

of what can happen when Christians who agree on the essentials work together in community. Much like leaders today, the Reformers did not always agree, but they did keep working together to build Christ's kingdom. As a result, these men did together what none of them could have done alone. It is a good model for leaders today.

A Mandate for the Future

Let us be the Reformers of this generation. Let us read each other, write each other, visit each other, attend conference together, influence each other, learn from each other, work together, hold each other accountable, and, when needed, challenge and correct each other. In other words, let's be in community. We don't have to agree on everything to change the world. But, like the Reformers, we too need to be together in community.

If the only technology the Reformers had available to them was the Guttenberg press, imagine what we can do! Today the Internet and email give us opportunities to connect that were unthinkable just fifteen years ago. What is the ultimate purpose of technology? It is to complete the Great Commission.

One great idea can change the world. Our idea is that a community of 100,000 leaders passionate about men's discipleship can disciple 10,000,000 men. Do you think 10,000,000 men discipled to be godly men, husbands, and fathers could turn our nation to Christ in 40 years? Only God knows, but it will be worth the effort to find out. And, of course, we will never know unless we try. Can we work together?

¹ For this historical account I have relied completely on my seminary notes from Dr. Frank James, now the President of Reformed Theological Seminary, Orlando, Florida. Any errors in this account are my sole responsibility

A LOOK IN THE MIRROR™

EQUIPPING LEADERS IN THE BATTLE FOR MEN'S SOULS

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What Can Happen When Leaders Work Together in Community?

Pat Morley

We believe that God can do His best work in men's lives when leaders communicate with each other and openly share their best practices and resources. So in 2007, on behalf of the Christian men's movement, Man in the Mirror will begin hosting an online community for leaders at www.disciplemen.com.

An Illustration from History

To illustrate the potential power of leaders working together in community, I would like to tell you about one of history's most astonishing transformations. It took place during a short period of time in the sixteenth century. *In just 40 years, half of all the churches in Europe converted to Protestantism.* This yeasty time has come to be known as The Protestant Reformation.

How did the Reformation happen so quickly? What were the factors that led to such rapid transformation? And what lessons can we learn for our ministries today?

First, and not unlike Protestantism today, the Reformation had many different important leaders. On my office wall I have 18th century mezzotint drawings of nine of the most important Reformation leaders: Erasmus, Luther, Melancthon, Bucer, Calvin, Beza, Bullinger, Martyr, and Henry VIII. I have each of them matted in a different color of the rainbow to illustrate the broad spectrum of thinking present in the Reformation.

Beginning on the left, in *purple*, is Erasmus who laid the foundations. Next, in shades of blue are Luther and Melancthon who spearheaded the Lutheran branch in Germany. The Reformed branch included Bucer in Strasburg; Calvin and Beza in Geneva (3 shades of *green*), and Zwingli, Bullinger (*yellow*), and Martyr (*orange*) in Zurich. The Radical Reformation was led by the Anabaptists. And the English Reformation was piloted by Henry VIII (*red*) and his son, Edward VI.

Let's recount some highlights from the Reformation.¹ While reading along, see if you can pick out some of the factors that led to the Reformers' success.

The foundations for the Protestant Reformation were laid by the humanist Erasmus. Erasmus is remembered as the scholar who opened the door that allowed Luther and more radical reformers to challenge the church. Ironically,

Erasmus opened the way, but then spent the rest of his career distancing himself from Luther and Melancthon. He really belonged more to the world of the fifteenth century than to the Reformation. Erasmus wanted to reform the morals of the church, Luther wanted to change the doctrine of the church.

At the beginning of his career, Luther was reading Augustine and Erasmus—the world's first best-selling author. Erasmus and Luther had a positive relationship between 1519 and 1526.

Luther's chief lieutenant was Philip Melancthon, who systematized Luther. Melancthon and Martin Bucer attended the Colloquy of Regensburg in 1541 at which Contarini for the Catholics and Melancthon for the Reformers thought they had reached an agreement on double predestination. Calvin accepted the outcome, but Luther and the Pope rejected it.

Melancthon was a friend of John Calvin and, over time, he abandoned Luther's view of the Eucharist for the real presence view of Calvin. Later, Melancthon's view of predestination started to shift, so Peter Martyr wrote him and asked what was happening to him. Calvin wrote and challenged Melancthon too.

As a young man, John Calvin wanted to go to Strasberg but ended up in Geneva. There he tried to build a reformed city, but was banished from Geneva. So he did finally get to Strasberg—as an exile! There he worked with Martin Bucer. Bucer took Calvin under his wing and, among other things, found him a wife. It was from Bucer that Calvin learned how a reformed city and church should work.

After starting as a Dominican monk, Bucer went on to become the famous Reformer of Strasberg. Martin Bucer heard Luther speak and wrote to him. Later in his career, Edward VI, Henry VIII's son appointed Bucer the Regis Professor of Theology in Cambridge.

Meanwhile, Theodore Beza had become Calvin's right hand man after Calvin's return to Geneva. Beza began to systematize Calvin's work and ran The Genevan Academy to train pastors. Jacob Arminius (the father of Arminian theology) studied under Beza at The Genevan Academy.

Huldrych Zwingli started the reform movement in Zurich. Zwingli's hero was Erasmus whom he met in 1515. However, Zwingli, like Luther, split with Erasmus over justification by faith alone in 1520.

From 1520 on, Zwingli and Luther were reading each other's works. As a result, five years into Zwingli's Reformation he became interested in theological reformation because of Luther's views. Zwingli, however, had an extreme view of double predestination. So Calvin wrote him a letter cautioning him that his view was too extreme. Zwingli's protégé was Henrich Bullinger.

After Bullinger succeeded Zwingli, he created a Swiss Reformed tradition that became at least as far reaching as Calvin's. In 1549 Calvin took a trip

to meet Bullinger to bring unity between German and Swiss believers on the matter of the Eucharist.

Meanwhile, over in England, Bloody Mary was persecuting the Puritans. Many fled to Zurich and Geneva where they studied under Martyr and Calvin, respectively. As you might expect, they became Calvinized, so returned to England with a Presbyterian orientation.

It was King Henry VIII who opened the door for Protestantism in England after being excommunicated for his attraction to Ann Bolin. Henry set himself up at the head of the new Church of England. There were at the time some 800 monasteries in England, and he suppressed them all. Henry never actually gave up his personal affirmation of Catholicism, but he did bring on men who were Protestants. And Henry's third wife, Jane Seymour—who died while delivering Henry a son, Edward—was Protestant.

Edward assumed the throne in 1547 at the fair age of nine or ten. His education was put entirely into the hands of the Seymour family who raised him as a Protestant. Edward was a born again Christian. With Thomas Cranmer's help, Edward publicly promoted Protestantism. Eventually, Edward invited Martyr and Bucer to England to become the Regis professors of theology at Oxford and Cambridge, respectively (the two main seminaries in England). Together, they raised up a whole generation of English Protestants.

So what were the factors that led to half of Europe's churches becoming Protestant in just 40 years? And what are the lessons we can learn? As you can see in the account just presented, several human factors contributed to what the Reformers accomplished. Even though they each ministered in their own vineyards, they were:

- Reading each other (thanks to Guttenberg printing from mid 15th c.)
- Writing each other
- Visiting each other
- Attending conferences together
- Influencing each other
- Learning from each other
- Working together
- Holding each other accountable
- Challenging each other
- Correcting each other

The 16th century Reformation offers us one of the most encouraging examples