

The Reformation: A Very Short Introduction  
By Peter Marshall

The Reformation transformed Europe, and left an indelible mark on the modern world. It began as an argument about what Christians needed to do to be saved, but rapidly engulfed society in a series of fundamental changes. This Very Short Introduction provides a lively and up-to-date guide to the process. It explains doctrinal debates in a clear and non-technical way, but is equally concerned to demonstrate the effects the Reformation had on politics, society, art, and minorities.

Peter Marshall argues that the Reformation was not a solely European phenomenon, but that varieties of faith exported from Europe transformed Christianity into a truly world religion.

Questions for thought and discussion

- Was the Reformation inevitable?
- Martin Luther: hero or villain?
- How similar were the Protestant and Catholic Reformations?
- Which was more successful in the end: the Protestant Reformation or the Catholic Reformation?
- Did ordinary people in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries really understand or care about theological concepts?
- Is 'justification by faith alone' an attractive idea?
- Why did conflicting interpretations of the Eucharist (or Holy Communion) arouse such intense passions?
- Was religion a source of political stability or of political instability in the Reformation era, and how does this compare with its role in the world today?
- Did the Reformation strangle or liberate art?
- Was the Reformation good news for women?
- Why were the Anabaptists hated so much?
- How was Christianity 'exported' beyond Europe during the Reformation, and what were the difficulties of doing this?
- Did the Reformation(s) make European societies more tolerant, or more intolerant?
- Can you imagine a world in which the Reformation never happened? How would it be different?
- What is the relevance of the Reformation in today's world?

Other Books by Peter Marshall

Peter Marshall, *Beliefs and the Dead in Reformation England* (Oxford University Press, 2002)

Peter Marshall, *Reformation England 1480-1642* (Arnold Publishing, 2003)

Further Reading

Patrick Collinson, *The Reformation* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2003)

Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Reformation: Europe's House divided* (Penguin, 2003)

Ronnie Po-Chia Hsia, *The World of Catholic Renewal 1540-1770* (Cambridge University Press, 1998)  
James Tracy, *Europe's Reformations 1450-1650* (Rowman & Littlefield, 1999)