

## Indulgences for today and the use today by the tithing pastors.

Indulgences for today by the tenth preachers. Short treatise The third document was a short treatise, entitled *Tractatus de indulgentiis per Doctorem Martinum ordinis s. Augustini Wittenbergae editus*, or "A Treatise on Indulgences published by Doctor Martin of the Order of Saint Augustine at Wittenberg. To Archbishop Albrecht of Mainz, October 31, 1517." This long-forgotten treatise of Luther was discovered in the archives of Mainz "among the papers containing the correspondence between Archbishop Albrecht and the Mainz university faculty of December 1517." It was published in 1907 by F. Herrmann in the *Journal of Church History* (ZKG).[12] The Jesuit and Luther expert Jared Wicks believes that this early treatise is of particular historical importance: "This document is the short treatise outlining a preliminary theology of indulgences that Luther sent to Archbishop Albrecht of Mainz and Magdeburg on that fateful day of October 31, 1517. It has received only limited attention from historians and theologians who started the Reformation. This is regrettable as the treatise neatly and succinctly explains Luther's understanding of indulgences in 1517. The treatise provides the theological standpoint for Luther's intervention, and shows in miniature the rich Augustinian spirituality of penance and progress that he forged in his early works. Germany was scattered, while this penetrating little treatise gathered dust in oblivion." [13] Although indulgences are the true merits of Christ and of His saints, and as such are accorded all reverence, yet they have fallen to a truly shocking practice of avarice. For who really seeks the salvation of souls through indulgences, and not rather money for his coffers? This is clear from the way indulgences are preached. Because the commissioners and preachers do nothing but glorify indulgences and encourage the people to contribute. You hear no one teaching the people what indulgences are, or how much they allow, or about the purpose they fulfill. Instead, you only hear how much you have to pay. The people are always left in ignorance, so that they think that by obtaining an indulgence they immediately receive bliss. It is also devoid of all truth, since we can only be saved by faith in Jesus as the Christ. The tithing preachers still use it today to raise millions for themselves, because the bigger the problem, the more it will cost to get rid of the problem.

"An indulgence is a remission before God of the temporal punishment due to sins whose guilt has already been forgiven." Joel Hodge, from ACU's School of Theology, says the belief is that indulgences can reduce believers' need for purification from the effects of sin in Purgatory before they can enter heaven.



**PHOTO:** [The sale of indulgences helped pay for the rebuilding of Saint Peter's Basilica in Rome.](#) (ABC News: Mary Gearin)

To this day they've been given out by the Church for acts of charity or the recital of prayers, as examples. You can use them for yourself or loved ones who have died.

Luther had a problem with the fact the Catholic Church of his day was essentially selling indulgences — indeed, according to Professor MacCulloch, they helped pay for the rebuilding of Saint Peter's Basilica in Rome.

Later, Luther appears to have dropped his belief in Purgatory altogether. Certainly, he denied that a person's actions had any role to play in salvation, saying faith alone was what counted.

The sale of indulgences was abolished by the Pope in 1567.

He believed Christians should hold to the Bible alone.

This was another of the major issues of the Protestant Reformation.

### **Luther was the Donald Trump of his generation**

ABC RN / By [Siobhan Hegarty](#) for [God Forbid](#)

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It's been 500 years since upstart priest Martin Luther nailed his 95 Theses to a church door — or so legend goes — and split the Catholic Church right down the middle.

#### **Reformation, globalisation and going viral**

Luther's main concern was the selling of indulgences, where people would pay money for their sins to be forgiven by the clergy, enabling them to go to heaven.

His ideas quickly spread, inspiring more dissenting voices and, in time, the rise of Lutheranism, Calvinism and the Church of England.

But the Protestant Reformation caused more than a religious rift: through the world's first "viral" media campaign, it also transformed architecture, sparked the notion of secular democracy, and began to empower women in the church.

## 1. Protestantism gave rise to secular democracy

In the Middle Ages and early modern period, religious institutions and the state were often intimate bedfellows. That all changed with the rise of secular democracy.

According to Carole Cusack, we shouldn't be thanking Rationalism or the Enlightenment for this societal swing, but rather Luther and his Protestant pals.

"The Reformation de-emphasised the power of institutions and strengthened the bonds between the individual and sacred scripture," she says. As religion became a private phenomenon, the bonds between church and state deteriorated, making way for secularism.

2. The beautification of churches went out of vogue. The Protestant Reformation pinpoints a major shift in church design.



Unlike Catholics, who adorned their churches with stained glass windows, saintly statues and other religious icons, Protestants favoured a minimalist approach.

The Reformers believed iconography would distract worshippers from their intimate relationship with God, so they transformed churches from sacred to stark, albeit practical, spaces.

## 3. The Nazis claimed Luther as a spiritual forebear

For all of the change he inspired, Luther was no angel.

The German friar was an anti-Semite and, according to biographer Peter Stanford, "an angry man who wrote very insulting things".

If you want to gauge the extent of Luther's anti-Semitism, look no further than his 1543 treatise *On the Jews and Their Lies*, which refers to Jews as "envenomed worms" and calls for the wholesale destruction of synagogues.

Four hundred years later, the Nazis brought out the tract at their Nuremberg rallies and claimed Luther as a spiritual forebear.

This association with the far-right continues: in recent German elections, Luther's image was displayed on campaign posters of the ultra-nationalist National Democratic Party.

#### 4. Luther was the Donald Trump of his generation

If noticeboards were the 16th century equivalent of Facebook or Twitter, Luther might be said to have created the world's first "viral" media campaign. Technical innovation was key to his success — thanks to the invention of the Gutenberg printing press, Luther circulated his 95 Theses swiftly through his town. Printers in nearby villages heard about the controversial document and continued to circulate the text until its message had spread to most of Europe.

According to Dr Hodge, Catholics teach that divine revelation is communicated through scripture and tradition. For instance, they argue the living tradition (oral stories, practices) existed before the New Testament was written down.

Examples of Catholic tradition include clerical celibacy, papal infallibility and the immaculate conception of Mary the mother of Jesus. But Luther disapproved of any additional traditions. He taught that the Bible alone was the source of revelation. "Neither the Church nor the pope can establish articles of faith. These must come from Scripture," he said.

But technology wasn't the only secret to Luther's success. According to Mr Stanford, the priest's Donald Trump-like temperament charmed the masses, too.

"The Twitter analogy is absolutely right [and] like Donald Trump, if someone insults [Luther], he comes straight back with a bigger insult," he said.

#### 5. We can thank Luther for Christian rock

The Protestant Reformers might not have liked stained glass or religious icons, but they didn't mind a good tune.

A singer, flute and lute player himself, Luther wrote several hymns, and inaugurated Congregational singing in church. Luther saw the emotional power of music as an opportunity to engage ordinary people with their faith — much as many modern evangelical preachers do today.

Martin Luther's hymn "Ein feste burg" (A Mighty Fortress Is Our God).

An edition of Luther's hymn book can be found at the Lutherhaus museum in Wittenberg. (Wikimedia Commons: Paul T McCain)

#### 6. The Reformation empowered women ... slowly

"In the pre-Reformation church, women were regarded as an inferior creation and, worse, as the devil's gateway," journalist and Anglican laywoman, Muriel Porter, says. These preconceptions began to shift after the Reformation lifted celibacy laws, allowing clergy to marry. In time, clergy wives became a byword for respectability, sharing their husbands' pastoral duties and, eventually, paving the way for women priests and bishops.

## 7. Protestantism is alive and kicking in the Global South

While Christians fret over dwindling congregations in the West, Christianity in the Global South — Africa and Latin America, especially — is growing rapidly.

Both Catholic and Protestant churches are on the rise, but driving this growth is a foundational Protestant principle, *sola scriptura*, which positions the Bible as the centre of faith and practice.

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