

#6 The Reformation Spreads in Europe

My original intent with this Reformation insert series was to parallel inserts created by Augsburg Fortress. Their inserts are historical. My goal has been to ask similar questions about what Reformation means in our world today. I've inquired about your "inner monk" and the birth of the "Reformer" within you.

The spread of Lutheranism through Europe is an fascinating historical study. The Reformation remained a social /political/theological reform. Sweden, Denmark and Norway all engaged the Reformation through the work of students who had studied with Luther in Germany. In Slovakia Jan Hus had predated the Reformation and had himself influenced Luther. So, for Slovaks what had went around came around again.

So, how did the Reformation spread? What can we learn?

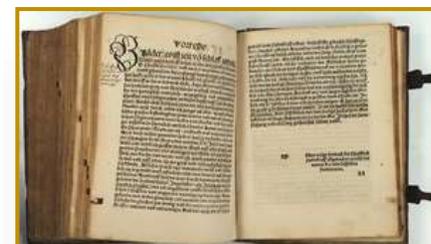
- The Reformation spread through education and thoughtful reflection on the faith.
- The Reformation spread through the sacrificial work of individuals, like Argula von Grumbach who put her life at risk to speak truth.



- The Reformation spread through unleashing the gifts of all - men, women, children, musicians, theologians, farmers and friars.

Here is the lesson for us today. Lutherans value education, scholarship, teaching, learning and mentoring. We are not afraid of scientific truth, political realities or changing paradigms. In Christ, we are the changing paradigm. "Can we talk?" That's all Martin Luther ever wanted. But his request was never for mindless or baseless conversation. He was a doctor of theology, an academic. If our world has lost respect for the educated, we have work to do!

Lutherans also value commitment and the voice of individuals. But again, we do not value the mindless utterances of biased or prejudicial politics. Reformers have always spoken truth just for truth's sake. We know the Spirit will take us forward from there.



Argula von Grumbach was the first published female Protestant author, writing a letter of protest over the arrest of a Lutheran student at the University of Ingolstadt in 1523.

And yes, men, women, children, refugees, voices from other faith perspectives, care for the earth. To proclaim, as both Lutherans and the Bible do, that God has become incarnate in our midst means all these voices can carry the Divine.

We will teach. We will risk all. We will value every person and every creature. This is how the Reformation spreads. (More at www.oregonsynod.org/500)

With you on the journey,
Bp. Dave Brauer-Rieke