

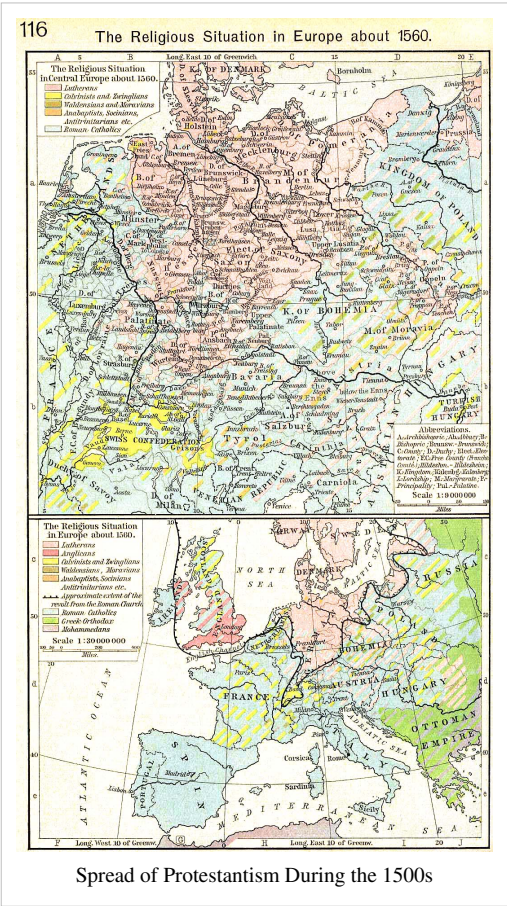
# European History/Challenges to Spiritual Authority

European History

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## Introduction



During this period of European history, the most important thing to individuals of society was religion. As people began to see corruption and problems in the Catholic Church, they began to have doubt in the belief system of the church. Many began to rebel against the church and many also wondered if their religious beliefs were accurate.

## Causes of the Protestant Reformation

### Church Corruption

As the corruption increased and the Church was based on money, the purchase of church offices (benefices) or even holding multiple offices (pluralism) became more common. The Church raised money by selling indulgences, or forgiveness from God. Popes and bishops were more political than ecclesiastical figures, provided with legal exemptions from taxes and criminal charges, and using graft and bribery to gain and exploit power. Clergy in the Roman hierarchy and as near as the village priest ignored church teachings on priestly celibacy and poverty, weakening the church's moral authority. A prime example of corruption in the church during this era is pope Alexander VI who is thought by modern historians to be the most corrupt church figure ever, he was involed in countless orgies, pluralism.

## Reactions to Church Corruption

Such abuse of authority led to resentment of the Church and contempt among the clergy. Monarchs resented having to collect taxes and send money to Rome (tithes). The upper class, envious of papal wealth, noticed opportunity to obtain Church land. Use of the printing press to spread works by vernacular authors fostered nationalism. John Wycliff initiated the first English translation of the Bible and is considered the precursor to the Protestant Reformation.

## Key Persons of the Reformation

From 1521 to 1555, Protestantism spread across southern Europe. The Reformation started as a religious movement, but became political, and as a result had economic and social impacts.

### Martin Luther (1486-1546)

Although there were some minor individual outbreaks such as that of John Wycliffe, a young German monk, called Martin Luther was the first to force the issue of the immorality of Church corruption. Disillusioned with the Church, Luther questioned the idea of *good works* for salvation, including prayers, fasting, and particularly indulgences.

#### 95 Theses

In 1517, Luther posted his *95 Theses*, though it is debated whether these were nailed to Wittenburg's All Saint's Church, known as *Schlosskirche*, meaning Castle Church, or his church door. These theses attacked the ideas of salvation through works, the sale of indulgences, and the collection of wealth by the papacy. He formally requested a public debate to settle the issue.



Luther at age 46 (Lucas Cranach the Elder, 1529)

#### Excommunication

Pope Leo X demanded that Luther stop preaching, which Luther refused. When Luther was forced into admitting that he openly denied the authority of the pope, he was excommunicated in 1520; he burned the announcement in front of a cheering crowd.

#### Diet of Worms

Luther was demanded by the Holy Roman Emperor Charles to appear before the Diet of Worms in 1521; Luther did not back down from his stance, and was declared a heretic. The Edicts of Worms declared Luther an outlaw and heretic, giving anyone permission to kill Luther without recourse. Due to Luther's popularity in Germany, this could not be enforced.

## **Lutheranism**

Lutheranism stresses education for all, including females. According to Lutheran doctrine, marriage is important, and gender roles should be enforced: women belong in the home and should control the economy, while men should control the household. Clergy can marry.

Salvation is attained by faith alone, instead of through works. Religious authority is found in the Bible instead of from the Pope; each man can be his own priest. Religious services are held in vernacular instead of Latin. Only two sacraments are followed: Baptism, and the Lord's Supper. Lutheranism teaches neither "transubstantiation" (the Roman Catholic view that the wine and bread change into the body and blood of Christ) nor "consubstantiation" (the view that the body and blood mingle with the bread and wine to become a third substance), but instead teaches that the Lord's Supper is the true body and blood of Jesus Christ, "in, with and under the bread and wine," given to believers to eat and drink. The benefits of receiving the sacrament come not from the physical eating and drinking, but from Jesus' spoken promise and assurance. In this sense, the sacrament is a proclamation of the Gospel. It is God's Word that makes the Lord's Supper a sacrament, and Luther taught that this means of grace is to be received in faith.

## **Justification by Faith**

Chief among Luther's doctrines is Justification by Faith. In it, he attacks the Church's view that good works can get a Christian into heaven. For Luther, because humans are inherently flawed, they can only rely on God's grace to get to heaven, not their own works. Therefore only faith in the grace of God was necessary (and sufficient) to obtain entry to heaven.

## **The Bible as Supreme Authority**

Luther said, "... when the Word accompanies the water, Baptism is valid, even though faith be lacking."

Luther challenged the role of the Pope as the supreme temporal authority for interpreting God's will. For Luther, the Bible was the supreme authority of God. As an extension of this philosophy, Luther believed that all Christians should be able to interpret the Scripture (in effect, acting as their own priest). This led Luther to place a heavy emphasis on universal literacy among Christians so that they could read the Bible and attain salvation (a doctrinal point which, along with the advent of the printing press barely more than half a century earlier, led to profound implications for Western society). It also led to Luther's translation of the Bible into German, which he did while in hiding from the wrath of the Holy Roman Emperor. This edition of the Bible became massively popular and made Luther's dialect of German the standard to this day. It also had the intended effect of moving Protestant liturgy into the vernacular.

## **The Sacraments**

The Catholic Church at the time of Luther had seven sacraments (with little change today):

- Baptism -- The dousing of infants with water to induct them into the church.
- The Eucharist (Holy Communion) -- Taking bread and wine in remembrance of the Last Supper.
- Matrimony -- Marriage.
- Holy Orders -- Becoming a priest.
- Penance -- Making contrition for your sins.
- Confirmation -- a kind of coming-of-age rite in which young people are indoctrinated to the church's teachings.
- Last Rites of Extreme Unction (Last Rites) -- At that time an anointing with oil to heal the sick, now more commonly a death rite.

Luther considered all but two of those to be unnecessary, and out of the two he accepted (Baptism and Holy Communion) he considered only baptism to be doctrinally sound. The present Roman Catholic view of the Holy Communion (transubstantiation) developed in the scholastic period. According to this understanding of the

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Eucharist, Roman Catholic priests were primarily responsible for the bread and wine of the Eucharist becoming the body and blood of Christ. Luther did not believe that the bread and wine changed into the flesh and blood of Christ, but rather that the flesh and blood of Christ was invisibly present "in, with, and under" the bread and wine in the ritual. This "Real Presence" is caused by God and not by a priest thus undercutting the Catholic authority over the sacrament.

### **Ulrich Zwingli (1484-1531), Zwinglianism**

Zwinglianism originated in Switzerland, introduced by Ulrich Zwingli. Zwinglianism believed in the two sacraments of baptism and communion. The religion advocated most of the key Protestant beliefs. It believed that the Church is the ultimate authority, and it rejected rituals such as fasting and the elaborate ceremonies of Catholicism. Finally, it advocated reform through education.

### **John Calvin (1504-1564), Calvinism**

John Calvin founded Calvinism in Geneva, Switzerland; Calvinism later spread to Germany. Calvin was the leading reformer of the second generation of the Reformation, succeeding Martin Luther at the forefront of theological debate and discussion. His most important work was Institutes of the Christian Religion, published in 1541 at the age of 26. At the time, it had a tremendous impact, and many considered Calvin to be a Protestant equivalent of Thomas Aquinas. In it, Calvin outlined the central premises of the religious doctrine which was to bear his name.

#### **Predestination**

Foremost among these is Calvin's assertion of Double Predestination (often simply referred to as predestination). Single predestination was the doctrine held by most orthodox theologians, including Luther. It said, in essence, that the elect were predestined for heaven. However, they pointed out that those who went to hell went there on their own free will. Calvin objected to this, saying that because all mankind was born in sin, and God had chosen a specific few to go to Heaven through His grace, he must have also chosen an elect who are doomed to damnation. This assertion is based on the commonly accepted view of God as: Omnipotent, Omniscient, Omnipresent, and All-Loving. From these premises, Calvin concluded that not only is there an elect destined for Heaven, but also an elect destined for Hell, and that no one could know with certainty their destination.

#### **The Sacraments**

Like Martin Luther, Calvin believed that there were only two sacraments in the church: the Eucharist (Holy Communion) and Baptism. With regard to the Eucharist (Holy Communion), Calvin tried to eke out a middle path between the positions which had led to the schism of the Marburg Colloquy. While Luther insisted that the body and blood of Christ were made materially present in the bread and wine of the communion, and Zwingli insisted that the communion was merely a symbol of communion, Calvin said that participating in The Eucharist raised the heart and mind of the believer to feast with Christ in heaven. Calvin's view never took root within the Reformation and it was eventually overshadowed by Luther's and Zwingli's views.

## Huguenots

French subjects and subjects of the French Navarre, who subscribed to Protestantism, usually, and specifically, Calvinism, or Reformed Protestantism, rather than Catholicism, became known as the Huguenots.

## Chart of Key Religions

The below chart offers a simple summary of key details of the major Protestant religions that came to formation, as well as Catholicism.

Religion	Key Beliefs/Documents	Sacraments	Key People and Locations	Church/State Relationship
Lutheranism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Saved by faith alone</li> <li>No sale of indulgences</li> <li>Church attendance is not mandatory; instead individual prayer and Bible reading</li> <li>There is no purgatory</li> <li>Reject papal authority</li> </ul>	Two: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Baptism</li> <li>Communion ('Real Presence')</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Martin Luther</li> <li>Huss and Wycliffe (foundation of ideas)</li> <li>Located in North Germany, Sweden, Norway, Denmark</li> </ul>	The state is more important than the church
Calvinism (aka Presbyterians, Puritans, Huguenots)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Predestination - God has saved an "elect" group of people, but a person's actions during his or her lifetime indicates the likelihood of him being one of the elect</li> <li>Prayer and work are the hallmarks of society</li> <li>Possession of luxury items indicate arrogance</li> </ul>	Two: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Baptism</li> <li>Communion, which is simply symbolic (or 'spiritual presence')</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>John Calvin</li> <li>Nobles and middle class</li> <li>Located in eastern parts France, Scotland, England, Bohemia, the Holy Roman Empire, Netherlands</li> </ul>	The church is more important than the state
Catholicism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Saved by the grace of God alone through faith and works</li> <li>You need to attend church, only valid authority for interpretation is the Magisterium's</li> <li>Traditions, not just Scripture, are sources of doctrine</li> <li><i>Extra ecclesiam nulla salus</i> - there is no salvation outside the Church</li> <li>Papal authority</li> </ul>	Seven: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Baptism</li> <li>Reconciliation: first confession</li> <li>First communion (transubstantiation)</li> <li>Confirmation</li> <li>Marriage</li> <li>Holy orders: priest(only men)</li> <li>Last rites (Anointing of the Sick)</li> </ol>	Throughout Europe, especially in France, Bavaria, the Iberian countries, Austria, Poland and Italy	The church is more important than the state

## The Counter-Reformation

The Catholics, enraged at the rise of Protestantism and determined to restore their control over European society, began their reform movement, which gained momentum in Italy during the 1530s and 1540s. The Catholic Church worked to reform, reaffirm their key beliefs, and then defend their ideology. It is important to recognize that they changed nothing about their core beliefs.

## Council of Trent (1545-1563)

Pope Paul III and Charles V Hapsburg of Austria convened a general church council at Trent that met sporadically between 1545 and 1563. The Council reasserted the supremacy of clerics over the laity. It did, however, establish seminaries in each diocese to train priests. They reformed indulgences, though the process was continued. They did, however, eliminate pluralism, nepotism, simony, and other similar problems from the church. They reaffirmed their

belief of transubstantiation, that during the Eucharist the bread and wine literally become Christ's body. The Council showed that the schism between Protestants and Catholics had become so severe that all hopes of reconciliation were gone.

### **Catholic Attempts to Re-convert Protestants and Extend the Faith**

The Catholic Church used Baroque art to show dramatic biblical scenes and large canvasses. This art was primarily spectator-oriented and was used to make religion more enjoyable to the lay person. In Spain and Rome, Inquisitions, or institutions within the Roman Catholic Church charged with the eradication of heresy, were used to root out heretics. In addition, the Church established the Index of Prohibited Books, which banned books they considered heretical. Finally, the Church sent missionaries around the globe to spread its beliefs and faith.

### **Jesuits**

The Society of Jesus, or Jesuits as it was known (founded on August 15, 1534 in France), was a new religious order that arose as a result of the Counter-Reformation. It was founded by former Spanish soldier and priest, St. Ignatius of Loyola (1491-1556), to convert Protestants and non-Christians to Catholicism and add lands to Christendom. The Jesuits vigorously defended the papal authority and the authority of the Catholic Church, thus their title as the "footmen of the Pope".

### **Missionaries**

Missionaries visited other distant nations to spread the ideals of Catholicism.

### **Major Figures**

The three most Catholic nations in Europe at the time were the Holy Roman Empire, Spain, and France. Important leaders of the Counter-Reformation included:

- Paul III, the pope that called together the Council of Trent
- Charles V Hapsburg, leader of Austria and the most vigorous defender of the Catholic Church at the time in Europe
- Philip II Hapsburg, leader of Spain and Catholic son of Charles V; he married Mary Tudor of England
- "Bloody" Mary Tudor, Catholic daughter of Henry VIII Tudor, she married Philip II
- Catherine de Medici of Florence, regent of France
- Ferdinand II

Prominent Protestant opponents of the Counter-Reformation included:

- Elizabeth Tudor, the leader of England and half-sister of Mary Tudor
  - William of Orange, the leader of the Netherlands
  - Protestant Princes in the Holy Roman Empire and France
  - Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden
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## The Spanish Reconquista of 1492

As a response to the reformation and in an attempt to preserve Catholicism in Spain, Ferdinand and Isabella forcibly expelled Jews and Muslims. Jews who either voluntarily or forced became Christians became known as *conversos*. Some of them were crypto-Jews who kept practicing Judaism. Eventually all Jews were forced to leave Spain in 1492 by Ferdinand and Isabella. Their *converso* descendants became victims of the Spanish Inquisition.

## Religious Qualms in England

In 1547, 10 year old Edward VI, son of Henry VIII and Jane Seymour, took the throne. He was cold, serious, and cruel, and although he was incredibly intelligent and exceptionally capable for his age, he was represented by a regent who controlled the nation. From 1547 until 1549, the regent was Edward Seymour. From 1549 to 1553, the regent was John Dudley. Before Edward's death in 1553, he signed a will leaving the throne to Lady Jane Grey out of fear that his sister Mary would convert England back to Catholicism.

Lady Jane Grey ruled for nine days, but she and Dudley were soon arrested because Mary Tudor began to gain support since she was the rightful heir to the throne upon Edward's death.

"Bloody" Mary Tudor thus took the throne in 1553 and ruled until 1558. She was proud, stubborn, vain, vulnerable to flattery, but most of all, she was highly Catholic. In 1554, she converted England back to Catholicism and burnt hundreds of Protestants at the stake, thus earning her nickname "Bloody" Mary. She married Philip II of Spain. However, as a result of her illness from ovarian cancer, she was forced to recognize her Protestant sister Elizabeth as the heir.

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