Reformation ABCs

# G is for Grace

*Faith is a living, daring confidence in God's grace, so sure and certain that a man could stake his life on it a thousand times.* – Martin Luther

Can grace really be true? Grace is perhaps the most surprising, challenging and significant element of faith, and the cornerstone of Lutheran thought. We understand that God’s love for us is pure gift, freely given. We do not earn it. We do not deserve it. We cannot control it. Grace is the unflinching love that tells us over and over again that, in spite of how the world views us or we view ourselves, we are enough. We are beloved. We are saved. Grace sets us free from our fear, sustains us in times of struggle and assures us when we are in doubt. Grace is what allows us to express faith in God in Christ. It is what allows the man whose son was in need of healing to cry out, “Lord, I believe. Help my unbelief!” (Mark 9:24). The grace of God is more than enough to save the world, given freely to all.

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# G is for Gutenberg, Johannes (ca 1400-1468)

Who was the single most influential figure in the history of the Reformation? Many historians would answer that it was Johannes Gutenberg, whose innovations with the printing press and moveable type revolutionized publishing. The youngest son of a wealthy merchant from Mainz, Germany, Gutenberg was known as a blacksmith, goldsmith, printer, and publisher. In his day, he was probably most noted for his ambitious publication of the Bible, the first to be printed rather than painstakingly copied by hand. The printing press was later to become the engine of the Reformation. In 1517 Martin Luther’s 95 Theses were likely printed first by a local Wittenberg printer and soon reprinted in Nuremberg, Basel, and Leipzig, giving his arguments a much wider audience. Luther seized upon the opportunities available through this medium, writing in German so his work would reach laypersons as well as theologians and scholars; his sermons, pamphlets, and broadsides were printed and widely circulated. In turn, his popular writing was a tremendous opportunity for German publishers, spurring expansion and profitability. For more on the crucial role of the printing press in the Reformation, see Andrew Pettegree’s fascinating *Brand Luther* (2015).

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