

THE FIVE SOLAS

³ If the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do? (Ps. 11:3)

¹⁹ When they say to you, “Consult the mediums and the spiritists who whisper and mutter,” should not a people consult their God? Should they consult the dead on behalf of the living? ²⁰ To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because they have no dawn. (Is. 8:19-20)

¹² Therefore, I will always be ready to remind you of these things, even though you already know them, and have been established in the truth which is present with you. (2 Pet. 1:12)

Introductory

Why study? Crucial doctrines of ongoing importance for the church as well as powerful and necessary ones in the Reformation.

1. Importance in the Reformation: what the Reformation was about (Calvin’s Necessity – The Soul of the Matter: Worship and Salvation, The Body of the Matter: Sacraments and Church Government)
2. Importance for today: always reforming, always training and reeducating; encroachments upon pivotal teachings, weakening the Church, the believer, our testimony. The church continues to face the challenges of traditionalism in RC, Greek Orthodox, Coptic, and high church Anglicanism. Souls turn from Protestant folds to embrace the history, stability and orderliness of these false communions which deny the gospel. But we face three other powerful forces of darkness in the church, which make the Solas all the more timely. They are:
 - a. *Rationalism*, in the form of 200 years’ worth of devastation upon the mainline churches. The motto, ‘Man the Measure of All Things’, still walks like a secular giant in the halls of learning and beyond.
 - b. *Experientialism*: 1700’s – the Presbyterian Century; 1800’s – Baptist Century; 1900’s – Charismatic and Pentecostal Century (fastest growing movement)
 - c. *Relativism*: this covers all the myriad ways in which the message of the church is curtailed, molded, and recast to fit an all-important sovereign audience. Replacing the God-Centered vision of the Reformation with a Man-Centered vision of self-esteem, the new message and model run the gamut of

the therapeutic, entertainment, marketing, and political/cause oriented ministry, found in megachurch, parachurch and emergent church¹ movements.

The picture is grim, as well summarized in The Cambridge Declaration 20 years ago: “As evangelical faith becomes secularized, its interests have been blurred with those of the culture. The result is a loss of absolute values, permissive individualism, and a substitution of wholeness for holiness, recovery for repentance, intuition for truth, feeling for belief, chance for providence, and immediate gratification for enduring hope. Christ and his cross have moved from the center of our vision.”

What are they? Review the five: then go over Boice’s page.

1. Sola Scriptura – the formal cause of the Reformation
2. Solus Christus – the only Mediator between God and man
3. Sola Gratia – the manner of divine salvation as opposed to man-made schemes
4. Sola Fide – the material cause of the Reformation; how is a man justified before God?
5. Soli Deo Gloria – the grand centrality of the one, true, triune God

How are we going to study them? From the vantage of the last one – all glory to God

When? Wednesday nights until the Wed after Reformation Day

¹ David's book is divided into seven chapters. In the first, "The Lay of the Evangelical Land," he outlines the three basic types of Christian with whom he is going to engage: classic evangelicals; marketers; and emergents. All three come in for relevant criticism. Not surprisingly, David criticizes the marketers and the emergents most vigorously. The former is an attempt to repackage classic evangelicalism in a way that is appealing and entertaining. Their strategies are rooted in polls, focus groups, and giving the people what they want, and they inevitably abandon the hard things—the doctrines, the imperatives—to make Christianity more palatable. The latter are virtually impossible to define in terms of doctrine, so broad is the collection of beliefs they represent. They see the essence of Christianity more in terms of what I would call aesthetic qualities—as seen, for example, in their preference for the language of "conversations" and "openness." The idea is to be on an exciting journey, but never actually to arrive. As for classic evangelicalism, David correctly identifies two weaknesses in the movement, particularly as it developed in post-World War II America: its increasing doctrinal minimalism, a requirement of its basic existence as a coalition movement; and its marginalizing of the church in favor of parachurch entities, a factor closely connected to the first weakness... Theologically, [Wells] argues for a message built around the five *solas* of the Reformation, emphasizing God's holiness and sovereignty, the uniqueness of Christ's person and work, and justification by grace through faith. Practically, his vision is built around the three marks of the church as articulated in later Reformed confessional documents such as the Westminster Standards: the preaching of the word, the administration of the sacraments, and discipline. Carl Trueman's Review of David Wells', *The Argument of The Courage to be Protestant*

Who? Terry Johnson's book