

Chapter 13 – Reformation and Religious Warfare in the 16th Century

Prelude to Reformation

Christian or Northern Renaissance Humanism

- Looked at the writings of antiquity, but emphasized sources of early Christianity
 - Scriptures, writing of St. Augustine
- Saw a simple Christianity (unlike complicated theologies of Middle Ages)
- Sought reform of the Church, largely through education
 - To change society, you had to first change human beings

Erasmus

- Wrote *Handbook of the Christian Knight* (1503)
- Developed a “philosophy of Christ,” (rather than a dogmatic religious view)
 - Preferred inner devotion to external rituals
- Translated original Greek texts of the Bible (instead of accepting the Church’s Vulgate version)
- Wrote *The Praise of Folly* (1509) a humorous criticism of Church corruption
 - Contemporaries said “Erasmus laid the egg that Luther hatched”

Thomas More

- As a humanist, More believed in using his learning to help the state
- Friend of Erasmus, he devoted hours a day to prayer and contemplation
- Wrote *Utopia* (1516) – *utopia* literally means “nowhere”
 - Proposed an ideal social, economic, and political society
 - Communal ownership, equal work hours, reward according to need, plenty of leisure time
- In serving King Henry VIII, he saw the abuses and corruption his book sought to change
 - Though a realist, he could not betray his conscience, and he opposed Henry’s religious moves

Church and Religion on the Eve of the Reformation

- Corruption led to calls for reform
 - Greed within the church: nepotism, **pluralism** (holding multiple paying position) led to absenteeism
 - Hiring of local priests who were inept and spiritually ignorant

Search for Salvation

- Ordinary people were looking for *guaranteed* salvation
 - relics (of the cross, the nails, the crown of thorns), pilgrimages, indulgences
 - indulgences – for sale! – could reduce time in *purgatory* (before going to heaven)
 - Christ-like behavior (see Thomas à Kempis’s *The Imitation of Christ*)
- Disillusionment began to set in as people could see that the clergy wasn’t living up to expectations

Calls for Reform

- Religious orders (particularly the Dominicans, Franciscans, and Augustinians) called for reform
- Christian humanists (like Erasmus) called for personal spiritual development and acts of charity

Martin Luther and the Reformation in Germany

The Protestant Reformation grew out of the question *What must I do to be saved?*

The Early Luther

- Martin Luther first pursued law at his father’s request but later turned to religion as his first passion
- At 22, caught in a thunderstorm, he promised that if he survived he would become a monk
 - He questioned methods for salvation, particularly *confession*
 - It never satisfied him whether he had actually confessed them all...
 - He studied theology and became a professor at the university of Wittenberg
 - Catholic dogma proclaimed that faith and good works were the way to salvation
 - As he felt one could never do *enough* good works, he came to believe **in faith alone**
 - Because he had come to this conclusion solely through the Bible, he decided **it alone held the truth**

The Indulgence Controversy

- Pope Leo X issued a special indulgence to be sold to finance his new St. Peter’s Basilica
 - The chief salesman in Germany was Johann Tetzel
- Luther believed that purchasing an indulgence brought eternal damnation rather than salvation
 - Angered, in 1517 his *Ninety-five Theses* were “nailed to the church door”

It was quickly spread throughout Europe thanks to the printing press

It resonated with the masses who had been unhappy with the behaviors and dogma of the Church

The Quickening Rebellion

In 1519 at Leipzig, his debate opponent pushed him beyond just indulgences

He also denied the authority of the pope and church councils

He was doing what he felt was God's work, so he had to push on

In 1520, three pamphlets began to outline a break from the Church

Address to the Nobility of the German Nation: the princes should establish a reformed German church

Babylonian Captivity of the Church: attacked Church's sacraments, called upon clergy to be able to marry

On the Freedom of a Christian Man: **faith alone** (but good works out of gratitude to God)

In 1521, the Church excommunicated him

Called to the town of Worms (pronounced "Verms"), he was expected to recant his heretical doctrines

He refused. The Edict of Worms made him a pursued outlaw

The Rise of Lutheranism

In 1522, Luther returned to Saxony and began to organize a reformed church

He translated the New Testament into German (although only 4-5% of Germans were literate)

So the primary means of teaching became the sermon based on the Bible

Also, pamphlets with vividly illustrated woodcuts (essentially propaganda) spread the teachings

Luther believed music could teach the gospel, and he wrote hymns

The Spread of Luther's Ideas

Lutheranism spread quickly – for both religious and political reasons

But it was primarily an urban phenomenon (that's where things can spread most quickly)

Early converts were both clergy (religious reasons) and princes and town burghers (political reasons)

It was not universally accepted; there were rebels

Older Christian humanists (like Erasmus) did not wish a split in Christianity

Younger Christian humanists (like Philip Melancthon) became supporters

Radicals (like Andreas Carlstadt) thought Luther didn't go far enough: abolish relics, images, and the Mass

The Peasants' War (1524-1525)

Peasants in southwest Germany sought Luther's support for their rebellion against local lords abuses

Thomas Müntzer (formerly a Lutheran) inflamed the peasants with passionate sermons

Luther reacted against the peasants (*Against the Robbing and Murdering Hordes of Peasants*)

He knew that the princes and lords were the backbone of his new church – and sided with them

Organizing the Church

Luther had to redefine the sacraments, so he kept only two of seven: baptism and the Lord's Supper (Communion)

But he rejected **transubstantiation** – that the bread and wine *actually* changed into Jesus body and blood

His belief in the importance of the Scriptures led him away from Church authority and tradition

That meant that a hierarchical priesthood (priest--> bishop--> archbishop--> pope) was unnecessary

All believers were their own priests, because they could commune with God through the Bible

Nevertheless, the German princes had converted to Lutheranism and began setting up churches with clergy

Luther established a worship service with vernacular forms, Bible readings, preaching, and song

Following his rejection of clerical celibacy, Luther married a former nun, setting an example for Lutheran ministers

Germany and the Reformation: Religion and Politics

In 1519, Spain's Charles I was elected Holy Roman Emperor (and called Charles V)

He ruled over Spain, Austria, Bohemia, Hungary, the Low Countries, and Naples (Southern Italy)

He wanted to preserve Catholic unity throughout his empire

The French and the Papacy

The Habsburg's traditional rival was the Valois king of France (Francis I)

They disputed territory: southern France, the Netherlands, the Rhineland, northern Spain, and Italy

These "Habsburg-Valois Wars" (on-and-off for 24 years) kept Charles from dealing with Lutheranism

Pope Clement VII, fearing Charles's power, didn't help Charles fight Lutheranism

But in 1527, Charles' army went wild and sacked Rome, and Charles controlled much of Italy

The Ottoman Empire

Having overrun Constantinople, the Ottomans now posed a threat to Charles's eastern borders

In 1526, under Suleiman the Magnificent they defeated Hungary and advanced to Vienna

In 1529, Charles's troops repelled the invasion

Politics in Germany

In 1529, Charles turned his attention to Lutheranism. In 1530, he demanded Lutherans return to the Church

In 1531, Lutheran princes and imperial cities formed the Schmalkaldic League, a defensive alliance

The Habsburg-Valois Wars broke out again and Charles could not wage war against Protestant authorities

In 1546, by the time Luther died, there was no hope for a peaceful compromise

German princes allied with Henri II of France (a Catholic) and Charles was forced into a truce

Exhausted, Charles V abdicated in 1556 and passed all German affairs to his brother Ferdinand

In 1555 the Peace of Augsburg recognized Lutheranism and granted the princes the right to choose religions

The Spread of the Reformation

Lutheranism in Scandinavia

In 1523, King Gustavus Vasa of Sweden created a Lutheran National Church

Too, Frederick I of Denmark encouraged Lutheran pastors to introduce Lutheran liturgy into their church service

His successor, Christian III, made Lutheranism official with the king as its supreme authority

By the 1540s, Scandinavia (Denmark, Sweden, Norway and modern Finland) was a Lutheranism stronghold

The Zwinglian Reformation

In Switzerland, Ulrich Zwingli was strongly influenced by Christian humanists in college

Ordained a minister, he began the Reformation in Switzerland

After "winning" a debate, Zürich's town council chose to let Zwingli supervise the city's churches

Reforms in Zürich

The city council abolished relics, removed all paintings and decorations from churches, whitewashed the walls

The Mass and music were removed from church services

Monasticism, pilgrimages, veneration of saints, clerical celibacy, and papal authority were all abolished

Concern over Catholic cantons (and Charles V) led the council to seek unity with Luther

The Marburg Colloquy of 1529 did not succeed in unifying the two

Zwingli thought the bread and wine were only symbolic; Luther could not accept that

In 1531, Catholic cantons of Switzerland defeated Zürich, killed Zwingli and cut up his body and burned it

The Radical Reformation: The Anabaptists

Anabaptists was a term covering a variety of radical Protestants

It was especially attractive to those who had suffered economically (peasants, weavers, miners, and artisans)

The Ideas of the Anabaptists

It was a voluntary association of believers who experienced a rebirth

Believed in

- adult baptism

- not forced to believe the truth of the Bible

- returning to the practices and spirit of early Christianity

- all believers were equal; churches selected their own ministers (but not women)

- preachers were to lead services that would have echoed those of early Christianity

- rejecting theological speculation in favor of simple Christian living

- complete separation of church and state ("human law had no power over them")

- would not hold political office or join the army

Varieties of Anabaptists

Swiss Brethren in Zürich (they frightened Zwingli)

In 1532 Münster became a haven for Anabaptists then they began to control the city

Ran nonbelievers out, burned all books but the Bible, proclaimed communal ownership of property

An army of Catholics and Lutherans recaptured the city and executed the Anabaptists

Dutch Anabaptism reinforced the pacifist nature

Menno Simons preached a peaceful return to Jesus-like behaviors

Mennonites (and the Amish) eventually made their way to the New World

The Reformation in England

Caused by Henry VIII's desire for a male heir

Divorced Catherine of Aragon in order to marry Anne Boleyn

Cardinal Wolsey was to obtain an annulment from the Pope (divorce was prohibited in the Catholic Church)

The Pope relied heavily on Charles V (Catherine's nephew) for support

The Pope delayed and Henry dismissed Wolsey

New advisers (Thomas Cranmer and Thomas Cromwell) recommended abolishing papal authority in England

Cranmer annulled Henry's marriage to Catherine and validated his new marriage to Anne

Anne gave birth to a girl anyway (Elizabeth)

1534: the Act of Supremacy made Henry the "supreme head" of the Church of England

the Act of Treason made it illegal to deny that the king was the head of the new church

Thomas More rejected it all, remaining loyal to the Pope; he was tried for treason, found guilty, and beheaded

The New Order

Cromwell saved Henry's financial crisis by confiscating Catholic land, monasteries, and possessions

Kept some for the royal treasury and sold the rest to various nobles, merchants, and gentry

Church of England changed little of its Catholic foundation (doctrine, theology, and ceremony)

Originally, it kept priestly celibacy

Henry beheaded Anne Boleyn and married three more times

Third wife, Anne Seymour, gave him a son (Edward) but died 12 days later

When Henry died, Edward was six, so England and the Church were effectively ruled by Archbishop Cranmer

He moved England in a more Protestant direction

Moved quickly to adopt a new *Book of Common Prayer*, resulting in more widespread opposition

Reaction Under Mary

Daughter of the Catholic first-wife, Catherine, Mary vowed to restore England to Catholicism

Her marrying Spain's Philip II (son of Charles V and future king of Spain) aroused intense opposition

She was called "Bloody Mary" for her burning of more than 300 Protestant "heretics"

At her death in 1558, England was more Protestant than it was when she assumed the throne

John Calvin and Calvinism

The most notable "second generation" Protestant reformer was John Calvin

In 1533 (at 24) he experienced a religious crisis that shaped the rest of his life

Influenced by Luther's writings, he became thoroughly convinced of the inner guidance of God

To avoid the persecution of Francis I, he fled to Basel, Switzerland

There in 1536 he wrote *Institutes of Religion*, which made his reputation

Calvin's Ideas

Like Luther, he believed in justification by faith alone

His belief that God was omnipotent led him to *predestination* (God alone knew who was to be saved)

He proposed three "tests" that might indicate possible salvation:

Open profession of faith, "decent and godly life," and participation in baptism and communion

Calvin never professed that any of these guaranteed salvation – but many followers since have

This led to Calvinism's widespread adoption

He believed in the *spiritual* presence of Jesus in the Lord's Supper (Communion)

Calvin's Geneva

1536: moved from scholarship to preaching in Geneva, Switzerland

1541: city council adopted Calvin's church constitution, which used both clergy and laymen in service

they created a Consistory, a council that enforced moral discipline

it gained authority and began to institute public penance and excommunication of the citizens

eventually, Geneva became a theocracy – and a center for the spread of Protestantism

first, John Knox took Calvinism to Scotland

later, trained missionaries spread it to France, the Netherlands, and central & eastern Europe

Social Impact of the Reformation

The Family

Despite the importance of marriage, the Catholic Church held abstinence from sex in highest regard

The clergy was required to be celibate – it was the surest way to holiness

Not all men could remain chaste, so marriage was the best way to control sexual intercourse

It would serve the purpose of procreation (having children)

Protestantism eliminated monasticism (monks and nuns), so the new means of holiness was within the family
Women were to (1) obey their husbands and (2) bear children
Church dogma had said God punished women for Eve's sins
Punishment had been procreation, feeding and nurturing children
The role of woman as wife and mother was seen as a holy vocation
In subordination to her husband, a wife was no longer even responsible for the children's religious education
Men and women were to read the Bible and participate in the religion together
This made education for girls necessary – but girls' education was for moral training not for advancement

Education in the Reformation

Protestant schools continued with humanist methods of education
They were not solely for the elite; they were to create a semiliterate body of believers
Luther believed that the state should provide the education
Philip Melancthon became the *Præceptor Germaniæ* ("Teacher of Germany")
Introduced the *gymnasium*, a "secondary school" combining liberal studies with religious instruction
Calvin's Geneva went further, adding a third, "public" school, which eventually became a university

Religious Practices and Popular Culture

Protestant reformers attacked many Catholic religious practices
Abolished or curtailed indulgences, saints' relics, pilgrimages, monasticism, and clerical celibacy
Elimination of saints resulted in elimination of saints' days (and the celebration)
Replaced them with private prayer, family worship, and Sunday services for collective prayer
Puritans often went even further, abolishing such things as drinking, gambling, drama productions, and dancing

The Catholic Reformation

Protestantism was becoming firmly established in northern Europe, but Catholics were not standing still

Catholic Reformation or Counter-Reformation?

Those who call it the "Counter-Reformation" want to emphasize that it was primarily a reaction
Those who call it the "Catholic Reformation" want to emphasize that it was part of a longer movement
There was an increased emphasis on mysticism and monasticism
As an example of mystical piety, there was Saint Teresa of Avila,
A Carmelite nun, she experienced mystical visions brought on by an ecstatic union with God
Old monastic orders (e.g. the Benedictines and Dominicans) were revived
New monastic orders (e.g., Capuchins and Theatines) were created
Capuchins sought to live the simple life of St. Frances; Theatines worked to reform the clergy

The Society of Jesus

Also known as the Jesuits, it was founded by a Spanish nobleman, Ignatius of Loyola
A former soldier, he vowed to be a "soldier of God"
Wrote *The Spiritual Exercises*, a training manual for spiritual development
The Jesuits were recognized by the Pope in 1540
It was structured like the military, even to being run by a "general" (Ignatius was the first)

Activities of the Jesuits

3 major activities:
highly disciplined schools (education was crucial to combat Protestantism)
spreading the faith among non-Christians, particularly to the East (including China and Japan)
restoring Catholic supremacy to Germany and eastern Europe

A Revived Papacy

The papacy had been seen as corrupt for a long while, but Pope Paul III began to change that
Appointed some reformist cardinals, established a reform commission
Was persuaded to establish a Roman Inquisition to search out those breaking Catholic doctrine
There was to be no compromise with Protestantism
Pope Paul IV created the *Index of Forbidden Books*, banning all "unwholesome" works

The Council of Trent

In 1542, Paul III called for the Council of Trent
Circumstances kept the council from meeting annually, but they did work sporadically from 1545 to 1563

Conservatives won: the council reaffirmed Catholic doctrines
Only the Church could interpret Scripture
Faith *and* good works would be necessary for salvation
A belief in purgatory and the effectiveness of indulgences

Politics and the Wars of Religion in the Sixteenth Century

The activism of both Calvinists and Catholics led to a succession of religious wars

The French Wars of Religion (1562-1598)

French kings tried persecuting Huguenots (French Calvinists) to stop the spread of Protestantism
Followers came from all levels of society, but the Huguenot nobles were seen as a “threat” to the crown
Huguenots made up about 10% of French society – but 40-50% of the nobility
Catherine de’ Medici, mother and regent to two “weak” kings, sought religious compromise
Both Huguenots and the ultra-Catholics rejected any compromise
For some, religious loyalty superseded loyalty to the crown

Course of the Struggle

It began in 1562 when the Duke of Guise (an ultra-Catholic) massacred a peaceful Huguenot congregation
Its pinnacle was the St. Bartholomew’s Day Massacre
Huguenots gathered in Paris to celebrate the marriage of the king’s sister (a Catholic) to Henry of Navarre (leader of the Huguenots)
The Guise family convinced Catherine de’ Medici that the presence of the Huguenots was a serious threat
For three days, Catholic mobs roamed the streets, killing Huguenots (often particularly cruelly)

The War of the Three Henries

As a result, the Guise family vowed to put a “true” Catholic (Henry of Guise) on the throne
Supported by Philip II of Spain, Henry of Guise demanded that King Henry III make him chief minister
Henry III assassinated Henry of Guise and allied with Henry of Navarre to defeat the Catholic Holy League
Henry II was himself assassinated by a monk who was sympathetic to ultra-Catholicism
Henry of Navarre, next in line, became King of France (as Henry IV)
In 1598, Henry IV issued the Edict of Nantes guaranteeing Huguenots the right to worship

Philip II and Militant Catholicism

King of Spain (r. 1556-1598), he was the greatest advocate of activist Catholicism of the time
Ruled over Spain, the Netherlands, and part of Italy
Used the Spanish Inquisition to enforce Catholicism
Worked hard to consolidate power (taking it away from aristocrats)
Although the economy was potentially strong – agriculture and industry – it eventually failed
silver and gold from the Americas actually created inflation and hurt it
cost of wars deepened government debt
the Spanish saw themselves as divinely chosen (to champion Catholicism in Europe)
Philip defeated the (Muslim) Turkish fleet at Lepanto

Revolt of the Netherlands

As traders, the Spanish Netherlands was at the crossroads of Europe and was open to different points of view
Lutheranism, Anabaptism, and Calvinism were growing
Philip was perceived by many as a “foreigner”
When Philip tried to increase control, the towns and nobles opposed him
They resented that their taxes were being used for Spanish interests
In 1566, Calvinists began to destroy statues and stain-glass windows in Catholic churches
Philip sent the Duke of Alva and 10,000 Spanish troops to crush the rebellion
It unified the resistance, so a Spanish tribunal began a reign of terror, executing even powerful aristocrats
William of Orange tried to use the rebellion to unify all 17 provinces
It failed: 7 northern provinces were Protestant and “Germanic” while 10 were Catholic and “French”
Finally, in 1609, the northern “Union of Utrecht” developed into the independent Dutch Republic

The England of Elizabeth

Elizabeth I ascended to the English throne (r. 1558-1603) after the death of her sister, Queen Mary
The daughter of Henry VII (founder of the Protestant Anglican church)
Mary, the daughter of Henry and (the very Catholic) Catherine of Aragon, tried to reestablish Catholicism

She had even had Elizabeth imprisoned

Religious Policy

Elizabeth sought moderation and compromise.

Did not call herself the “supreme head of the church” as her father and brother had

Would have upset Catholics, because to them the Pope was the supreme head

Would have upset radical Protestants, because to them Christ alone was the supreme head

New Act of Uniformity, establishing a Book of Common Prayer, was more moderate

Despite moderation, both Catholics and Puritans (English Calvinists) opposed her

Her Catholic cousin, Mary, queen of Scots, –next in line to the throne – was ousted by Calvinists and fled to England

In England, she continually plotted Elizabeth’s overthrow; finally Elizabeth had her beheaded

Potentially more dangerous were the Puritans, but Elizabeth managed to handle them

Foreign Policy

Although she avoided war – England is a small island – she undercut her “enemies”

She encouraged English seamen to raid Spanish ships loaded with gold and silver from America

She provided aid to the French Huguenots and Dutch Calvinists – to weaken France and Spain

Eventually, she openly supported the Dutch

Philip II, formerly reluctant to invade Protestant England, ordered the fleet to prepare for war

The Spanish Armada

It was a disaster

The armada had neither the ships or the troops to accomplish the task

They relied on a “miracle” provided by the “Catholic” God they worshipped

It was battered by both the English fleet and the storms they encountered returning to Spain

Though the Spanish and English battled for 6 more years, England was never invaded and remained Protestant