

Catholic vs. protestant doctrine

Business



Since the mid 1300s, the Catholic Church had been at war with the early reformers over major doctrines such as priesthood of all believers, authority and salvation. The church settled disputes with early reformers like John Huss by burning them at the stake as heretics. For the most part, this persuaded other reformers to keep their ideas to themselves. However, this wasn't the end of the reformation or the battle for validity of Catholic doctrines. For instance, in October of 1517, Martin Luther, an early reformer, finally had enough of Johann Tetzel, a Dominican preacher's claims concerning indulgences and posted the 95 theses on the doors of the church in Wittenberg, Germany. Several years after Luther, around the mid 1500s, John Calvin was planted firmly in the Reformation.

He wrote doctrines specifically for Christianity, all having substantial Biblical support, that went against common belief. The Reformation doctrines differed hugely from the doctrines of the Catholic Church. The doctrine of the priesthood of all believers, which touches on the idea of calling, was an important difference between Calvinists and the Catholic Church. The only similarity was that both knew there were people with the ability to translate scripture. The conflict, however, lay in who possessed this priesthood.

Catholic's believed that only the priests and pope had a calling to interpret the Bible. The norm was that a person must be particularly called to be a priest or archbishop in the church and therefore, some callings were holier than others. On the other hand, Calvin and his followers believed that the Holy Spirit was in everyone, and therefore everyone had a spiritual right to interpret the bible. Calvin based his idea off 1 Peter 2: 9, which says, " But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people

belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light." Calvin claimed that, while people were called to do certain things, not one was holier than another because they were all done in the glory of God.

The problem with who possessed authority to interpret the bible caused controversy over the true authority of the church. The doctrine concerning authority over the congregation was another large issue because it questioned the significance of the Word of God. Catholic doctrine suggested that the Pope had a direct relationship to Jesus and had authority over the Bible. This meant that no matter what, the Pope's word was final and not even the bible could overcome a Papal ruling. The Pope had tremendous power and was able to acquire great wealth through selling pardoning for sins.

He was able to manipulate the Word of God, due to his head position. On the other hand, the Calvinist doctrine said that the Pope came beneath the primacy of scripture. John 1 supports this declaring, " In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." The Pope detested the idea of the Bible coming before him because it took away his power and ultimately, his wealth. The Bible was not written in the vernacular, though, so commoners were unable to read it. However, the Pope did not completely write off the Bible as a whole.

He thought it had authority beneath him. Both doctrines acknowledged the other's authority, but as being beneath oneself. The most important doctrinal conflict is that of salvation. The main difference was where salvation comes

from. Catholic doctrine states that one could be saved from faith and works; this includes performing sacraments.

The idea that came along was that salvation could be purchased. Lutheran doctrine, however, said that justification comes from faith alone. The idea was that salvation cannot be purchased or worked for, because it has already been chosen by God in the beginning, and faith is the one and only thing that will put anyone in Heaven. This was pulled from predestination, the idea that at creation, God determined who will be saved and who will be condemned, and found support in the Bible in Romans 8: 29, which says, “Those whom he foreknew he predestined to share the image of his Son, that the Son might be the first-born of many brothers.” Both doctrines stated that a key to salvation had to be faith; one doctrine simply had several more keys. To this day the battle between Catholicism and Protestantism is still raging with their doctrines at the heart of the war.

Simply put, since the Calvinistic and Lutheran doctrines were created, they have been very different from the doctrines of the Catholic Church. As time has gone on, people become more fervent in what they believe and the differences may seem to be that much greater, but the doctrines themselves have not changed. Through all of the differences that can be found when analyzing the two sets of doctrines, it is evident that there is actually some similarity. This similarity is because the reformers rooted their doctrines from those of the Catholic Church. The larger concept to grasp, however, is the large differences between the Catholic doctrine and the doctrines of the reformers.