



# 2017: The Year of the Reformation

by Jeffrey Breshears

The Protestant Reformation was one of the most significant events in Christian history as well as one of the great transitional eras in Western civilization. As the historian Rudolph Heinze has written, “The changes that occurred were so radical that a medieval Rip van Winkle who went to sleep in 1350 and woke up in 1650 would not recognize the world as the same one in which he was born.” Running concurrent with the Reformation was the emergence in Europe of powerful new nation-states along with radical new political ideas that emphasized civil liberties, religious tolerance, the separation of church and state, and the end to royal absolutism. This was also the “Age of Discovery” in which a whole new part of the world was opened up for exploration and colonization as well as the beginning of the “Scientific Revolution” that would forever alter the mindset of Western societies.

Protestant Christians look back at this period as a kind of Golden Age in which heroic figures such as Martin Luther, William Tyndale, John Calvin, Menno Simons and others emerged to challenge the Roman Catholic Church’s dominance over the religious, social and cultural life of Europe. Understandably, Catholics view it differently. For them, the Reformation ruptured the unity in the Body of Christ that had prevailed for more than a thousand years and led to the unfortunate fragmentation of Western Christianity into innumerable splinter groups.

The Reformation was certainly momentous, and there is much about it that is cause for celebration. For the first time in over a thousand years Europeans had an alternative to the imperial Roman Catholic Church. Not only was the Reformation movement a major grassroots reaction to the corruption and immorality in the Church, but it also offered an incisive critique of many apostate doctrines and practices of Roman Catholicism by restoring the

centrality of the Bible as the source of authority for doctrinal and ecclesiastical orthodoxy. As a result, within 20 years after Luther drafted his Ninety-Five Thesis, the Bible was available to most Europeans in their own language.

This coming year marks the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the beginning of the Reformation, an event that will be discussed and debated extensively throughout the year. The Reformation will also be the central focus of our Areopagus seminars along with some of our forum presentations. In the course of our year-long study we will address issues such as “Was the Reformation necessary?” and “What are the issues that continue to divide professing Christians today?”

This September the Areopagus will be co-sponsoring a **Reformation History Tour** in which we will visit many of the key sites related to this momentous period in history. If you would like to join us for this unique and inspiring learning experience, check out the details at our website, [www.TheAreopagus.org](http://www.TheAreopagus.org).

### The Areopagus Calendar

#### Winter/Spring Seminars

##### The Reformation Era, Part 1

The origins, the legacy, and the major people, issues and events associated with one of the most significant and influential periods in Christian history.

Tuesdays, Jan. 10 - April 25

7:00 PM

Perimeter Church / Fellowship Hall

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Wednesdays, Jan. 11 - April 26

7:00 PM

Johnson Ferry Baptist Church / Room 108

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Sundays, beginning Jan. 8

11:15 AM

Johnson Ferry Baptist Church / Room 270



#### The Reformation History Tour

SEPTEMBER 15-28, 2017

— Sponsored by —

The Areopagus and  
Christian Heritage – London

For more information visit  
[www.TheAreopagus.org](http://www.TheAreopagus.org)

# 2016 RECOMMENDED BOOKS

## — APOLOGETICS —

Dallas Willard, *The Allure of Gentleness: Defending the Faith in the Manner of Jesus* (HarperOne)

Timothy Keller, *Making Sense of God: An Invitation to the Skeptical* (Viking)

## — CULTURAL APOLOGETICS —

Daniel Strange, *Their Rock Is Not Like Our Rock: A Theology of Religions* (Zondervan)

## — CHRISTIAN HISTORY —

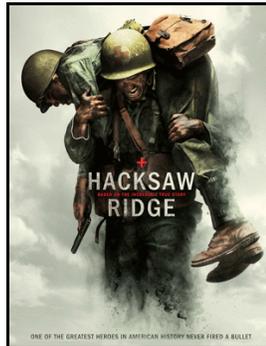
Michael Reeves, *Why the Reformation Still Matters* (Crossway)

## — CHRISTIANITY & SCIENCE —

Fuz Rana and Hugh Ross, *Who Was Adam?* (RTB Press)



Four recommended films of 2016  
with significant theological, philosophical,  
and/or socio-cultural themes



## The Areopagus Calendar

### Winter Forums

**The Never-Ending Jihad:  
Islamic Expansion from the Time  
of Muhammad to the Present**



A presentation by  
**Iraj Ghanouni**

Founder and president of the  
Christian Center for Islam Awareness

Thursday, January 19<sup>th</sup>

7:30 PM

Perimeter Church  
Fellowship Hall

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**How to Discern the Hidden  
Assumptions in Contemporary  
Culture That Control Your Life**



A presentation by  
**Dave Richardson**

Author of "Transparent: How To See Through  
the Powerful Assumptions That Control You"

Thursday, February 16<sup>th</sup>

7:30 PM

Perimeter Church  
Fellowship Hall