

The Influence of the Reformation's Ideas on Transformations in Western Culture

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The sixteenth century has been viewed by historians as a significant turning-point marking the end of the Middle Ages and the beginning of the Modern period. Europe witnessed some impressive, society-transforming processes which had been prompted, first of all, by the spread of some new ideas that were shaping a new kind of thinking. Many historians agree that the most important source of these ideas lay in the Reformation, the religious renewal movement. The famous church historian Phillip Shaff has called the Reformation the greatest historical event after the birth of Christianity. This religious movement, directly or indirectly, provided an impetus for other progressive movements, becoming the major driving force in the history of modern civilization.^[1] Other scholars have voiced a similar opinion.^[2] For example, Max Weber in his well-known work *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*,^[3] has shown how Protestant religious ideas provoked a social revolution in society; the Reformation historian D. MacCulloch admits that it is impossible to understand present-day Europe without having grasped the changes that took place in the sixteenth century.^[4] The renewal movement began as a construction of some reasoning system to replace faith, but very soon went in different direc-

^[1] P. Schaff, *Reformacija. Bendroji apžvalga* (I d.), retrieved October 2011 from: <http://www.btz.lt/lt/laikrastis/1/5766>.

^[2] D. Pociute, *Maištiniku katedros* (Vilnius: Versus aureus, 2008), p. 19.

^[3] M. Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (Los Angeles: Roxbury, 1996).

^[4] D. MacCulloch, *Reformation. Europe's House Divided, 1490-1700* (Penguin Books, 2003), p. 20.

tions, acquiring its shape in accordance with diverse social strata and impacting cultural developments rapidly and in a comprehensive manner.^[5]

The purpose of this article is to examine and to show the relationship between the cultural transformations taking place in Europe in the sixteenth century and Reformation theology. Out of consideration for length, the author has chosen to focus in more detail on one theological aspect, namely on the principle of the priesthood of all believers (or the universal priesthood); consequently, several areas of culture are succinctly discussed in this connection. These areas (economics, politics, social relationships, art, and education) illustrate vividly the effects of this principle on the development of cultural innovation.^[6]

The term “Reformation” in this article is used in a more limited sense, referring to Lutheran and Calvinist branches. Sometimes these movements are also referred to as the “mainstream Reformation,”^[7] i.e. the movements that shaped the theology of “classical” Protestantism. The term “culture” refers to a multi-functional, complex phenomenon that encompasses all areas of human activity, not just artistic-esthetic or intellectual kinds of work.^[8]

The Relationship of the Mainstream Reformation with Culture

The subject of the relationship between Christianity and culture is a very broad and complex issue, since the area of culture and hermeneutics contains a number of open questions, and the discussion about Christianity’s relationship to culture presents us with a variety of opinions. Two different schools—cultural materialists and cultural idealists—interpret cultural phenomena differently. The former believe that cultural changes and values are determined by material laws, whereas the latter maintain that the major generative, culture-shaping force comes from ideas.^[9] The representative of the latter school, the famous anthropologist K. J. Geertz, defines culture as “an historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life.”^[10] Scholars who are drawn to cultural idealism, in their disputes with cultural materialists, have pointed to the Reformation as an especially vivid example of the fact that it is ideas (or, to be more precise, theological ideas) that played the dominant role in determining historical transformations in a variety of fields.^[11] This his-

^[5] I. Lukšaitė, *Reformacija Lietuvos Didžiojoje Kunigaikštystėje ir Mažojoje Lietuvoje*. (Vilnius: Baltos lankos, 1999), p. 17.

^[6] This article was prepared on the basis of the author’s Bachelor’s thesis in which the theological ideas of the Reformation, as well as their relationship to different areas of culture were examined in more detail. T. K. Dičius, “Reformacijos teologinių idėjų itaka Vakarų kultūros pokyčiams”: bakalauro studijų baigiamasis darbas, 2015, EBI.

^[7] A. E. McGrath, *Reformation Thought. An Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2001), p. 5.

^[8] A. Andrijauskas, *Kulturologijos istorija ir teorija* (Vilnius: VDAI, 2003), p. 336; S. C. Lewis, “Krikščionybė ir kultūra,” retrieved November, 2014, from: <http://www.btz.lt/article/articleview/7279/1/434/?PrintableVersion=enabled>.

^[9] A. Maceina, *Raštai*. (Vilnius: Margi raštai, 2005), p. 197.

^[10] C. Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), p. 89.

torical example has demonstrated that ideas are not merely a product of society; on the contrary, ideas may become a key factor in forming a new society. The Reformation, likewise, confirms the opinion of many Christian thinkers,^[12] summed up in the following citation by K. Vanhoozer: "Culture, that shared set of meaningful human activities and works that express ultimate values, is a 'religious' text that calls for theological interpretation."^[13] The historical evidence points to the fact the Reformation began with the reform of theology (i.e. correcting the "religious" text), and later touched on the other areas of culture as well.

Church history has been marked by a consistent conceptual search that has shaped different views on the relationship between Christianity and culture. Different historical concepts were typologized by R.H. Niebuhr in his widely popular work *Christ and Culture*.^[14] In his sketch of five views, Niebuhr presented two opposite poles, or two extreme positions: one that holds to a largely negative view of culture, and the other that maintains a very positive view of it. The other three "middle" positions maintain a balance between these two extremes—they reject the antagonistic stance toward culture, yet acknowledge that the tension between various cultural expressions, affected by sin, and Christ cannot be resolved. The cultural concepts of Luther and Calvin are attributed by Niebuhr to different "middle" categories and labeled correspondingly as "Christ and culture in paradox" and "Christ the transformer of culture." Most scholars would agree that mainstream Protestantism cannot be identified with the extreme cultural positions. Still, many would disagree with attributing the two concepts, i.e. Lutheran and Calvinist, to different categories,^[15] for, while they are not identical, they have too many features in common.

As already mentioned, in order to give some objective evaluation of the historical transformations in the culture of the sixteenth century, it is essential that we consider the theological ideas of the Reformation. Which of the most significant theo-

^[11] It is true that one's treatment of the Reformation may become overly romanticized, i.e. ignoring the fact that religious ideas were not the only driving force of historical processes, and that the non-religious context of the day (e.g. the Renaissance) had little influence upon the emergence of those ideas. Still, the major sources for the key theological ideas were the Holy Scriptures and the heritage of the Early Church which were not dependent on the sixteenth century context. These ideas were not the sole factor that determined cultural changes, yet they were dominant. See A. E. McGrath, *Reformation Thought: An Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing 2001), p. 277.

^[12] For example, Max Weber was also convinced that the roots of life's meaning systems are found in religion, even though, with time, people tend to forget the origins of the meaning of their work in the religious tradition. T. S. Eliot has termed culture "the embodiment of religion" (*Notes Towards the Definition of Culture*

[London: Faber, 1948], pp. 15, 33, 67-82). According to Paul Tillich, religion constitutes the contents of culture, and culture constitutes the form of religion. No cultural phenomenon is able to hide its religious roots (*The Protestant Era* [Chicago: Phoenix Books, 1957], p. 57).

^[13] K. J. Vanhoozer, *First Theology: God, Scripture and Hermeneutics* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2002), p. 327.

^[14] R. H. Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture* (New York: Torchbook, 1951).

^[15] R. McIlhenny, "A Third-Way Reformed Approach to Christ and Culture: Appropriating Kuyperian Neo-Calvinism and the Two Kingdoms Perspective," *Mid-America Journal of Theology*, No. 20 (2009): 75-94. Other critical evaluations of Niebuhr's typology can be found in: D. A. Carson, *Christ and Culture Revisited* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2008); C. Carter, *Rethinking Christ and Culture: A Post-Christendom Perspective* (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2006).

logical ideas can we single out? In a search of authentic evangelical teaching, three fundamental tenets of the Reformation emerged,^[16] bringing to life some theological aspects of the New Testament largely neglected by the Medieval Church^[17]: (1) the preeminence of Scripture over the tradition; (2) the preeminence of faith over works; (3) the priesthood of all believers as over against the idea of priests' special status. A distinctive attitude toward culture among Protestants was shaped also by other theological aspects, such as the two kingdoms doctrine,^[18] doctrines of common grace,^[19] human depravity,^[20] vocation, eschatology, etc.

The reformers objected to the medieval dualistic view of the world as one without a basis in Scripture. They were convinced that not just the religious sphere, but also the whole of human life is related to God: one's work, thinking, feelings, etc.—all of the areas, in a sense, constitute a “religion.”^[21] The whole world belongs to God. He has created it; He sustains it and rules over it. Abraham Kuyper expressed these ideas in his well-known phrase: “There is not a square inch in the whole domain of our human existence over which Christ, who is Sovereign over all, does not cry, ‘Mine!’”^[22]

The Reformers desired to give believers not only a set of religious truths, but also a worldview that would encompass all the areas of life.^[23] With regard to scriptural revelation, they attempted to maintain the balance between God the Creator and God the Savior, by stating that the people who experienced the Savior's grace are called to live out their faith in different walks of life by serving Him as their Creator, i.e. they have been given not merely the ticket to eternity but also a cultural mandate for cultivating the creation.^[24]

The aforementioned theological features have shaped a distinctive relationship between classical Protestantism and culture, as well as a social stance that influenced

^[16] P. Schaff, “Reformacija. Bendroji apžvalga (part III). Reformacijos dvasia ir tikslas,” retrieved October, 2011, from: <http://www.btz.lt/article/articleview/6251/1/295/>; J. Atkinson, “Reformacija” in T. Dowley, ed., *Krikščionybės istorija*, (Vilnius: Alma littera, 2000), p. 387.

^[17] The first slogans of the Reformation were *Ad fontes* (Lat. “back to the sources”) and *Christianismus renascens* (Lat. “rebirth of Christianity”). They were expressive of the Reformers' conviction that Christianity can be reformed only by returning to the teachings and practices of the Early Church. For this reason, calling the Protestant teachings an “innovation” that emerged in the sixteenth century is not correct.

^[18] Martin Luther, “Apie pasaulietine valdzia, kiek privaloma jai paklusti,” retrieved September, 2014, from: <http://www.liuteronai.lt/Istorija-ir-teologija/Martyno-Liuterio-rastai/Apie-pasaulietine-valdzia-kiek-privaloma-jai-paklusti>.

^[19] H. R. Van Til, *The Calvinistic Concept of Culture* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1972), pp. 57-66.

^[20] *Ibid.*, pp. 229 -245.

^[21] Kh. R. Rokmaker, *Sovremennoe iskusstvo i smert' kul'tury* (Contemporary art and the death of culture), (St. Petersburg: Mirt, 2004), p. 28.

^[22] A. Kuyper, „Sphere Sovereignty“, in J. D. Bratt, *Abraham Kuyper, A Centennial Reader* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), p. 488.

^[23] D. Bintsarovskii, *Protestantizm bez Reformantsii* (Protestantism without the Reformation), (Minsk: Pozitiv-tsentr, 2014), p. 32. The theologian James Orr has listed Calvinism among the existing twelve comprehensive systems of religious-philosophical thought. Similarly, Kuyper lists it among the five great complex (or “all-embracing”) worldviews next to paganism, Catholicism, Islam, and Modernism. J. Orr, *The Christian View of God and the World*, retrieved December, 2014, from: <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/orr/view.vii.html>; A. Kuyper, *Lectures on Calvinism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2000), p. 32.

^[24] A. E. McGrath, *Reformation Thought. An Introduction*, pp. 264-265.

cultural transformations in the West. The impact of the Reformation's theological ideas upon culture is illustrated by the ways in which the principle of the universal priesthood has been applied and expressed in economics, politics, social relations, art, and education.

The Principle of the Universal Priesthood, Vocation, and Economic Development

As early as 1520, Luther took a new look at the Christian's calling in his tract, *To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation*.^[25] The tract takes pains to show that Catholic monks, priests, and other clergy do not belong to a special estate among believers. As proof, Luther adduces the New Testament teaching on the universal priesthood. He points out that the teaching that splits the believers into two strata ("the spiritual" and "the worldly") contradicts the Scriptures. Clericalism is criticized on the basis of biblical passages, such as Ephesians 4, 1 Peter 2, and Revelation 5, which show that every Christian is a partaker of the same faith, having received one and the same baptism by which each one is made a priest.

It is pure invention that pope, bishop, priests, and monks are called the spiritual estate while princes, lords, artisans, and farmers are called the temporal estate. ...Yet no one need be intimidated by it, and for this reason: all Christians are truly of the spiritual estate, and there is no difference among them except that of office.^[26]

It is faith that makes men priests, faith that unites them to Christ, and gives them the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, whereby they become filled with all holy grace and heavenly power. The inward anointing – this oil, better than any that ever came from the horn of bishop or pope – gives them not the name only, but the nature, the purity, the power of priests; and this anointing have all they received who are believers in Christ.^[27]

The abolition of the two estates and the pronouncement of spiritual equality for all believers changed not only the understanding of the church's structure and of its government, but also gave birth to a new perception of a Christian's calling in this world. Luther taught that the vocation of clergy is no more important than that of other professions, since each Christian is a priest at his workplace (be that his workshop, kitchen, farm, office, etc.). By diligently fulfilling his vocational duties, each person engages in a priestly ministry:

Therefore, just as those who are now called "spiritual," that is, priests, bishops, or popes, are neither different from other Christians nor superior to them, except

^[25] M. Luther, *Open Letter to the Christian Nobility of the German Nation Concerning the Reform of the Christian Estate (1520)*, retrieved March, 2015, from: [http://web.stanford.edu/~jsabol/certainty/readings/Luther-Christian Nobility.pdf](http://web.stanford.edu/~jsabol/certainty/readings/Luther-Christian%20Nobility.pdf).

^[26] Ibid.

^[27] Cited in P. Schaff, "Reformacija. Bendroji apžvalga (IV d.). Isteisinimas per tikejimą," retrieved October, 2011, from: <http://www.btz.lt/article/articleview/6299/1/295/>

that they are charged with the administration of the word of God and the sacraments, which is their work and office, so it is with the temporal authorities. They bear the sword and rod in their hand to punish the wicked and protect the good. A cobbler, a smith, a peasant – each has the work and office of his trade, and yet they are all alike consecrated priests and bishops. Further, everyone must benefit and serve every other by means of his own work or office so that in this way many kinds of work may be done for the bodily and spiritual welfare of the community, even as all the members of the body serve one another.^[28]

The newly reformed church retained the “profession” of a clergyman, while having altered its status. A Protestant clergyman (pastor, preacher and others) became like every other believer—one of the community’s servants, fulfilling his functions: serving the sacraments (the Eucharist and baptism), proclaiming the Word of God, etc. The doctrine of the universal priesthood did not claim that every Christian is capable of fulfilling these functions, since not every person is called to be a minister of the church. Nevertheless, a minister’s work is not superior to or more valuable than others because, in the eyes of God, all the occupations that serve the community are equally honorable and important.^[29] By drawing on the apostle Paul’s metaphor of different body members, Luther argued that those who follow their vocation in their work are obedient to God’s established order, as they participate in the public distribution of work (in the same manner as different body members fulfill different functions). By his work a believer serves others, thus fulfilling the law of love and serving God Himself.

Luther’s idea irreversibly affected the view of work among Protestants; now work started to be identified with direct service to the Most High. In his sermon based on John 21:19-24, Luther explained:

Hence it is, that if a pious maid-servant goes forth with her orders, and sweeps the yard or cleans the stable; or a man-servant in the same spirit plows and drives a team: they travel direct to heaven in the right road; while another who goes to St. Jacob or to church, and lets his office and work lie, travels straight to perdition.^[30]

U. Siemon-Netto,^[31] when summing up the Lutheran conception, notes that living as a Christian does not require becoming a church minister. We are simply required to serve our neighbor by doing our ordinary work. There is no need to do something extraordinary; we are called to serve *by* our vocation (Lat. *in vocatione*), rather than through the vocation (Lat. *per vocationem*). The most important thing is to serve our neighbor with love. A person was created to be God’s co-worker, His partner in the continual process of creation in all the areas of life.

^[28] M. Luther, *Open Letter to the Christian Nobility of the German Nation Concerning the Reform of the Christian Estate (1520)*.

^[29] P. Helm, *The Callings. The Gospel in the World* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1987), pp. 60-61.

^[30] M. Luther, *Sermons by Martin Luther, Volume 1*, ed. by J. N. Lenker, retrieved December,

2014, from: <http://www.martinluthersermons.com/Luther_Lenker_Vol_1.pdf>, (p. 234).

^[31] U. Siemon-Netto U., “Vietnamas, Liuteris ir mokymas apie pašaukima,” retrieved October, 2014, from: <http://www.bernardinai.lt/straipsnis/2014-10-13-uve-siemon-netto-vietnamas-liuteris-ir-mokymas-apie-pasaukima/122661>.

Calvin holds a similar view when he observes that each person's work may be respected and highly esteemed in the eyes of God. No vocation is so small or so insignificant as not to be sanctified by God. In one of his sermons based on 1 Cor 10:31–11:1, Calvin takes issue with the dualistic view, identifying ordinary work with service to God:

The devil has so blinded men that he has persuaded them to believe that in little things they do not have to worry whether God is honored or served: and this he accomplished on the pretext that such things are of the world. When a man works in his labor to earn his living, when a woman does her housework, and when a servant does his duty, one thinks that God does not pay attention to such things, and one says that they are secular affairs. Yes, it is true that such work is proper to this present and fleeting life; however, that does not mean that we must separate it from the service of God.^[32]

In his famous *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (III, X, 6) the Reformer teaches that a believer must find his vocation and devote himself to it. The vocation is called “a custodian” that brings discipline to our lives, a starting point, and a basis. Each believer has been given a vocation from God, and the obedience to it brings harmony and comfort in trials:

Therefore, lest through our stupidity and rashness everything be turned topsy-turvy, he has appointed duties for every man in his particular way of life... he has named these various kinds of living “callings”. Therefore each individual has his own kind of living assigned to him by the Lord as a sort of sentry post so that he may not heedlessly wander about throughout life... Accordingly, your life will then be best ordered when it is directed to this goal. For no one, impelled by his own rashness, will attempt more than his calling will permit, because he will know that it is not lawful to exceed its bounds. A man of obscure station will lead a private life ungrudgingly so as not to leave the rank in which he has been placed by God. Again it will be no slight relief from cares, labors, troubles, and other burdens for a man to know that God is his guide in all these things. The magistrate will discharge his functions more willingly; the head of the household will confine himself to his duty; each man will bear and swallow the discomforts, vexations, weariness, and anxieties in his way of life, when he has been persuaded that the burden was laid upon him by God. From this will arise also a singular consolation: that no task will be so sordid and base, provided you obey your calling in it, that it will not shine and be reckoned very precious in God's sight.^[33]

Calvin not only allowed a Christian to engage in earthly matters, but also viewed them as a holy duty to God. Even the word “talent,” which in Jesus' parable is a monetary unit, is treated by Calvin, in one of his commentaries, as a God-given ability (similar to the way the word is used today). Various abilities should be used in accordance with their purpose, i.e. by serving the One who gave them. The work that

^[32] Cited in R. S. Wallace, *Calvin's Doctrine of the Christian Life* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1959), p. 155.

^[33] J. Calvin J., *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Vol. XX. Book III (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1960), pp. 724-725.

is done honestly and well is a man's response to God's grace, the expression of his gratitude, and the way to glorify Him.

Calvin's and Luther's teaching about one's vocation cardinaly changed the view of lay occupation and daily work; in the long run, it has fostered the tradition of some distinctive Protestant asceticism. According to J. T. McNeill, Calvin (as well as Luther) would have had a difficult time imagining that the Christian ethics stemming from his doctrine of vocation would influence Europe's social-economic course in such a profound way.

Calvin's insistence on diligence and frugality, his horror at waste of time or of goods, his permitting interest on money under strict limitations of equity and charity, and his similarly guarded permission of a change of vocation are justly held to have contributed something to the development of capitalistic industry and business.^[34]

This connection between the Protestant work ethic and changes in the course of capitalism was noted and diligently examined by the prominent sociologist Max Weber. His famous work *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* has sparked considerable interest among scholars, drawing their attention to the Reformation's impact upon Western culture. Based on historical evidence, Weber formulated his main thesis: Protestant religious ethics created the necessary conditions for a new economic system and fostered the emergence of modern Western capitalism.^[35]

Weber's ideas received their share of criticism.^[36] Some of it was directed against his interpretation of Protestant ideology. Experts in Calvinist theology criticized the idea of a connection between the doctrine of predestination and the pursuit of vocational success. Calvin himself does not mention that a successful vocational activity may be a sign of election. Any well-instructed Reformed believer understands that one should not look for external signs of salvation, and even more so when it comes to economic success. Another scholar, R. H. Tawney, has accepted the Weberian thesis, but expanded his conclusions to include the influence of the Protestant movement as a whole (not merely that of Calvinism) on economic development.^[37]

Although experts in Protestantism rejected some of Weber's explanations of Calvinist thinking, many acknowledge the value of his studies. First, his book prompted many discussions and similar kinds of study. The author showed convincingly that the theological ideas of the Reformation, in one way or the other, influenced new

^[34] Cited in T. K. Johnson, *The Spirit of the Protestant Work Ethic and the Economic Crisis*, retrieved October, 2014, from: <http://www.brts.edu.lv/files/mbstexte137_b_0.pdf>, (p. 6.)

^[35] M. Weber, *Protestantiškoji etika ir kapitalizmo dvasia* (Vilnius: Pradai, 1997), p. 36.

^[36] D. Sirvys, "Maxo Weberio knygos „Protestantiškoji etika ir kapitalizmo dvasia“ ideju apžvalga ir kritika," retrieved September, 2014, from: <<http://www.btz.lt/article/articleview/1391/1/310>>; S. Pierotti, "Backup of The Prot-

estant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism: Criticisms of Weber's Thesis," retrieved December, 2014, from: <http://www.csudh.edu/dearhaber-mas/weberrelbk01.htm>.

^[37] R. H. Tawney, *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism* (New Jersey: Transaction Publishers, 2008); L. V. Spitz, *Istorija reformatsii. Vozrozhdenie i dvizhenie reformatsii, t. 11* History of the Reformation. The Renaissance and the Reformation movement, v. II), retrieved October, 2014, from: <http://www.reformed.org.ua/2/338/10/Spitz>.

social processes. One would have a hard time denying the assertion that a person's view of work and business is determined by moral and cultural factors, with religious convictions being the most essential among them.^[38] Weber has rightly observed that Protestant teaching, in practice, has given birth to its own ethical rigorism and to a rational life method. However, he was wrong (according to these critics) not take into account the multiplicity of aspects presented in Protestant teaching, confining himself to the Calvinistic doctrine of predestination. When looking at economic vicissitudes, one should pay greatest attention to the principle of the universal priesthood, since it is from this principle that the teaching on one's vocation arose. As Weber himself has observed, Protestantism alone provided an impetus for ardently pursuing worldly vocations and serving God in this way.^[39] A disciplined pursuit of a vocation, directed toward glorifying God, became the grounds for professionalism in business as well as in any other activity. These factors notably influenced the transformation processes in Europe that was about to enter the modern period.

Transformations in Political Thought and Social Relationships

Although Luther was the first to formulate the doctrines of the universal priesthood and the two kingdoms (first presented in some detail in the religious tract *On Secular Authority: How Far Does the Obedience Owed to it Extend?*), these theological aspects were developed and, for the first time, applied *de facto* to the political sphere, not in Lutheran but in Calvinist circles.

Gradually, on the basis of the universal priesthood, Calvin began to build a new kind of relationship, primarily in the church of Geneva. His principle of pluralistic government and of reciprocal brotherly rebuke, the principle that the structures of both church and state organizations were expected to imbibe, was practiced in holding the sessions of church ministers and members of magistracy.^[40]

In summarizing those parts of the *Institutes* that extensively deal with the models of church government and with the appointment of ministers (4 vol. chs. III-V), we may say that Calvin viewed negatively the idea of one-person dominance, and was most strongly predisposed toward a collective rule. He concurs with Cyprian's opinion that democratic rule in the Early Church was the order prescribed by God:

... it is of divine authority, that the priest be chosen in presence of the people, before the eyes of all, and be approved as worthy and fit by public judgment and testimony... so that ordination was just and legitimate which was vouched by the testimony of all.^[41]

Calvin was convinced that if the democratic principles of the church were applied to the state, they would serve the latter's prosperity. He had no doubt that the society would do best whenever the people themselves are allowed to choose the government.

^[38] T. K. Johnson, *The Spirit of the Protestant Work Ethic and the Economic Crisis*.

^[39] M. Weber, *The Sociology of Religion* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1964), pp. 269-270.

^[40] J. T. McNeill, *The History and Character*

of Calvinism (New York: Oxford University Press, 1954), pp. 162, 187.

^[41] J. Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Vol. XXI. Book IV, p. 1066.

In his sermon from the Book of Deuteronomy, Calvin names democratic elections as God's special gift:

... since God grants us the grace or rather privilege of choosing officers to govern us, which is not common to all people in any way, let us not abuse that gift of God, or else we will be amazed to see ourselves bereft of it. And truly the very cause why so many tyrannies are crept into the world is that all nations have given up their freedom so that there is no more election...^[42]

In Calvin's *Institutes* one may find his reflections on various forms of government. Both in ecclesiastical and political government, he preferred collective rather than individual forms of government. Since monarchs with absolute power were often prone to tyranny and had their interests moved by personal rather than social interests, Calvin viewed such models of government as the least reliable. The better model, therefore, is the one where power is shared, that is, aristocracy or democracy:

Therefore, men's fault or failing causes it to be safer and more bearable for a number to exercise government, so that they may help one another, teach and admonish one another; and, if one asserts himself unfairly, there may be a number of censors and masters to restrain his willfulness.^[43]

According to Calvin, the divine origins of power cohere well with the idea of democratic elections. To the end of his life, Calvin condemned absolutism and defended democratic ideas in his various writings. For this reason, more careful examination of Calvin's political ideas makes one take the labels not infrequently applied to Calvin in modern historical textbooks, such as "Genevan dictator" or "Calvin's dictatorship" with a grain of salt.

The later Reformed theological tradition formed a foundational political stance, consisting of two parts: (1) we should accept from God with gratitude the state together with the means that have been instituted for maintaining order and preventing chaos; (2) we must stay on our alert continuously, lest the state's government pose any danger to our personal freedom. With the human fall undermining God's direct rule, the state became an instrument of common grace guarding against the dominance of evil. Nevertheless, only God has the right to rule over human souls, and human power over other human beings should be preceded by the understanding of God's sovereignty. Otherwise, such a rule will be the basis of the principle of the domination of the stronger over those who are weaker—a principle that is not acceptable to Calvinism.

Later Calvinism also defended the idea that different areas of society possess God-given goals which should complement rather than negate each other. The Reformed tradition developed biblically grounded social pluralism in order to protect and nurture family, church, government, business, and other social institutions. Calvinists always insisted on respecting the autonomy of each social area and regulating their interrelationships not by means of executive government, but on the basis of law.

^[42] J. Calvin, „The Third Sermon on Deuteronomy (Deut. 1: 9-15),“ retrieved December, 2014, from: [http://reformation.societyphilippines.org/2014/11/11/john-calvins-](http://reformation.societyphilippines.org/2014/11/11/john-calvins-sermon-on-)

[deut-1-9-15/](http://reformation.societyphilippines.org/2014/11/11/john-calvins-sermon-on-deut-1-9-15/).

^[43] J. Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Vol. XXI. Book IV. pp. 1493-1494.

Such a requirement directly influenced the process of enhancing civil rights and the formation of social law, since the purpose of a constitution is to regulate the relationship between the authorities and diverse social areas.^[44] Thus Calvinism, even though respecting secular authority, always resisted the state's omnipotence. The history of Western civilization confirms the following words of G. Bancroft: "The fanatic for Calvinism was a fanatic for liberty, for in the moral warfare for freedom, his creed was a part of his army, and his most faithful ally in the battle."^[45] G. Van Prinsterer expresses the same idea in different words: "In Calvinism lies the origin and guarantee of our constitutional liberties."^[46] Finally, A. Kuyper sums it up: "That Calvinism has led public law into new paths, first in Western Europe, then in two Continents, and today more and more among all civilized nations, is admitted by all scientific students, if not yet fully by public opinion."^[47]

Starting with the seventeenth century, Europe faced significant changes in its social structure. The principle of the universal priesthood undermined the hierarchical system of mediation between God and man, announcing equality among all believers. A transformed ecclesial model pushed for democratic relationships not only within the church, but also outside of it. The Reformers placed a greater emphasis on the personal convictions of each individual and on their freedom of conscience. Their insistence on acting in accordance with one's conscience contained some significant potential that determined changes in social relationships. According to Philipp Schaff, the Reformation was a great liberation event that broke the yoke of spiritual tyranny and protected the right of human conscience to choose faith freely.^[48]

Over the years, these ideas about the inviolability of faith and freedom of conscience were developed, eventually freeing the Western world from the model of the "ecclesiastical state" and establishing the idea of the separation of church and state. The most important step with regard to this development was taken in 1787, when the USA ratified the Federal Constitution that abolished all religious criteria in appointing a person to an office or in endowing him with public trust. The First Amendment to the Constitution declared that Congress cannot accept any law that would establish a state religion or that would prohibit one from practicing his religion freely. Thus, the American government voluntarily removed any possibility of uniting church and state. The regulations concerning religion, as reflected in its Constitution, were one of the most conspicuous gains in the history of liberty progress. The ideas of religious liberty, having been cultivated in Protestant soil, opened a new page in the history of law and civilization.^[49]

The USA, in particular, has witnessed the development not only of religious but also of civil freedom. A. Tocqueville, in his famous book *Democracy in America*, has argued that the democratic peculiarities of this country were determined by the Prot-

^[44] A. Kuyper, *Lectures on Calvinism*, p. 104.

^[45] G. Bancroft, *History of the United States of America* (Boston, 1853), p. 464.

^[46] Cited in A. Kuyper, *Lectures on Calvinism*, p. 78.

^[47] *Ibid.*, p. 78.

^[48] P. Schaff, "Reformacija. Bendorji apžvalga (VIII d.). Protestantizmas ir religijos laisve," retrieved October, 2011, from: < <http://www.btz.lt/lt/baznycios-istorijos-labirintai/1/6496>>.

^[49] *Ibid.*

estant religious mindset.^[50] In his opinion, every religion is closely tied to kindred political views; the Protestant (mainly Puritan, i.e. Reformed) religion has prepared very favorable grounds for the thriving of the republic and democracy.^[51] The second president of the United States, John Adams, noted: “Let not Geneva be forgotten or despised. Religious liberty owes it much respect.”^[52] G. Bancroft shares a similar point of view: “He who will not honor the memory and respect the influence of Calvin knows but little of the origin of American liberty.”^[53] In the first colonies of American settlers, believers could participate freely in the life and government of the church, in the same way as citizens could participate in the government of the state.^[54] The new continent became congenial soil for putting into practice the principles of freedom of conscience and of the universal priesthood, cherished by Puritans as well as by other representatives of the Protestant camp.

The practice of these principles cultivated laypeople’s ability to govern and administer properly not only their churches, but also cities, colonies, and the whole country. Democratic relationships in churches and the consequent activity of community members gave rise to the emergence of self-rule among free citizens, the formation of civil society, and the beginnings of modern democratic political order. The practice of spiritual equality among believers had direct impact on the implementation of legal-political equality. As a result of these processes, in the long run, the United States witnessed the flowering of such highly cherished Western values as democracy, human rights, freedom of conscience, equality, tolerance, social concern, public spirit, etc.

The Reformation’s Influence on Music and Art

Starting with the doctrinal reforms, Luther also engaged in reforming the order of worship services, while also devoting a great deal of attention to church music.^[55] By consistently working out the principle of the universal priesthood, he attempted to create the conditions for each attending believer to worship God with sincerity and understanding. Church services were expected to take on a collective form and every worshipper was expected to participate in them. Church music was to serve the same purpose; it is with this music that some significant liturgical changes were associated. Before the Reformation, virtually all the liturgy was oriented toward clergy and choir; the rest of the participants in the Mass would offer only a few responses in their native language. This collective element was taken on and developed by Luther to a significant degree; for this reason, he may be considered the father of congregational singing.^[56] All the singing in Lutheran services became communal and democratic.

^[50] A. Tocqueville, *Apie demokratija Amerikoje* (Vilnius: Amzius/ALK, 1996).

^[51] *Ibid.*, p. 309.

^[52] Cited in *Calvin and Calvinism: Sources of Democracy?* (ed. Kingdon R.), (Lexington: Health and Co., 1970), p. 39.

^[53] G. Bancroft, “A Word on Calvin, the Reformer,” in *Literary and Historical Miscellanies*

(New York: Harper and Brothers, 1855), p. 406.

^[54] Earl Cairns, *Dorogami khristianistva* (Christianity through the centuries), (Moscow: Protestant, 1992), p. 299.

^[55] Luther’s first attempts at the reform are reflected in his tracts, *The Service Order* (1523) and *The German Mass and Order of Divine Service* (1526).

One of the innovations proposed by Luther was the use of popular melodies in church singing so that they would be more easily understood and accepted by the common people. Thanks to Luther's special relationship to music and to his efforts to apply the principle of the universal priesthood in liturgy, Lutheran countries witnessed the solemn tradition of choral and congregational singing. This tradition played an important role in making Germany the most musically-literate European country of the day, able to provide inexhaustible musical resources for many years to come.^[57] Lutheranism became a fertile ground for the genius of J. S. Bach.^[58] F. A. Schaeffer once noted that without Luther there would be no Bach.^[59] Reformation theology, the Protestant faith, and the Lutheran heritage of church music constituted the core of the latter's work.

The first composers of music in the Reformed church may also be called pioneers in the wider context of music history.^[60] Having broken ties with Gregorian chant, they would pick up tunes from the free world of folk music. The first Reformed composers, L. Bourgeois, K. Goudimel, and their followers would return folk songs to the common people after having "cleansed" and "clothed" them with Christian meaning. L. Bourgeois was the first to "adopt rhythm and exchange the eight Gregorian modes for the two of major and minor."^[61] He also introduced harmony, divided songs into several parts, and simplified the wedding of text and melody by rejecting medieval embellishments.^[62] These innovations prompted the development of the composition principles that are at the basis of all contemporary music. Thus, by seeking to adjust church music to a wider audience (with the result of democratizing it) the Reformed musical tradition, as much as the Lutheran one, significantly influenced the course of all Western music.

In the Middle Ages, art was "raised" above the daily lives of the common people. However, under the influence of the Reformation worldview, it was "brought down to earth." In the light of Reformation teachings, artists saw that all of reality has to do with God; in a certain sense, all of human life was acknowledged as "sacred space."^[63] This transformation and the contrast between the two eras of art is depicted most clearly in the seventeenth century paintings of the Dutch Golden Age, represented by such outstanding artists as Rembrandt, J. Vermeer, P. de Hooch, and others. The riches of this highly masterful treasury, created in a Calvinistic environment, continue to enthrall and inspire students and composers of art. The contemporaries of this art were astounded at its unprecedented realism and prosaic character. Such a turn of art toward the lives of common people could only take place in the Reformed democratic setting.^[64] The principle of the priesthood of all believers

^[56] R. H. Baintonas, *Čia aš stoviu* (Taurage: Kelias, 2000), p. 347.

^[57] J. S. Andrews, "Giesmes ir bažnytine muzika," in *Krikščionybės istorija*, ed by T. Dowley, p. 500.

^[58] N. Davies, *Europa: istorija* (Vilnius: Vaga, 2011), pp. 492-493.

^[59] F. Schaeffer, *The Complete Works of Francis A. Schaeffer: A Christian Worldview*, vol. 5.

(Westchester, Ill.: Crossway, 1982), p. 122.

^[60] A. Kuyper, *Lectures on Calvinism*, 167.

^[61] *Ibid.*, p. 169.

^[62] *Ibid.*, p. 168.

^[63] Kh. R. Rokmaker, *Sovremennoe iskusstvo i smert' kul'tury* (Contemporary art and the death of culture), p. 29.

^[64] A. Kuyper, *Lectures on Calvinism*, p. 142.

gave rise to the view that the sacred actions of priestly ministry (which can be depicted on canvas) may be carried out not only in churches, but also in homes, in the workshops of craftsmen, in clerks' offices—in every area of society, regardless of a rank.

Artists themselves perceived their occupation as a vocation from God, a form of their priestly ministry through which they were called to glorify the Most High. For this reason, Dutch art was characterized by particularly high quality; the highest level of artfulness, for it was not a theme that established the value of the work of art in the eyes of God, but rather its quality, as the result of following one's vocation. Art was interpreted not as an illustration of God's glory, but rather as a matter of beauty, suitable for glorifying God. A perfect piece of art itself would become a hymn to the glory of God.^[65]

The Reformation and the Development of Education

Education plays an important role in defining the cultural state of a society. The intensity of cultural development in a specific nation or state has always been tied to the progress of education. Some important processes of educational development took place in the sixteenth century; historians link them directly with the Reformation.^[66] The desire of the Reformers to improve the system of education—viewed by the latter as hardly less important than church or family—was also connected with the major tenets of the Reformation. The doctrine of the priesthood of all believers had essentially changed the medieval order in which all care and related spiritual instruction was entrusted to clergy only; for wider audiences, a deeper grasp of theological truths seemed to be redundant.^[67] Learning how to read was not an essential thing for a rank-and-file believer in the Middle Ages, as the personal reading of the Bible was not encouraged. The Reformation changed this attitude by stressing the importance of personal faith. As a result, common people were pressed to make their decision and to justify their choice of faith.^[68] One is able to explain and to substantiate his faith only after becoming well-acquainted with the gospel truths; therefore the Bible was seen as a beacon on the faith journey, entrusted to every Christian. The new religious attitude presupposed the need for greater literacy, since the Reformers' concern was with the number of Christians that would be able to read and understand the Word of God on their own;^[69] the reading, understanding, and memorization of Scripture became not only the right but also the duty of every Christian. The implementation of the foundational principles of the Reformation made education for all social strata, including common people,

^[65] F. Schaeffer, "Menas Biblijoje," *Prizme* Nr. 4 (1996).

^[66] T. K. Dičius, "Reformacija ir Lietuvos švietimo sistemos raida (I-II)," retrieved September, 2014, from: <http://www.btz.lt/lt/komentarai/1/5438>.

^[67] R. Khanko, "Khristianskoe obrazovanie: Nasledie Reformatsii" (Christian education:

Legacy of the Reformation), retrieved November, 2014, from: <http://reformedlife.org.ua/?p=817>.

^[68] G. Schröter, "M. Lutheris ir pedagogika," retrieved October, 2014, from: http://www.prizme.lt/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=329&Itemid=93.

^[69] R. Khanko, "Khristianskoe obrazovanie: Nasledie Reformatsii."

inevitable. These ideas irreversibly changed the attitude of European societies toward general education, encouraging the trend toward a multi-level system of education as well as strengthening pedagogics. The results of these processes are with us even to this day.

Summary

The religious reforms of the sixteenth century evolved into a complex phenomenon that included many aspects of social life. The impact of the Reformation's theological ideas on the transformation of collective thought which, in turn, caused the emergence of some tangible innovations, can be traced to various areas of culture. These theological ideas formed a distinctive Protestant relationship to both culture and social behavior, marked by cultural activism.

Among the more outstanding contributions of the Reformation in shaping a new Western culture was the reinstatement of the principle of the universal priesthood, which gave rise to the doctrine of vocation. This doctrine provided an impetus for the ardent Christian commitment to one's daily lay duties and, in the long run, has shaped a distinctive work ethic among Protestants. This new kind of work ethic left a clear imprint in the history of economic development. The principle of the universal priesthood, while rejecting the unique status of a priestly rank, emphasized equality among Christians and stressed a free choice for an individual with regard to faith. These ideas affected not only the church, but also society; they laid a foundation upon which the modern Western, democratic society, with its defense of the freedom of conscience and other human rights, was formed. The new theological mindset influenced the development of political and legal thought that shaped the principles of the modern state. The Protestant worldview also affected the development of art, and prompted the evolution of the system of education.

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