

Immediate Causes and Principles of Reformation

The Tyrannical Disposition of the Popes During the Middle Ages Was One Cause

- **They prostituted spiritual things to their own benefit**
- **“Even the choice of who would be Pope depended largely upon political favoritism and nepotism**
- **“Some of the most licentious men imaginable were occupying the papacy**
 - **“Alexander VI was referred to as a ‘Papal Nero,’ destitute of all religious virtues and principles (from Mosheim)**
 - **“Julian II was a politician and warrior**
 - **“Leo X had far more interest in the revival of pagan literature and art than he did in religion” (Shackelford 54)**

Other Immediate Causes

- **Cardinals, bishops, priests and monks were involved in great immoralities, with simony and nepotism being widely practiced**
- **Discipline in the churches was ruined by the flagrant violations of spiritual leaders**
- **A complete lack of study of scripture - Carlstadt said he was made a Doctor of Divinity before he even had a complete copy of the Bible**
- **Preaching was unimportant, except for using it to sell indulgences**
- **“Endless rites, ceremonies, and image worship obstructed true worship to God (Shackelford 54-55)**

Still More Causes

- **Good works were replaced by works of merit**
- **“Remission of sins could be bought with money. The sale of indulgences was carried on under the direction of the Pope”**
- **“The rise of Scholasticism and the renewal of the desire for learning among the ‘laity’ caused a greater respect for the Scriptures as authority in faith and morals”**
- **“Many European kings and princes favored the full separation of church from state” (Shackelford 55)**

**Some Fundamental
Principles Were Held by
Those Involved in the
Protestant Reformation**

Their View of the Bible

- **Reformation leaders viewed the Bible as the infallible rule of faith and practice**
- **Roman Catholic doctrine held “that Scripture and ecclesiastical tradition are both to be accepted as a rule of faith” (Shackelford 55)**

Accepting Anything Not Expressly Forbidden

- **“Luther’s attitude in matters of worship was strongly conservative, his principle being that ‘what is not contrary to Scripture is for Scripture and Scripture for it’” (Walker 314)**
- **In other words, anything is acceptable “that does not expressly contradict the Scriptures”**
- **Such a view led to keeping certain things established by the Roman Catholic Church, like instrumental music and sprinkling babies (Shackelford 55)**

Faith Only

- “A reading of Romans 1:17 convinced him [Luther] that only faith in Christ could make one just before God”
- *Sola fide*, or justification by faith, became one of his constant themes from that day forward (Cairns 282)
- This contrasted with Catholic doctrine that said man is justified by faith combined with meritorious works (Shackelford 55)

The Priesthood of All Believers

- **“For Martin Luther, it meant the duty of every Christian to hear the confession of fellow Christians, speak the word of forgiveness to them, and to sacrifice the self to God” (Althaus as quoted by Everett Ferguson, *The Church of Christ: A Biblical Ecclesiology for Today*, Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1996, 222)**
- **This contrasted with the Roman Catholic priesthood**

A More Direct Line to Christ

- **“Removal of obstructions between the believer and Christ; such as, intercession of saints and Mary (Shackelford 56)**