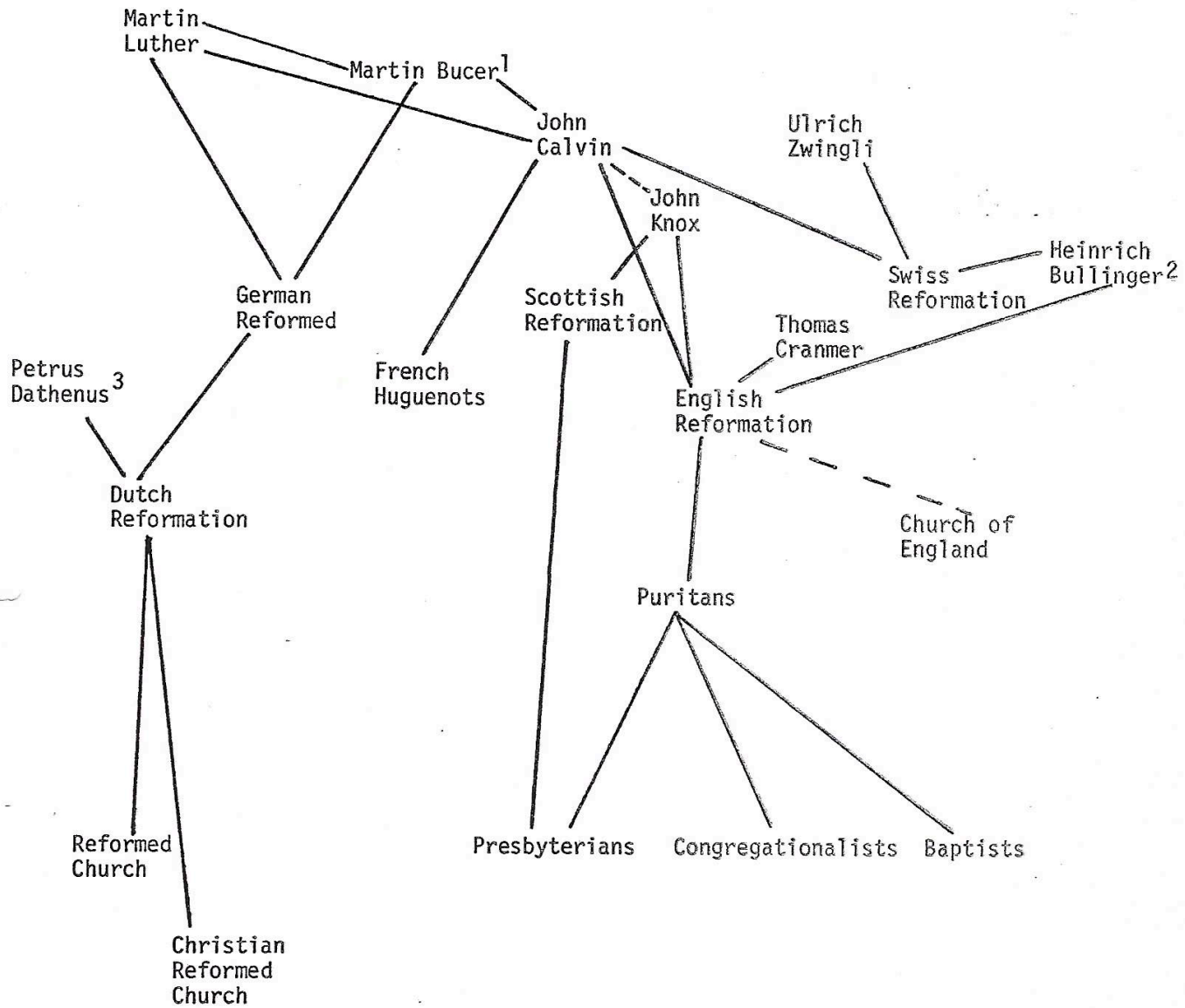
--“New Calvinist” (soteriological Reformed).

¹ First, we affirm that we desire to follow Scripture alone as the rule of faith and religion, without mixing with it any other thing which might be devised by the opinion of men apart from the Word of God, and without wishing to accept for our spiritual government any other doctrine than what is conveyed to us by the same Word without addition or diminution, according to the command of our Lord.

² We confess all our life ought to be ruled in accordance with the commandments of [God’s] holy Law in which is contained all perfect of justice, and that we ought to have no other rule of good and just living, nor invent other good works to supplement than those which are contained [in the Ten Commandments].

³ We ought to regard [Magistrates] as vicars and lieutenants of God, whom one cannot resist without resisting God himself; and their office as a sacred commission from God which has been given them so that they may rule and govern us.

A SIMPLIFIED "FAMILY TREE" OF THE REFORMED FAITH



- 1) Calvin's "pastor" in Strasbourg, late 1530's
- 2) Respected reformed theologian who supported a strong state-church system
- 3) Translated the Heidelberg Catechism into Dutch, 1566