



## Reformed Theology and Church Reformation Always Happening and Will Never End

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### **Abstract**

The study aimed to declare several philosophical, theological, biblical and historical arguments regarding reformed theology and church reformation that is always happening and will never end. The author uses a qualitative approach with a content analysis method to achieve this purpose. Content analysis is a research technique to make conclusions based on text or content analysis in writing and systematically. Based on this analysis method, it was found that reformed theology and church reformation are two things that cannot be separated as ideas, agenda and work of God. God is unchanging and sovereign, so only He spells it out through His reformation tools. Therefore, reformed theology and church reformation always occur in His time and will never end. This goal is significant to awaken and dynamize theologians and church leaders who are called to be used as tools of church reformation through reformed theology in the 21st century.

**Keywords:** *Reformed; Reformation; Theology; Church; Content Analysis*

### **Introduction**

The Reformation of the 16th-century church was the greatest event (George, 1988) and one of the most important events in the church's history since the 1st century (Curtis, 2003). The Reformation later became the root and measure of all the world's protestant churches, including today's Pentecostal and Neo-Pentecostal churches (Lumintang, 2017). Of course, the events of the 16th century Reformation were not the ideas or thoughts of Martin Luther and other reformers, nor the ideas of John Huss and John Wycliffe, nicknamed "the Morning Star of the Reformation" 14th and 15th centuries. The reform event was God's idea and agenda revealed to Martin Luther to produce a reformed theology, and John Calvin formulated and systematized the thought of reformed theology, later called a reformed theology. Reformed theology is a unique system of theological thinking, a continuation of the early church orthodox theology formulated by John Calvin and enriched by other reformers during and after the Reformation of the 16th century, which led to the Scottish and Dutch reformed traditions and was supported by the congregation of the reformed churches in the following centuries (Warfield, 2000). This theology influenced all fields, such as politics, society, economics, literature, science, education and world

government since the 16th century in many world regions (Batlajery, 2014; Kelly, 2011). God, the great Reformer, reformed His distorted church through the tools of His reformers, reforming theologians, including Luther and Calvin.

Why were 16th-century churches reformed? Since the reformation is God's idea and agenda, it is, first of all, a reformed truth that essentially transforms the world and/or restores the church (Das, 2007; Kwan, 2018). Furthermore, because church leaders have transformed the church, it is no longer a church. The power of the church leaders (propertied and political power) became the Papal theocracy, considered Christ's representative in the world (Baiton, 1956), followed by filthy and evil behaviors such as fornication and adultery, the luxuries of life (debauchery) and the money politics of church leaders (Pope, Priests and Monks) (Loucks, n.d). The downfall of the morality of church leaders is rooted in the fall of theology (spirituality). The Bible is no longer the only theology they have deviated from the theology of Augustine's tradition (Shedd, 1978; Kristiyanto, 2002), of which the existence of seven sacraments and indulgences are associated with the sacrament of penance being traded, and the decline of scholastic theology, which was strongly influenced by Aristotle's philosophy (Lumintang, 2017), theological questions are answered with philosophy, such as Thomas Aquinas' ontological, cosmological, teleological arguments regarding the existence of God.

Church reform is an event that occurred due to reformers' struggle in theology, that is, the struggle to bring the church back to the Bible. Theology was the way reformers reformed the church. The reformers reaffirmed the fundamental principles of the Christian faith formulated in five sola, *sola scriptura* (by Scripture alone), by grace alone, *sola fide* (by faith alone), *sola Christo* (by Christ alone) and *soli deo gloria* (glory to God alone) (Lumintang, 2006). These five fundamental principles are the belief system that is the church's central pillar. Therefore, without one or lack of attention to one, there must be theological chaos, which is seen in the chaos of the church and church, so that the church not only becomes paralyzed or seriously ill in the condition of the church but is no longer the church.

Since the 16th century, church reform has been 505 years old in 2022, the beginning of this 21st century, so what is the condition of the church in this postmodern century? Many studies have been conducted and found that the condition of churches in the 21st century is in a very bad state like the 16th-century churches (McGrath, 2002), even worse than the state of the church before the reformation of the 16th century ago. In his book *Christianity Without Christ*, Michael Horton reveals the church's present state (Horton, 2012). In the book *Theology of the Reformation of the Church of the XXI Century*, the author reveals that the church became conformed to the world (Lumintang, 2017), and this is also by the findings of George Barna, Roland J. Sider and John MacArthur (Barna, 2010; Barna, 1990; Sider, 2007; MacArthur, 2010). Sarah E. Zylstra founded churches (Protestants) in Germany, the center of Luther's reformation (62%), in Switzerland, Central to Calvin's reform and America (52%) is closer to Catholics than Martin Luther, recognizing salvation by good works (Zylstra, 2017).

In response to the state of the church, before the age of reformation reached 500 years, Mark Knoll and Carolyn Nystrom wrote their book *Is the Reformation Over?* (Noll & Nystrom, 2008). Therefore, Michal S. Hortor wrote an article entitled *Is the Reformation Over?* (Horton, 2017). Stanley Hauerwas wrote, "The Reformation may be coming to an end, but reform in the church is never-ending" in their article entitled *The Reformation is Over. Protestant Won. So Why Are We Still Here?* (Hauerwas, 2017). Nikolaus Satelmajer wrote *The End of the Reformation Is Coming: Luther Started Something We Still Talk about Today. Why?* He ensured that the reform would inevitably come to an end (Satelmajer, 2021). Peter J. Leithert writes that the reformation is not over, but Protestantism is or should be (Leithert, 2013). Gregg Allison and Chris Castaldo wrote "The Unfinished Reformation: What Unites and Divides Catholic and Protestants After 500 Years" (Allison & Castaldo, 2016). Given the many opinions that the reformation will inevitably end, this article is very important and urgent to be studied by asserting that reformed theology will not end, so the church's reformation has always taken place and will never end. This statement raises the following question: What are the philosophical, biblical and historical arguments

that assert that the theology of reformation and church reform will never end? The purpose of this article is to present several philosophical, theological, biblical and historical arguments regarding the theology of reformation and church reform so that it will always occur (effectively) and never end. This goal is meaningful to awaken, move and dynamic theologians and church leaders who are called to be tools of church reform through reformed theology in the 21st century.

### ***Method***

The author uses a qualitative approach with content analysis methods to achieve this goal (Nelson & Woods, 2011). Content analysis is a research technique for making conclusions based on text or content analysis in writing and systematically (Lumintang & Lumintang, 2016). In this regard, the author analyzes the content of essential and deep understanding of related research (Elo et al., 2014), namely thoughts in the literature on the theology of reformation and church reform, especially regarding arguments about the theology of reformation and reformation of the church continuing and will never end. The research steps of content analysis are as follows: select texts relevant to the purpose of this study and then find messages from those texts regarding the theology of reformation and church reform (Nelson & Woods, 2011). Furthermore, researchers use two categories to classify units of analysis, namely the content of literature-literature substance and the analysis of literature content philosophically, theologically, biblically and historically.

### ***Findings and Discussions***

#### **Is It True That Theology and Reform Are Over?**

In 2008, Mark A. Noll and Carolyn Nystrom were two experts who wrote a book with title of the question: "Is the Reformation Over? They answered, possibly over, arguing that many Protestant Christians lived as in the past, the dark times before the Reformation, becoming like Catholic Christians. In addition, there is an opinion that reform is futile because it leaves divisions (Noll & Nystrom, 2008). Nine years later, in 2017, Stenley Hauerwas wrote an article that appeared in the Washington Post. The article was titled: The Reformation is over. Protestants won. So why are we still here? His writing was motivated by the author's experience as a protestant since birth and living in a protestant environment. After becoming a professor of theology at the University of Notre Dame, specifically the Duke Divinity School, he argued that the opposition of the past, namely the reform period, was no longer relevant. For him, Five hundred years after its beginning, we witnessed the end of the Reformation (Hauerwas, 2017). In 2016, Peter J. Leithart wrote "The End of Protestantism". He criticized that one of the Reformation's results was the church's devastating division. Therefore, he called for an end to divisions with a vision of the church's future that transcends divisions, namely pace-reformation. Therefore, he offered church unity but did not abandon faith in the truth. Protestantism is no longer needed by the church today. He compared Protestantism to reformist Catholicism. Therefore, he called for a return to the original vision of Catholic reformers (Leithert, 2016).

In the same year, Peter J. Leithart wrote the book above, and on the other hand, Gregg Allison and Christopher A. Sastaldo wrote the book entitled *The Unfinished Reformation: What Unites and Divides Catholics and Protestants After 500 Years* (Allison & Sastaldo, 2016). The reformation was not yet completed. After 500 years of reformation, there are still problems that the Protestant or Catholic churches have not resolved. The reformation had not yet finished awakening the thought of the Christian faith, equipping efforts to restore the church's health from division. The reality is that the church continues to break up. Nor has the reformation ceased to encourage studies of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Everything is going on. God's Word remains relevant, so reform remains relative. Studies on Scripture, Tradition, interpretations of God's image, sin, church and sacrament have not yet been discussed and taught. Finally, it is worth adding to this section to emphasize that the reformation is not over because the

Bible is the Word of God for all ages, and the work of the Holy Spirit never stops working to renew His church through the Word of God. In celebration of 500 years of reform, the book *The Reformation Then and Now: 25 Years of Modern Reformation Articles Celebrating 500 Years of the Reformation* was published. The book contains 42 articles from theologians in all fields. They asserted that the reformation was still underway (Landry & Horton, 2017). Theological reform resulted in church reform.

### **Reformed Theology Produces Church Reformation**

Reformation in many forms, meanings and expressions, as argued by Hans J. Hillerbrand (Hillerbrand, 1981), is not easily defined. Of course, the meaning of the reformation stems from the events of the religious movement that began in 1517, namely the renewal of theological thought and the organizational church, which later produced the Lutheran and Reformed churches (Calvinism) (McGrath, 2002). The reformation theology produced (cause and effect) church reform (George, 1988). Jack L. Arnold asserted that the reformation was the church renewal brought about by studying New Testament theology (Arnold, 1999). The events of reform (phenomena) cannot produce theological reform thought (truth), but vice versa. Historically, the reformation was an attempt by reformers to restore the church to the purity of New Testament Christianity through theological struggle, returning to the Bible as the supreme canon of the church (Berkhof & Enklaar, 1993). God calls His church to return to Him through His reformers. Theologies and practices distorted from the Bible by church leaders were returned to the Bible, including a return to Augustine's theological tradition (Gonzalez, 1984), just as Martin Luther returned to the Bible through his conversion experience while reading Romans 1:17 (Gonzalez, 1984).

### **Reformation is the Essence of Theology and the Christian Church**

Why are reforms always happening and will never end? Because, in essence, theology and the church are reformed. Theology always calls the church to return to the Bible. Therefore, the theology that drives the church further away from the Bible is not theology because theology is the servant of Scripture. Theology always returns the church to Scripture, just as theology itself always returns to the Bible. That's reform. In essence, reform, like the reform slogan, is *Sola Scriptura* (Only by Scripture Alone). Scripture must continually reform theology. The church must be constantly renewed by Scripture, by the slogan of the reformed churches: "*Ecclesia Reformata Semper Reformanda*" (Batlajery & van den End, 2016). The mistaken nature of the church is holy, and God preserves the sanctity nature of the church through Scripture. Scripture has always cleansed (reformed) the church.

The Reformation can be likened to the blood vessels of Christian theology. Blockage of blood vessels can result in a heart attack that can lead to death because blood stops flowing from the heart to all blood vessels. Theology is the heart of the church and/or Christianity. A theology ceases to be renewed (reformed) is the same as a theology that dies. Without the Reformation, theology and the church would be like the world (Romans 12:2) (Lumintang, 2017). Thus, the Reformation is inseparable from theology, just as theology cannot be separated from the church. Theology, indeed, must be reformed, as well as the church, because it is the church that has a theology. In addition to its nature, it is also a reflective, formulating, responsive, creative, corrective, and reformational task (Tong, 1998). The task of theology is to the world-changing power of the gospel.

### **Reformation is God's Idea and Agenda**

Why are reforms always happening and will never end? The Reformation was not the idea and agenda of the 16th-century reformers but the idea and agenda of God. Jesus Christ Himself is the foundation upon which the church stands and operates (Sproul, 1995). Jesus Christ founded one and most common church and guarded it by reforming it. Jesus Christ did not allow His church to be overrun by death (Matt. 16:18), much less by the filth of church leaders. On His agenda, Jesus Christ wants His church to remain holy as the essence of the church is holy, and just as He is holy, who calls His church: "Holy are you because I am holy" 1 Pet. 1:16). Jesus Christ did not want His church to be conformed to

the world, but He desired the constant reform of His church. The apostle Paul wrote: "Do not conform to this world but be changed by the renewing of your minds..." (Romans 12:2).

Christ is the Head of the church, and the church is His Body (Rom. 12:4-5 and 1 Cor. 12). He cannot allow His church to be defiled and perverse by ministers, whether He calls or not. The Head of the Church cannot allow His Body (His church) to be defiled by its members. The Head of the church appoints the members of His body who, though many differ from one another, become one body and harmonious (1 Cor. 12:12, 20, and 27). There is no way that the Head of the Church will allow the members of His body to stagnate (malfunction), get sick, regress and turn into another body. He surely revives, dynamics, moves, heals, and even restores the changed essence of the church (Lumintang, 2017).

He appoints His ministers to keep His church healthy, growing and playing a role. To play a harmonious role, He appointed His ministers to the church's offices. The church's offices were apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers (Eph. 4:11). The primary duty of all church offices is to relate to the Word of God. Howard Snyder wrote, "The Church must always be critically examined by the written word of God and by the life and doctrine of Jesus Christ, the incarnate word, applied to us by the Holy Ghost" (Snyder, 2006). This has continued to be experienced by the church throughout its history. Christ is calling and renewing His disciples to the Lord Jesus' evaluation and diagnosis of the seven churches in Asia Minor, namely Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea (Kistemaker, 2004). The Lord calls His servants to reform His church, such as the apostles of the first centuries, the sound church fathers' theology in the first five centuries, Augustine at the beginning of the Middle Ages, Martin Luther and other reformers in the 16th century, and so on these reform theologians of the 17th to 21st centuries (Lumintang, 2004; Douglas, 1978). The Reformation continues and never stops because it is God's idea and agenda.

### **Reformation is God's Work**

Why are reforms always happening and will never end? Since reform is God's idea and agenda, He also calls upon His means of reform, transforming and then using them. Church reform is God's work that fundamentally changes a person, that is, to change one's worldview (Engelsma, 2005). Reformation is God's work of changing or returning His church to its original purpose when it was about to and has changed or shifted from His purpose. God continues to call His church to His gospel (Metzger, 2005). The reference to church reform is the gospel of the Lord Jesus. It is also what the 16th-century reformers and evangelical theologians of later centuries reaffirmed (Bornkamm, 1965). So the reformation is the work of God calling back His church the doctrine of Christ. There is no repetition of history but rather the continuation of history through preaching the gospel of Christ to the church, which has continued to change throughout its history (Bornkamm, 1965).

The reformation is the work of God, who continually calls His church to repentance and believe in the gospel. Bornkamm believed, "Today he is still calling us so that with us and through us he may change the world" (Bornkamm, 1965, p. 71). Martin Luther did not aspire to be a reformer, but God called him, seeing the destruction of the church (external call) (Olson, 1999), and his conversion while reading Romans 1:16-17 (internal call), justified by faith alone. Again, discussing the internal vocation, Luther wrestled with "the righteousness of God" and the "condemnation of sinners." This troubled Luther because, for him, God required something that no sinful man could do. How was he to love such a God with all his heart? He then had enlightenment from Romans 1:17 about the righteous going to live by faith. Luther finally understood that by faith alone, justification took place (Gritsch, 2010), and he reformed the church with the teaching of justification by faith (*iustitia Dei*) (McGrath, 2005). From here, the fire of reformation ignited, and the reform movement manifested itself in the form of nailing 95 theses to the gates of the church of Wittenberg on October 31, 1517 (Gritsch, 2010). Not only Luther was called to the task of church reform but also other reformers. After John Calvin's reformation known as the phrase "sudden conversion" (Wendel, 2002), he responded to the call for reform after witnessing the

church's perversion due to false church leaders and teachers (Wendel, 2002). Calvin believed that the unexpected work of the Holy Spirit had separated him from the age (Roman Catholicism) (Schmidt, 1960). Calvin later became a theologian who was strongly called upon to reform the church through writings about The Church and its role as a leader (leader and writer).

### **The Reformation is a Turning Point Theology of the General Church**

Why are reforms always happening and will never end? Because reform is present indicative active. Donald K. McKim wrote *Theological Turning Points*, highlighting several turning points throughout the history of Christianity, from the council of Nicaea, the post-Nicene councils, Chalcedon, Cyprian and Novatian, Donatism and Augustinian, Augustinian and Pelagian, and including the reforms of Martin Luther (McKim, 1988). Each time the church reform took place, a paradigm shift differed from the previous one. The theological paradigm of the church of the previous century changed to the church paradigm of the next era, but the truth did not change (Lumintang, 2006). Reformation does not offer anything new but rather reforms. Reformed theology, however, does not offer a new kind of theology but rather an existing, orthodox or traditional theology rooted in and based on the early church centuries. The Reformation was merely a return to the position of early church theology that had shifted in the dark ages (Lumintang, 2006). The Reformation was a turning point to the point of departure: the Bible.

The reformation of the church was a turning point in church theology. Luther's theses were a turning point in theology and the church. The turning point to the point of departure of further theological reform that continues to occur and will never end, from the apostles to Augustine to Luther and Calvin, to theologians/reformers of later centuries. Never break up. It never ends. Gritsch wrote on this subject: "Many students and younger theologians supported Luther's call for a return to biblical theology and to the teaching of the ancient church, especially the writings of Augustine" (Gritsch, 2010). From Luther's disciples, the reform agenda continued. One of Luther's theologians that continually reformed the church was the theology of the cross because Luther found God precisely through suffering and the cross (Noll, 2005). The cross was a turning point in Luther's theology. The cross was a good point of the reform movement. The cross is the glory of God. No reform is a cross. The Reformation was the desire to return the church to the cross throughout the centuries. The Reformation of the 21st century is the desire and teaching of God's word to restore the church from the teaching of success (prosperity) to the theology of the cross (the Bible).

### **Reformation Is Only Theologically**

Reformation means a return to its original form (re-form) due to a change or de-form (Atkinson, 1988). In the context of church reform, the meaning of reformation is a movement to return the church to the original form established by the Head of the Church, as written in the Bible, its nature and proper function, that is, by what Christ mandated in the Bible. According to Klaas Runia, church reform is: "Taking into full account the situation and problems of this day and trying to find new ways to make the church again what it ought to be according to the New Testament: 'the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and bulwark of the truth' (1 Tim. 3:15)" (Runia, 1968).

To return the church to its nature and function because it has changed, to be unlike in nature and not to function as it should. The Church has been changed by the world and transformed into the likeness of the world. Regarding the nature of the church, this movement is also called the cleansing of the holy and one church that the minds and customs of the world have polluted. Church renewal begins with a church diagnosis, as the author stated in the previous three chapters. The Church is called back to its original essence: as a community of God's people, that is, a living people of the living, holy, just and righteous God. This community is very different from any other community in the world. A community (church) is sustained by the pillar of truth and fortified by the truth, so it is very strong and firm because of the truth.

The church has been and is being changed by the world so that the church is being conformed to the world. There are other reasons for affirming the theological reform in the 21st century. The problems that caused the church to change and become conformed to the world, in addition to explaining the context of the 21st-century reform, which is certainly different from the context of the reformation of the past 16th century, are also external factors for the rise of the reform movement. At the same time, the internal factor lies in the nature of theology and the church itself. In essence, theology must be reformed. Theology is not the dogmatic study of static texts of the past but rather the question, "What does the whole Bible teach us today?" Likewise, the church is essentially a reformation, as the slogan of the reformed churches, *ecclesia reformata semper reformatur* (Stotts, 1992), that the reformed church is constantly being renewed. In other words, the church that ceases to be renewed by the Word is not reformed. A church that ceases to return to the Bible is certainly no longer a church.

The Church is God's holy people who live and play a role in a world filled with impurity. Holiness is one of the qualities of the church. Although the blood of Christ has sanctified the church at the first experience of believing and being justified, it is also sanctified by the Holy Spirit through God's word on the daily journey of her life. Therefore, every day the church continues to be called to renewal through the preaching and teaching of God's word. Charles Van Engen agreed with Howard Snyder's statement that: "The will of God is not only to plant, grow, and perfect the church but also to renew it" (McIntosh, 2006).

In church history, God has always reformed or renewed His church. Many forms of church reform. Neil T. Anderson and Elmer L. Towns wrote the book *Rivers of Revival*. They present historically the renewal of the church in the form of revivals that took place like a river: Revival of repentance, the revival of evangelism, the revival of worship, the revival of deepening of life, the revival of spiritual warfare, the revival of reconciliation, a revival of liberation, and revival of prayer (Anderson & Town, 1997). Indeed, reformation is revival, the movement of awakening the sleeping state of the church or resuscitating the changed church, no longer the church, back to its essence as a church according to the Bible.

James Emery White wrote *Rethinking the Church* (White, 2003). For him, rethinking the church began by answering fundamental questions. White's fundamental questions about the church were: "What is the purpose of the church? What is the church's mission, and whom are we trying to reach out to Christ? What are the determinants of a church living and thriving? How do we fulfil the mission the Lord has given us?" All these White questions are epistemological. White's point was good, but unfortunately, the essential question he did not ask is, what does church mean? This is an ontological question. What is very sad is that it turns out that White is also caught up in the habits of the world. These questions he adopted from the business world, especially from business books that were considered successful, such as James Champy's *Reengineering Management* (White, 2003). The church was made to be the same as corporations but for reasons covered with embellishments of biblical texts.

The condition of the churches today is no longer an answer to the question of the meaning of the church. Therefore, how to restore the church to its meaning or essence? Learning from the reformers of the 16th century, the way to restore the church to its essence, as Jesus Christ intended, was to reform church theology. The theology of church reform is intended to be an attempt to restore the church to its nature, *Corpus Christi* (body of Christ), as written in the Bible. Only with theology can the church be restored to its essence. This is an urgent agenda. The reforms championed by 16th-century reformers such as Martin Luther, John Calvin and others were reforms through theological studies and theological teaching, not by political means, influencing the masses with positional power. They returned the Bible to the church by teaching theology to God's people through confessional formulations and catechism with catechism materials.

In essence, the church is not the same as the world. The existence and function of the church are totally different from that of the world. The church is a community of God's chosen people, who are one,

holy and universal. In particular, the holy church is certainly different, though not contrary to the world. Therefore, the existence of the church is a holy existence. The role of the church is also a holy one. Methods applied outside the church should not be applied within the church. Hart and Muether assert that: "The church's ways are not the world's ways. And that is because God has called the church to be holy as he is holy. He has gathered the church as his assembly. The church is set apart to serve God" (Hart & Muether, 2002).

Returning the church to Jesus Christ through returning the Bible to the church in this postmodern era is urgent. It is not because of challenges and problems (pragmatism), such as the challenges of postmodernism and the problems that result, but because of the meaning and significance (significancy) of theology itself (ontology). Because theology does not only make human as beings with knowledge and personality; nor merely to become mature man, but to return man to his essence, to return man to his source, which is God. Theology not only makes man knowledgeable, personable, mature and lives meaningfully, but also knows and fellowships, becomes like and does the will of God who has saved him. Thus, only theology can facilitate the church to continue to return to its essence, the church of Jesus Christ.

### **Conclusion**

The theology of reformation and church reform is an inseparable unity. The theology of reform is the idea, agenda and work of God. Therefore, while the truth of theology itself is active and eternal, the church is active and eternal, and the theology of reformation and reformation of the church continues and will never stop. This is good news for us and the world. Because the cessation of the theological reform and the reformation of the church means bad news for us and the world. There is no hope. However, in truth, the reformed theology that led to and dynamized the reformation of the church will happen continuously and never end, as revealed by the history of theology, which is the history of the church. Theology was formulated and standardized by and in the context of the early church, developed and relevant by the church fathers, strengthened by Augustine (the father of the church), transformed by the theologians of the first part of the middle ages, defiled and perverted by the scholastic theologians of the second or late Middle Ages, reformed and restored by the theologians of the Reformation century, challenged by philosophers, scientists and theologians of the modern century of the 17th and 18th centuries, perverted and refuted by the liberal theologians/critical histories of the 19th century, uprooted and married by contemporary 20th-century theologians with other sciences, and discarded by postmodern theologians and pluralists in the 21st century, banished in newly awakened Asian churches in theology. God continued to reform the theology of the church and reformed the church with theology. This is God's providence over His church.

The above statement is based on philosophical, theological, biblical, and historical arguments. The historical argument is that reformed theology is the parent theology of the church rooted in the orthodox (traditional) theology of the early church, which was extracted from the teachings of the apostles, and was written in the books of the Bible. This theology was again taught in the first reform era pioneered by Martin Luther and in the second reform era pioneered by John Calvin after being removed by leaders and/or theologians throughout the second Middle Ages. Luther and Calvin's reform theology was enriched by other reformers and developed by Luther and Calvin's followers worldwide over time. This reform theology has stood the test throughout church history, not fading by the challenges of the times since 17th-century rationalism, atheism in the 18th century, romanticism, and liberal theology in the 19th century, and increasingly shining amid the rise of contemporary theology in the 21st century. The theology of reform has not been changed by changing times and has stood the test of isms (views) that affect the world and civilization.



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