

Westminster Biblical Missions, Mexico

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## Celebrating 500 Years

It was 500 years ago, 31 October 1517, that Martin Luther nailed to the door of the castle church in Wittenburg 95 theses – 95 propositions concerning the church's practice of selling indulgences. Luther was inviting any learned opponent to debate with him the merits of the practice which he opposed as being unbiblical. It was this, more than any other single event, that set in motion that chain of events that we now know as the Protestant Reformation.



And so we come to celebrate the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the beginning of the Protestant Reformation, in which the church came to a much more biblical understanding of its theology. The theological distinctives of the Reformation are summarized in the five slogans, in Latin, which captured the difference in perspective between the

Medieval Roman church, and the Reformed church.

### Sola Scriptura

Scripture Alone – Where the Roman Church had over the centuries compiled a grand body of authority, in the decisions of Popes, Councils, the Canon Law, so many interpreters of truth, the Reformers cut through all the clutter by insisting that the **only** authority for the church's faith and practice was **the Scriptures**. And Scripture is its own interpreter. Scripture must be the guide and judge of our teaching - not church tradition.

### Sola Gratia

Grace Alone - Our redemption owes nothing - absolutely nothing - to ourselves! God did not redeem us because of anything **in us!** But we are saved by grace **alone**. Do we do good works? Of course we do, in thankful response to God's mercy. But even the best works that we do - even those are still only by God's grace! "Nothing in my hands I bring, simply to Thy cross I cling!"

### Sola Fide

Faith Alone - Here is the crux, as it were, of the issue of our Justification. The Roman Church certainly believed in Justification by Faith. Yes, they said, you were justified by faith. - But **not faith alone!** Faith **and works!** No, said the Reformers, you

are Justified as an **act** of God, by the **imputation** of the righteousness of Christ, and that justification is appropriated to the believer by **faith alone!**

## Solus Christus

**C**hrist Alone! Not Christ and me. Not Christ and bishop, pope, or priest. Not Christ and works. No other mediator. No other way. No other means. This is the foundation. So simple, yet so difficult for people to accept because it strikes at our pride. God Himself (very God of very God) became man without sin, and lived the life of obedience that we could not, and died the death for sin that we could not, to be the substitute for His people. Christ Alone! If 1/10000<sup>th</sup> of my redemption depended on me, then I could never be saved. For it is Christ Alone.

## Soli Deo Gloria

**I**f there is but one phrase that best characterizes the doctrinal imperatives resulting from the Reformation it is Soli Deo Gloria - To God Alone Glory. Everything that exists, exists for God's glory alone. Everything God does He does for His glory alone. And, everything that man does ought to be done to the glory of God alone. Not for ourselves. Not for the Church. Not for the state. Not even for others... our every action, our every thought needs to conform to that which not only honors our Creator, but glorifies Him - as Creator, Sovereign, and Redeemer.



**W**e will be in Mexico during Reformation Day this year, celebrating with them the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the beginning of the Reformation. It is exciting to be able to minister there at this auspicious time, especially as the ideas of the Reformation have had such a powerful impact among our brothers at the *Seminario Teológico Juan Calvino* in Mexico City, and among our Tarascan brothers in the mountains of Michoacán.

## Revised Links

**U**nfortunately, it appears that the links to our YouTube video newsletters that we gave you in our last newsletter have changed. Here are the new links:

Who are the P'Urepecha?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J02LaQS14Yw>

*Seminario Juan Calvino:*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JMv--ZgsXfY>

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## Please Pray for our Work in Mexico

**P**ray that the Lord will bless our upcoming trip, that God would be glorified, and that His people would be edified.

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