

CHAPTER 3

THE TWO REFORMATIONS



After paying a handsome sum to Pope Leo X in 1515, Albert of Hohenzollern received a papal dispensation (exemption from canon law) that enabled him to become archbishop of Mainz, a lucrative and prestigious ecclesiastical post. Otherwise, under canon law, the twenty-three-year-old Albert would have been ineligible due to his age (archbishops were supposed to be at least thirty years old) and because he already drew income from two other ecclesiastical posts. As part of his payment to the pope and in order to repay the large sum of money loaned to him by the Fugger banking family, the new archbishop authorized the sale of the St. Peter's indulgence, which would release a sinner from punishment for his sins. Johann Tetzel, a Dominican friar who was in charge of the sale of papal indulgences in the archbishopric of Mainz, was commissioned to preach the indulgence. Half of the proceeds were to go to the papacy, and half to Albert and the Fuggers. In his tour of parishes, Tetzel emotionally depicted the wailing of dead parents in Purgatory, pleading with their children to put coins in the box so that they could be released from their suffering.

The sale of indulgences, particularly their commercial use to allow clergy-men to obtain multiple posts, had drawn increasing criticism in some of the German states. Indeed, no other ecclesiastical financial abuse drew as much passionate opposition as did indulgences. More than this, the Roman papacy itself faced considerable opposition in the German states, as the pope had appointed foreigners to many key ecclesiastical posts and had attempted to force the German states to provide him with money for a war against the Turks. The young German monk Martin Luther was among those denouncing Tetzel, the sale of indulgences, and the role of the Roman papacy in the German states.

This opposition to the papacy created a schism that would tear Christendom apart beginning in the second decade of the sixteenth century. Orig-

an anxious inscription: "I Sandro painted this picture at the end of the year 1500 in the troubles of Italy." Botticelli thereafter became preoccupied with suffering and the Passion of Christ, reflecting the fact that the High Renaissance was more closely tied to ecclesiastical influence. The deteriorating political situation, combined with the expansion of Spanish influence after 1530, made it more difficult for artists to find patronage in the Italian city-states.

Soon in Italy only Venice, the city of Titian, remained a center of artistic life. Machiavelli, who died in 1527, the year Charles V's troops pillaged Rome, sensed that the humiliation of the Italian city-states by foreign armies brought to a close a truly unique period in not only the history of Italy but in Western civilization. Of the great figures of the High Renaissance, only Michelangelo and Titian lived past 1530.

Impulses Elsewhere

The cultural glories of the Renaissance ebbed even as different kinds of discoveries by Europeans opened up new possibilities for mankind. Columbus's transatlantic voyages were signs that the economic and cultural vitality of Europe was shifting away from the Mediterranean to Spain and, to a lesser extent, England. The economic interests of these states would increasingly be across the Atlantic Ocean. The mood of optimism associated with the Renaissance seemed to have moved to central and northern Europe as Italy lapsed into a considerably less happy period. Many humanists and artists began to emigrate north of the Alps to lands considered by most cultured Italians to have been barbarian only a century earlier. Now new universities in northern Europe beckoned them.

Other dramatic changes had already begun to occur across the Alps. Relentless calls for reform of the Catholic Church led to a schism within Christendom: the Reformation. In northern Europe, the Dutch monk and humanist Erasmus expressed the exhilaration many men of learning felt when he wrote, "The world is coming to its senses as if awakening out of a deep Sleep."



(Left) The young Martin Luther by Lucas Cranach. (Right) The pope selling indulgences.

nating in the German states and Switzerland, a movement for religious reform began to spread across much of Europe, in part reflecting the influence of Renaissance humanism in northern Europe. Reformers rejected the pope's authority and some Church doctrine itself. The movement for reform, or of "protest," came to be called the "Reformation." It led to the establishment of many Protestant denominations within Christianity. The followers of the German priest Martin Luther became Lutherans, while those of the Frenchman Jean Calvin in Switzerland became known as Calvinists. King Henry VIII established the Church of England (Anglican Church). Under attack from many sides, the Roman Catholic Church undertook a Counter-Reformation, or Catholic Reformation, which sought to reform some aspects of ecclesiastic life, while reaffirming the basic tenets of Catholic theology and belief in the authority of the pope.

By 1600, the pattern of Christian religious adherence had largely been established in Europe. Catholicism remained the religion of the vast majority of people living in Spain, France, Austria, Poland, the Italian states, Bavaria, and other parts of the southern German states. Protestants dominated England and much of Switzerland, the Dutch Netherlands, Scandinavia, and the northern German states. Wars fought in the name of religion broke out within and between European states, beginning in the late sixteenth century and culminating in the Thirty Years' War (1618–1648). These conflicts shaped the next century of European history, with religious divisions affecting the lives of millions of people.

Until the middle of the fifteenth century, the Renaissance had been limited to the Italian peninsula. Northern Europe enjoyed very little of the economic and cultural vitality of the Italian city-states, where wealthy merchant and banking families patronized humanists and artists. The country estates of noble families were rarely centers of learning. The future Pope Pius II claimed in the mid-fifteenth century that "literature flourishes in Italy and princes there are not ashamed to listen to, and themselves to know, poetry. But in Germany princes pay more attention to horses and dogs than to poets—and thus neglecting the arts they die unremembered like their own beasts."

In about 1460, Renaissance humanism began to influence scholars in northern Europe. As in Italy, humanism changed the way many people thought about the world. Humanists were interested in morality and ethics, as well as in subjecting texts to critical scrutiny. Therefore, debates over religion, and the Bible itself, attracted their attention. Humanists began to criticize Church venality and corruption, and the seeming idleness of monastic life. They also called into question scholasticism and its influence on religious theology, as well as criticizing parts of religious practice that they considered illogical and therefore superstitious. The spread of humanism in northern Europe was gradual, first influencing isolated scholars. In the beginning, it posed no immediate threat to the Church; humanists could not imagine organized religion beyond Roman Catholicism. But the cumulative effect of the Northern Renaissance, and humanism in particular, helped engender a critical spirit that by the first decades of the sixteenth century directly began to challenge Church practices and then doctrine.

Northern Art and Humanism

The Northern Renaissance that began in the late fifteenth century reflected considerable Italian influence. Italian ambassadors, envoys, and humanists brought Renaissance art and humanistic thought to northern Europe. Many of the Italian envoys to northern Europe had studied the classics. They carried on diplomacy with oratorical and writing skills learned by reading Cicero and other Roman authors. Yet, much of the artistic creativity in northern Europe, particularly Flanders, emerged independent of Italian influence. Like the Italian city-states, in the Dutch Netherlands, which had a well-developed network of trading towns, wealthy urban families patronized the arts. Lacking the patronage of the Church, which so benefited Florentine and other Italian painters, Flemish painters did few church frescoes (which, in any case, a wet climate also discouraged). They emphasized decorative detail, such as that found in illuminated manuscripts, more than the spatial harmonies of Italian art. Dutch and Flemish painters favored realism

more than Italian Renaissance idealism in their portrayal of the human body. They broke away from religious subject matter and Gothic use of dark, gloomy colors and tones. In contrast to Italian painting, intense religiosity remained an important element in Flemish and German painting, and it was relatively rare to see a depiction of nudes.

Albrecht Dürer's visits to Italy reflect the dissemination and influence of the Italian Renaissance beyond the Alps. The son of a Nuremberg goldsmith, Dürer was apprenticed to a book engraver. As a young man, he seemed irresistibly drawn to Italy as he wrestled with how to depict the human form. During two visits to Venice—in



Albrecht Dürer's *Self-Portrait* (1500).

1494 and 1505–1506—he sought out Italian painters, studying their use of mathematics in determining and representing proportion.

Literary societies, academies, and universities contributed to the diffusion of Renaissance ideals in northern Europe. Francis I established the Collège de France in 1530 in Paris, which soon had chairs in Greek, Hebrew, and classical Latin. Northern universities became centers of humanistic study, gradually taking over the role royal and noble households had played in the diffusion of education. In Poland, the University of Krakow, which had its first printing press in 1476, emerged as a center of humanism in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. But some universities were quite slow to include humanists; only one humanist taught at the University of Cambridge in the early sixteenth century.

Some nobles now sent their children to humanist schools or employed humanists as tutors, as did a number of wealthy urban bourgeois. Some Italian artists and scholars found employment in northern courts. Leonardo da Vinci, Renaissance artist and scientist, was employed by King Francis I of France. Kings and princes also hired humanists to serve as secretaries and diplomats.

Latin gradually became the language of scholarship beyond the Alps. German, French, Spanish, and English historians borrowed from the style of the Roman historians to celebrate their own medieval past. Unlike Italian historians, they viewed the medieval period not as a sad interlude between two glorious epochs but as a time when their own political institutions and customs had been established.

In England at the end of the sixteenth century, Latin remained the language of high culture. There Machiavelli's *The Prince* was widely read and debated in Latin. When continental scholars traveled to England, they could discuss common texts with their English counterparts. Sir Thomas More (1478–1535), English lawyer and statesman, reflected the influence of Renaissance humanism, writing poetry in Latin. In his *Utopia* (1516), a satire of contemporary political and social life, More asked readers to consider their own values in the context of their expanding knowledge of other societies, including those of the New World.

The spread of the cultural values of Renaissance humanism across the Alps into the German states and northern Europe helped prepare the way for the Reformation. Like the Renaissance, the Reformation was in some ways the work of humanists moving beyond what they considered to be the constraints of Church theology. Humanists, who had always been concerned with ethics, attacked not only the failings of some clerics but also some of the Church's teachings, especially its claim to be immune to criticism. They also condemned superstition in the guise of religiosity. Northern Renaissance humanists were the sworn enemies of scholasticism, the medieval system of ecclesiastical inquiry in which Church scholars used reason to prove the tenets of Christian doctrine within the context of assumed theological truths. By suggesting that individuals who were not priests could interpret the Bible for themselves, they threatened the monopoly of Church theologians over biblical interpretation.

Erasmus's Humanistic Critique of the Church

An energetic Dutch cleric contributed more than any other person to the growth of Renaissance humanism in northern Europe. Born to unmarried parents and orphaned in Rotterdam, Desiderius Erasmus (c. 1469–1536) spent seven years in a monastery. Ordained a priest in 1492, he taught at the universities of Cambridge and Louvain, and then worked as a tutor in Paris and in Italy. As a young man, Erasmus may have suffered some sort of trauma—perhaps a romantic attachment that was either unreciprocated or inopportunistically discovered. Thereafter compulsively obsessed with cleanliness, he was determined to infuse the Church with a new moral purity influenced by the Renaissance.

The patronage of Holy Roman Emperor Charles V and several other statesmen permitted Erasmus to apply the scholarly techniques of humanism to biblical study. Erasmus's *In Praise of Folly* (1509) was a satirical survey of the world as he saw it but also a clear call for a pure Christian morality shorn of the corruption he beheld in the monastic system. Thus, he wrote that priests claimed "that they've properly performed their duty if they reel off perfunctorily their feeble prayers which I'd be greatly surprised if any god could hear or understand." He believed that the scholastics of the Middle Ages had, like the barbarians, overwhelmed the Church with empty, lifeless theology.

Erasmus's attacks on those who believed in the curing power of relics (remains of saints venerated by the faithful) reflected his Renaissance sense of the dignity of the individual. His *Handbook of the Christian Soldier* (1503), which called for a theology that de-emphasized the sacraments, provided a guide to living a moral life. The little book went through twenty Latin editions and was translated into ten other languages. Erasmus wrote at length on how a prince ought to be educated and how children should be raised. The most well-known intellectual figure of his time in Europe, Erasmus greatly expanded the knowledge and appreciation of the classics in northern Europe.

He and other major Northern Renaissance figures forged a Christian humanism focused on the early Christian past. Following his lead, northern humanists turned their skills in editing texts in Greek and Latin to the large body of early Christian writings.



Portrait of Desiderius Erasmus by Hans Holbein the Younger.

THE ROOTS OF THE REFORMATION

In principle, the pope governed the Church in all of Western Christendom. But in reality, the emergence of the monarchical states of France, England, and the kingdoms of Spain in the late Middle Ages had eroded papal authority. Gradually these rulers assumed more prerogatives over the Church in their states. This expansion of monarchical authority itself provided the impetus toward the development of churches that gradually took on a national character as monarchs bargained for authority over religious appointments and worked to bring ecclesiastical property under their fiscal control by imposing taxation.

In the Italian and German states and in Switzerland, where many smaller, independent states ruled by princes, urban oligarchs, or even bishops survived, the very complexity of territorial political arrangements served to limit the direct authority of the pope. For in these smaller states, too, the ability of the pope and his appointees to manage their own affairs depended on the cooperation of lay rulers. Furthermore, the territorial expanse of Western

Christendom and daunting problems of transportation and communication made it difficult for the papal bureaucracy to reform blatant financial abuses. That the papacy itself increasingly appeared to condone or even encourage corruption added to the calls for reform.

Yet Erasmus and other northern humanists, while sharply criticizing the Church, were unwilling to challenge papal authority. The papacy, however, had other, more vociferous critics. First, the monarchs of France, Spain, and England had repudiated the interference of the pope in temporal affairs, creating what were, for all intents and purposes, national churches. Second, religious movements deemed heretical by the Church rejected papal authority. Some people sought refuge from the turmoil in spiritualism. Others based their idea of religion on personal study of the Bible, turning away from not only papal authority but also the entire formal hierarchy of the Church. Third, within the Church, a reform movement known as conciliarism sought to subject the authority of the popes to councils of cardinals and other Church leaders. More and more calls echoed for the reform of clerical abuses. As the Church seemed determined to protect its authority, to critics it also seemed more venal, even corrupt, than ever before. By questioning fundamental Church doctrine and the nature of religious faith, the resulting reform movement, culminating in the Reformation, shattered the unity of Western Christendom.

The Great Schism (1378–1417)

In the fourteenth century, the struggle between the king of France and the pope put the authority of the papacy in jeopardy. The French and English kings had imposed taxes on ecclesiastical property. In response, Pope Boniface VIII's bull *Unam Sanctam* (1302) threw down the gauntlet to lay rulers, asserting that "it is absolutely necessary for salvation for everyone to be subject to the Roman pontiff." King Philip IV of France ordered Boniface's arrest, and the pope died a year later, shortly after his release from captivity. Philip then arranged the election of a pliant pope, Clement V (pope 1305–1314). In 1309, he installed him in the papal enclave of Avignon, a town on the Rhône River. During the "Avignon Papacy" (1309–1378), the popes remained under the direct influence of the kings of France. At the same time, the popes continued to build up their bureaucracies and, like the monarchs whose authority they sometimes contested, to extract ever greater revenues from the faithful.

In 1377, Pope Gregory XI (pope 1370–1378) returned to Rome, in the hope that his presence there might calm the political situation in the Italian states. When Gregory XI died a year later, a group of cardinals in Rome, most of whom were French, elected Pope Urban VI (pope 1378–1389), popularly believed to be faithful to the Avignon Papacy. After a Roman mob invaded the proceedings, the cardinals fled. Upon their return several months later, a smaller group of thirteen cardinals was vexed by the new

pope's denunciation of their wealth and privileges. Furthermore, they now viewed him as temperamentally unstable, unfit to be pope. They elected another pope, Clement VII, who claimed to be pope between 1378 and 1394. He returned to set up shop in Avignon, leaving his rival, Urban VI, in Rome. The Great Schism (1378–1417) began with two men now claiming authority over the Church.

The two popes and their successors thereafter sought to win the allegiance of rulers. The Avignon popes, like their pre-Schism predecessors, were under the close scrutiny of the king of France, and the Roman pope was caught up in the morass of Italian and Roman politics. France, Castile, Navarre, and Scotland supported the Avignon popes; most of the Italian states, Portugal, the Holy Roman Empire, and England obeyed the Roman popes. In 1409, Church dignitaries gathered at the Council of Pisa to resolve the conflict, and they elected a third pope. However, neither of the other two would agree to resign. And, in the meantime, secular rulers forced the popes to make agreements that increased the authority of the former over the Church in their states. The Great Schism enabled lay rulers to construct virtual national churches at the expense of papal power.

Heretical and Spiritual Movements

The chaos of two and then three popes claiming authority over the Church, along with the ruthlessness and greed of the claimants, greatly increased dissatisfaction with the organization of the Church. From time to time, heresies (movements based on beliefs deemed contrary to the teaching of the Church) had denied the authority of the papacy and demanded reform. In the twelfth century, the Waldensians in the Alps and the Albigensians in the south of France had defied the papacy by withdrawing into strictly organized communities that, unlike monasteries and convents, recognized neither Church doctrine nor authority.

An undercurrent of mysticism persisted in Europe, based on a belief in the supremacy of individual piety in the quest for knowledge of God and eternal salvation. William of Occam (c. 1290–1349), an English monk and another critic of the papacy, rejected scholastic rationalism. Scholasticism had become increasingly linked to the theology of Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274), who had deduced the existence of God from what he considered rational proofs that moved from one premise to the next. Occam, in contrast, posited that the gulf between God and man was so great that scholastic proofs of God's existence, such as those of Aquinas, were pointless because mankind could not understand God through reason. "Nominalists," as Occam and his followers were known, believed that individual piety should be the cornerstone of religious life. Nominalists rejected papal authority and the hierarchical structure of the Church. Their views reflected and accentuated the turn of more clergy and laymen toward the Scriptures as a guide for the individual's relationship with God, emphasizing the

importance of leading a good, simple life. The Great Schism may have increased the yearning for spirituality as well as for the institutional reform of the Church.

The English cleric and scholar John Wyclif (c. 1328–1384) also questioned the pope's authority and claimed that an unworthy pope did not have to be obeyed, views that drew papal censorship. For Wyclif, the Church consisted of the body of those God had chosen to be saved, and no more. Stressing the role of faith in reaching eternal salvation, he insisted that reading the Scriptures formed the basis of faith and the individual's relationship with God. Wyclif also put himself at odds with Church theology by rejecting transubstantiation (the doctrine that holds that during Mass the priest transforms ordinary bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ).

Wyclif's de-emphasis of rituals and his advocacy of a religion based on faith suggested the significantly reduced importance of the Church as intermediary between man and God. Wyclif, who had powerful English noble and clerical protectors, called for Church reform. But the Peasants' Revolt of 1381 in England, in which wealthy churchmen were targets of popular wrath, gave even Wyclif's powerful protectors pause by raising the specter of future social unrest. An English Church synod condemned Wyclif, but he was allowed to live out his remaining years in a monastery. Some of his English followers, poor folk known as the Lollards, carried on Wyclif's work after his death. They criticized the Church's landed wealth and espoused a simpler religion. Led by gentry known as "Lollard knights," the Lollards rose up in rebellion in 1414, but were brutally crushed by King Henry V.

In Bohemia in Central Europe, Jan Hus (c. 1369–1415), a theologian, had learned of Wyclif's teaching. He, too, loudly criticized the worldliness of some clerics, and called for a return to a more unadorned religion. Rejecting the authority of the papacy and denouncing popes as "anti-Christ," Hus held that ordinary people could reform the Church.

The Challenge of Conciliarism to Papal Authority

The doctrine of conciliarism arose not only in response to the Great Schism but also to growing demands from many churchmen that the Church must undertake reform. The Council of Constance (1414–1418) was called to resolve the Great Schism and to undertake a reform of the Church. Many of the ecclesiastical dignitaries who attended also wanted to limit and define the authority of the papacy.

There were at least four significant parties to conciliarism: the popes themselves; bishops who supported councils as a way of resolving Church problems; secular rulers, particularly French kings, but also Holy Roman emperors, intervening in the Great Schism; and heretics condemned at Constance, who were far more radical than the mainstream conciliarists in their challenge to papal authority.

The Council of Constance first turned its attention to Jan Hus. Holding a safe-conduct pass given to him by the king of Bohemia, Hus travelled to the Council of Constance in 1414 but was arrested and put on trial for heresy. Hus refused to recant Wyclif's views, defending his own belief that the faithful, like the priest saying Mass, ought to be able to receive communion, the Church's rite of unity, in the two forms of bread and wine. The council condemned Hus, turning him over to the Holy Roman emperor, who ordered him burned at the stake as a heretic. The Hussites, the only major fifteenth-century dissidents within the Church, fought off several papal armies. They finally won special papal dispensation for the faithful to take communion in both bread and wine; their "Utraquist" ("in both kinds") church lasted until 1620.

The Council of Constance resolved the ongoing conflicting claims to papal authority by deposing two of the claimants and accepting the resignation of the third. In 1417, the council elected Martin V (pope 1417–1431). But the Great Schism, with its multiple papal claimants, by delaying any serious attempts at reform, had reinforced the insistence of some prelates that councils of Church bishops ought to have more authority than the pope.

Convoked by the pope, at least in principle, councils brought together leading ecclesiastical dignitaries from throughout Europe. These councils deliberated on matters of faith, as well as on the organization of the Church. But some councils began to come together in defiance of papal authority. Those holding a "conciliar" view of the Church conceived of it as

Jan Hus being burned at the stake as a heretic.



a corporation of cardinals that could override the pope. William of Occam had argued a century earlier that, when confronted by a heretical pope, a general council of the Church could stand as the repository of truth and authority. Some reformers wanted to impose a written constitution on the Church. At the Council of Basel, which began in 1431, exponents of unlimited papal authority and their counterparts favoring conciliarist positions both presented their views. In 1437, the pope ordered the council moved to Ferrara, and then the next year to Florence. Some participants, mostly conciliarists, continued to meet in Basel until 1445, although the pope declared that council schismatic. Fifteen years later, Pope Pius II (pope 1458–1464) declared the conciliar movement to be a heresy.

Clerical Abuses and Indulgences

The assertion by some churchmen that councils had authority over the papacy merged easily with those who called for the reform of blatant abuses within the Church. Some monasteries were mocked as hypocritical institutions no more saintly than the supposedly profane world monks and nuns sought to leave behind. Several new religious orders had been founded at least partially out of impatience with, if not disgust with, ecclesiastical worldliness.

Critics of the papacy attacked with particular energy ecclesiastical financial and moral abuses. They claimed that the papacy had become an investment trust run by the priests who administered the papacy's temporal affairs. No clerical financial abuse was more attacked than indulgences, which were based on the idea of transferable merit. Through granting indulgences, the Church supposedly reduced the time a soul would have to suffer punishment in Purgatory (that halfway house between Hell and Heaven that had emerged in Church belief early in the Middle Ages) for sins committed on earth. The practice of selling indulgences began during the Crusades as a means of raising revenue for churches and hospitals. Those seeking the salvation of their souls did not purchase God's forgiveness (which could only be received in the confessional) but rather cancelled or reduced the temporal punishment (such as the obligation to undertake pilgrimages, or give charity, or say so many prayers) required to atone for their sins. In 1457, the pope had announced that indulgences could be applied to the souls of family members or friends suffering in Purgatory. Some people had the impression that purchasing indulgences rather than offering real repentance brought immediate entry to Heaven for oneself or one's relatives. "The moment the money tinkles in the collecting box, a soul flies out of Purgatory," went one ditty. The implication was that wealthy families had a greater chance of opening the doors of Heaven for their loved ones than poor people. One papal critic interpreted all of this to mean that "the Lord desireth not the death of a sinner but rather that he may live and pay."

Another clerical practice that was much criticized was that of the sale of Church offices, known as simony. More than ever before, those who participated in—and benefited from—this practice were Italian clerics. Most popes appointed Italians as cardinals, many of whom lived in Rome while accumulating great wealth from ecclesiastical sees (areas of a bishops' jurisdiction) they rarely if ever visited. Some prominent families looked to the Church to provide lucrative sinecures—offices that generated income but that required little or no work—for their children. Reformers decried the appointment of unqualified bishops who had purchased their offices.

Many priests charged exorbitant fees for burial. Resentment also mounted, particularly in the German states, because clerics were immune from civil justice and paid no taxes. Indulgences and pardons, swapped for gold or services, had since 1300 become a papal monopoly. Commenting on Leo's death in 1521, one wag remarked, "His last moments come, he couldn't even have the [Last] Sacrament. By God, he's sold it!"

The papacy also came under attack for moral abuses. In the diocese of Trent in the early sixteenth century, about a fifth of all priests kept concubines. Nepotism, the awarding of posts to relatives or friends, seemed to reign supreme. In the fifteenth century, Pope Paul II was mocked as the "happy father," not revered as the Holy Father. Alexander VI (pope 1492–1503) looked after his own children with the care of any other father. Paul III (pope 1534–1549) made two of his grandsons cardinals, their expensive hats far bigger than the young heads upon which they rested.

The sacrament of penance also generated popular resentment against the clergy. Since 1215, the faithful were required to confess their sins at least once a year to a priest. This sacrament originated in the context of instruction to encourage good behavior. But for many people, penance had become the priest's interrogation of the faithful in the confessional, during which the confessor sought out details of misdeeds in order to determine one of the sixteen stated degrees of transgression. The Church's call for sinners to repent seemed particularly ironic in view of popularly perceived ecclesiastical abuses.

Given a boost by the conciliar movement, calls for reform echoed louder and louder. The representatives of the clergy who had gathered at the Estates-General of France in 1484 criticized the sale of Church offices. In 1510, the Augsburg Diet, an imperial institution of the Holy Roman Empire, refused to grant money to the pope for war against the Turks unless he first ordered an end to financial abuses. The imperial representative Assembly (Reichstag) had increasingly served as a forum for denunciations against the papacy. In 1511, King Louis XII of France, whose armies had backed up his territorial ambitions in northern Italy, called a council with the goal of reasserting the conciliar doctrine and ordered reforms in the monastic houses of his realm. The Fifth Lateran Council, which met from 1512 to 1517, urged more education for the clergy, sought to end some monastic financial abuses, and insisted that occupants of religious

houses uphold their vows of chastity. The council also suggested missions to carry the Church's influence into the Americas. Pope Leo X, however, emphatically insisted that he alone could convoke Church councils, and the Fifth Lateran Council itself forbade sermons denouncing the moral state of the Church.

Martin Luther

Martin Luther (1483–1546) was born in the small town of Eisleben in central Germany. He was the son of a miner whose family had been prosperous peasants. His peasant background could be seen in the coarseness of his language, song, and humor. The stocky, pious, and determined Luther began his studies in 1501 at the University of Erfurt, where he took courses in philosophy and then began the study of law.

In July 1505, Luther was engulfed in a violent storm as he returned to Erfurt after a visit home. As a bolt of lightning struck not far from where he stood in terror, the young student cried out to the patron saint of travelers, "Help me, Saint Anne, I will become a monk." Returning safely to Erfurt, he gathered his friends together and told them, "Today you see me, henceforth, never more." They escorted him to the nearby monastery of the Augustinian monks, which he entered against his father's wishes. Luther prayed, fasted, and, outside the monastery, begged for charity. In 1507, he was ordained a priest and soon became a doctor of theology, administrator of eleven Augustinian monasteries, and dean of the theological seminary in the town of Wittenberg.

Luther had, for some time, been wracked with gnawing doubt concerning his personal unworthiness. Was he not a sinner? He had been saved from the storm, but would he be saved from damnation on Judgment Day? Was there really any connection between good works effected on earth and salvation? If mankind was so corrupted by sin, how could charity, fasting, or constant prayer and self-flagellation in the monastery earn one entry to Heaven? He later recalled, "I tried hard . . . to be contrite, and make a list of my sins. I confessed them again and again. I scrupulously carried out the penances that were allotted to me. And yet my conscience kept telling me: 'You fell short there.' 'You were not sorry enough.' 'You left that sin off your list.' I was trying to cure the doubts and scruples of the conscience with human remedies. . . . The more I tried these remedies, the more troubled and uneasy my conscience grew."

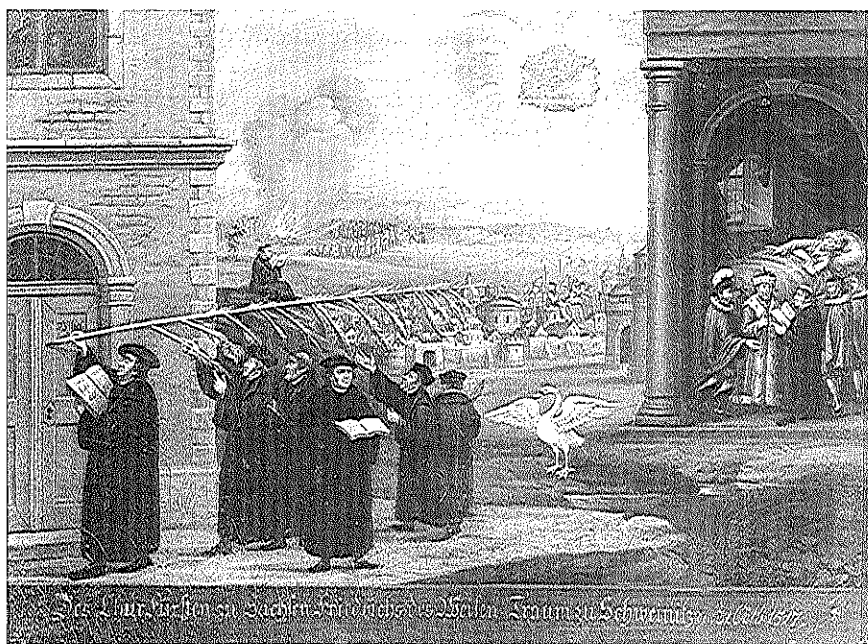
Luther's lonely study of theology in the tower library of the monastery did not resolve his doubts. Like other Augustinians, he had been influenced by the nominalism of William of Occam, which emphasized individual piety. This led Luther closer to his contention that faith, not good works, was the key to salvation. Indeed, the teachings of Saint Augustine himself also suggested to him that each person could be saved by faith alone through the grace of God. Believing man is saved "not by pieces, but in a heap," Luther

became obsessed with a phrase from the Bible (Romans 1:17), "The just shall live by faith." Such a conclusion broke with the accepted teachings of the Church as defined by medieval scholasticism. But more than faith was troubling Luther. He was also especially troubled by the abuse of the ecclesiastical sale of indulgences.

On October 31, 1517, Luther tacked up on the door of the castle church of Wittenberg "Ninety-five Theses or Disputations on the Power and Efficacy of Indulgences." He denounced the theoretical underpinnings of the papal granting of indulgences out of the "treasury of merits" accumulated by Christ and the saints. He then had his theses printed and distributed in the region and invited those who might want to dispute his theses to present themselves to debate with him, as was the custom. In February 1518, Pope Leo X demanded that Luther's monastic superior order him to cease his small crusade. Luther refused, citing his right as a professor of theology to dispute formally the charges now leveled against him. And he found a protector, Frederick III, elector of Saxony, a religious ruler who turned to the Bible as he mulled over matters of state.

In April, as denunciations against Luther poured into Rome, he successfully defended his theses before his Augustinian superiors. Pope Leo was

An allegorical painting of the dream of Frederick the Wise wherein Martin Luther uses an enormous quill to tack his Ninety-Five Theses to the door of the castle church at Wittenberg.



trying to remain on good terms with Frederick III, a strong candidate for election as Holy Roman emperor. Instead of immediately summoning Luther to Rome, he therefore proposed that a papal legate travel to Augsburg to hear Luther out. At their meeting, the legate warned Luther to desist or face the consequences. Luther's friends, suspecting that the pope had ordered his arrest, whisked him away to safety.

Luther sought a negotiated solution. He agreed to write a treatise calling on the German people to honor the Church, and promised neither to preach nor publish anything else if his opponents would also keep silent. At this point Luther did not seek to create a new church, but merely to reform the old one. A papal representative sent to meet with Luther in Leipzig in June 1519 accused him of being a Hussite, that is, of denying the pope's authority. Luther admitted that he did not believe the pope to be infallible.

Luther crossed his Rubicon, but unlike Caesar moved not toward Rome but away from it. "Farewell, unhappy, hopeless, blasphemous Rome! The wrath of God come upon thee, as you deserve," he wrote a friend, "We have cared for Babylon and she is not healed; let us then leave her. . . ." Luther would not be silenced. "I am hot-blooded by temperament and my pen gets irritated easily," he proclaimed.

Three treatises published in 1520 marked Luther's final break with Rome. Here Luther developed his theology of reform, one that went far beyond the prohibition of indulgences and the sale of ecclesiastical offices. He argued his view that faith alone could bring salvation, that good works follow faith but do not in themselves save the soul. Nor, he argued, does the absence of good works condemn man to eternal damnation. Upon reading one of these tracts, Erasmus, loyal critic of the Church, stated emphatically, "The breach is irreparable."

Developing the theological concept of "freedom of a Christian," Luther's immediate goal was to free German communities from the strictures of religious beliefs and institutions that seemed increasingly foreign to their faith. He called on the princes of the German states to reform the Church in their states. In doing so, he argued that the Scriptures declared the Church itself to be a priestly body that was not subject to the pope's interpretation. Luther acknowledged only two of the seven sacraments, those instituted by Christ, not the papacy: baptism and communion. After first retaining penance, he dropped it, arguing that faith was sufficient to bring about a sinner's reconciliation with God. If this was true, the monastic life no longer seemed to Luther to provide any advantage in the quest for salvation. And he rejected what he called the "unnatural" demands of poverty, chastity, and obedience.

On June 15, 1520, Pope Leo X excommunicated Luther from the Church, accusing him of forty-one heresies. The papal bull of excommunication called Luther "the wild boar who has invaded the Lord's vineyard." In Wittenberg, a crowd burned papal bulls and documents. Luther defiantly tossed the writ of excommunication into the flames.

Charles V had been elected Holy Roman emperor following his father's death in 1519. He had promised before his election that no one would be excommunicated within the empire without a proper hearing. Through the influence of Frederick III of Saxony, Charles summoned Luther to the German town of Worms in April 1521 to confront the imperial Diet (assembly).

Before the Diet, Luther was asked if he had written the imposing number of treatises and books placed on the table. Acknowledging them all, Luther replied: "I am bound by the Scriptures I have quoted and my conscience is captive to the Word of God. I cannot and I will not retract anything, since it is neither safe nor right to go against conscience. I cannot do otherwise, here I stand, may God help me. Amen." The Diet condemned Luther's beliefs. Charles V, in agreement with the pope, signed the Edict of Worms in May 1521, placing Luther under the "ban of the empire." This forbade him from preaching and declared him a heretic. Several men loyal to Frederick III, Luther's protector, escorted him to safety.

By declaring Luther an outlaw and forbidding any changes in religion in the Holy Roman Empire, the Edict of Worms made religious reform an issue of state. But Luther could not have survived the ban of the empire if his influence had not already spread, convincing many that through Luther they had now discovered the true Gospel.

SOCIAL BACKGROUND OF THE REFORMATION IN THE GERMAN STATES

Challenging the ways people in Central Europe had thought about religion for centuries, the movement for reform, spread by preachers, found converts in the German states. During the early 1520s, the proponents of Martin Luther's reform convinced many clergy and lay people to reconsider their religious beliefs and to restructure their communities. Social and political unrest, perhaps encouraged by the quest for religious reform, began to stir in the central and southern German states as peasants rose up against their lords. This uprising, although roundly condemned by Luther, left no doubt that the Reformation would shake the foundations of the German states.

Urban Centers of Reform

At first the Reformation was overwhelmingly an urban phenomenon in the German states and then Switzerland. The decentralized political structure of the Holy Roman Empire and traditions of popular participation in urban government aided the movement for reform, for example in the free cities in the northern German states like the powerful Baltic trading city of Lübeck, leader of the Hanseatic League, and self-governing towns in the southern German states. Each German town had its own elite of prosperous

burghers. Reformers found these communities fertile ground for Luther's ideas. Complaining of incompetent or lazy priests, members of some towns had endowed posts for preachers in order to attract vigorous, effective priests, a good many of whom now followed Luther.

German towns also had a particularly well-developed sense of civic solidarity that included a belief that all citizens of the town shared a common fate in the material world—vulnerability to bad times, and a certain degree of prosperity in good times—and that salvation itself was something of a group enterprise. Erasmus had asked, "What else is the city but a great monastery?" Luther sought to spark a more personal religion that would make people not only better Christians, but better citizens of their communities as well. In many towns, urban leaders and ordinary people may have accepted reform because it appeared more promising than unreformed Catholicism for the maintenance of local order.

Yet no simple formula could predict how the Reformation would fare in German towns. In the southern German states, urban nobles, merchants, and bankers remained staunchly Catholic. These property-owning groups were more conservative by instinct. Here the role of personality and the configuration of local social and political life came into play; so did pure chance, including such factors as whether preachers and reform literature arrived, how both were received, and by whom.

The Process of Reform

Social and political factors thus helped shape religious outcomes. While the embrace of the Reformation did not constitute a social revolution, in many cases clergy supporting religious reform were drawn from the middle and lower middle classes, groups with some possibility of social mobility. The "middling sort," in turn, brought reform to the lower classes. This process might be marked by the spontaneous singing of Lutheran hymns by those sitting in Mass, or by some other signs of a turn to reform. While archbishops and bishops in general opposed Luther, the lower clergy, particularly those of recent ordination, became influential converts in their towns. Communities accepted reformers by consensus, as local governments began to bow to the wishes of townspeople.

Thus, a crowd cheered in Basel when a priest carried the Bible instead of the communion host during the feast of Corpus Christi. Priests began to wear simpler clothes instead of rich robes. For the first time some of the Mass was said in German. Some reformed priests began to give the faithful both bread and wine during communion. Some crowds mocked Church rituals in angry ways: ringing cow bells to disrupt Mass; heckling priests trying to deliver sermons; smashing stained-glass windows, crucifixes, statues, and other images of the saints; and even destroying relics considered sacred. Such largely spontaneous actions bewildered Luther, who remained in most ways a very conservative man.

Luther and his followers denied the special status of the clergy as a group marked off from the rest of the population. In the early days of the Reformation, some reformers undertook expeditions to "rescue" nuns from convents. A number of former priests began to take wives, which at first shocked Luther, since this represented the end of clerical celibacy, which the Church had proclaimed in the eleventh century. Luther asserted in 1521, "Good Lord! Will our people at Wittenberg give wives even to monks? They will not push a wife on me!" But by 1525 he changed his mind, and married a former nun. The marriage of clerics further broke down the barrier between the priest and the people, symbolizing the "priesthood of all believers" by eliminating the clerical distinction of celibacy. Nonetheless, Luther limited the task of interpreting the Scriptures to professors of theology.

The Peasants' Revolt

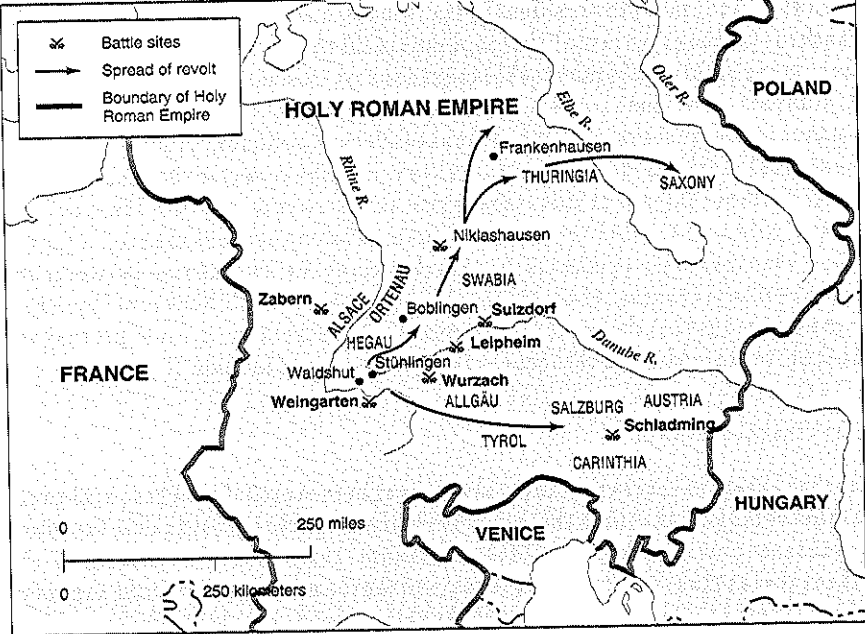
In the southern German states, some burghers worried that law and order would collapse, and that the poor might rise up. Some lords and burghers expressed concern that the villagers might "turn Swiss," referring to the Swiss towns that lived without lords and were self-governing and independent. News of several strange and alarming prophecies circulated.

In 1524–1525, peasants rose up against their lords in parts of the central and southern German states (see Map 3.1). They demanded the return of rights (such as to hunt freely and to pasture their animals on the common lands) that lords had usurped. They also asked for the abolition of serfdom and the tithe, which they declared to be against God's will. Bands of poor people burned castles and monasteries.

The peasants' revolt spread into Austria and Carinthia, and up into Thuringia and Saxony. Pamphlets called for social as well as religious reform. Thomas Münzer (c. 1491–1525), a priest and theologian, merged religious reform with social revolution. He preached against the Church and Luther with equal fury, for he believed that both the Church and Luther had humbled themselves to lay authorities. Münzer led a peasant army in Thuringia, where Luther's reform movement had made many converts.

In the northwestern German states, also in 1525, some towns that had been won over to religious reform rose up against Catholic princes. Swabian peasants promulgated twelve articles against their lords, princes, and bishops, demanding that communities have the right to choose their own pastors. But here, too, the demands of the rebels had a social content. They asked for an end to double taxation by both lay and ecclesiastical lords and the "death tax" by which heirs had to give up the deceased's finest horse, cow, or garment. They demanded the end of serfdom, the return of common lands to their use, and free access to forests and streams.

Luther had some sympathy with the plight of the poor. Some of his followers began to see in his teaching a means of resistance against the powerful. But Luther rejected the idea that his central theological idea of



MAP 3.1 THE PEASANTS' REVOLT, 1525-1526 Sites of peasant uprisings in parts of the central and southern German states. The revolt began in Waldshut and Stühlingen in the southern German states and spread east to the Tyrol and Salzburg in Austria, and north to Thuringia and Saxony.

"Christian freedom," which he believed applied only to the spiritual realm, could be extended into the relationship between lord and peasant. Luther asked lords to "act rationally" and "try kindness" when confronted by peasant demands. As nobles and churchmen began to accuse him of fomenting insurrection, he denounced the peasants in extravagant language. In *Against the Murdering, Thieving Hordes of Peasants*, he advised the German princes to "brandish their swords. . . . You cannot meet a rebel with reason. Your best answer is to punch him in the face until he has a bloody nose." Catholic and reformed princes put aside their differences to crush the revolt, in which more than 100,000 peasants perished. Münzer was defeated, captured, tortured, and beheaded.

THE SPREAD OF THE REFORMATION

Because of the intertwining of religion and politics, what began as a movement for Church reform became entangled in princely rivalries in the German states. As the breach between Catholic and reformed princes widened, religion became a source of division rather than of unity.

Although Luther had never intended to bring about a permanent division within Christianity, his followers gradually created a new church in many of the German states. The Reformation then spread beyond the German states.

Divisions within Christendom

The Augsburg Confession, a summary of beliefs presented by Luther's friends to the Diet that gathered in that city in 1530, became the doctrinal basis of the Lutheran Church. It was implemented by princes and prelates in the reformed states and towns, and in some places by a council, known as a Consistory, of ministers and lawyers.

Some humanists influenced by the Renaissance were attracted by Luther's writing. In the tradition of their predecessors who had rediscovered the classics, they admired Luther's return to the Scriptures as an original source of knowledge. One of Luther's converts later wrote that his own excitement at the new teaching was so great that he studied the Bible at night with sand in his mouth so that he would not fall asleep. Humanists transformed some monasteries into schools. The first reformed university began in Marburg in 1527.

But as the gap between reformers and the Church grew larger, Erasmus was caught in the middle. His own criticism of ecclesiastical abuses did not go far enough for reformers, but it went too far for churchmen. Erasmus remained loyal to Church doctrine. Similarly, Luther and the humanists parted ways by 1525. For the latter, humanistic knowledge was an end in

The Augsburg Confession read before Charles V in 1530.



itself; for the reformers, rhetoric was a method for teaching the Scriptures and for arguing in favor of ecclesiastical reform. Many reformers were less committed than humanists to the belief that man is a rational and autonomous being. Luther himself did not share the humanists' Renaissance optimism about mankind. He was not interested in rediscovering mankind but was instead preoccupied with an individual's relationship to God. Furthermore, Luther opposed attempts by philosophers to intrude in theological questions. Nonetheless, a humanist curriculum continued to influence the training of reform ministers.

Luther's followers gained their first martyrs in 1523, when two former monks were executed in Brussels for their beliefs. German princes requested from Holy Roman Emperor Charles V that a "free general council or at least a national council" consider the growing religious division within the Holy Roman Empire. The Diet of Speyer (1526) proclaimed that each German prince was "to live, govern, and bear himself as he hopes and trusts to answer to God and his imperial majesty." This truce gave reformers time to win even more converts. In 1529, German princes again gathered in Speyer. Some of them prepared a "protest" against the policies of Charles V and the Catholic princes, who had declared themselves against Luther. The followers of Luther thus became known as "Protestants."

Luther's writings, translated into Latin, then spread beyond the German states, following trade routes east and west. The reformers easily revived the anti-papal Hussite traditions of Bohemia and Moravia and that of the Waldensians in the southwestern Alps. German merchants carried reform to the Baltic states and Scandinavia. In Denmark, King Christian II adopted Lutheranism for his state. When Lutheranism was declared its official religion in 1527, Sweden and its territory of Finland had the first national reformed church.

Charles V and the Protestants

Holy Roman Emperor Charles V, the pope's most powerful potential advocate, was a pious man who first denounced Luther with passion. But extensive Habsburg imperial interests kept him fighting a war in Western Europe against King Francis I of France, which prevented him from acting against those who supported Luther. The French king, for his part, was pleased that religion was dividing the German princes, thereby weakening the imperial crown that he had coveted. Charles V was away from his German states between 1521 and 1530, for the most part in Italy, crucial years during which the Reformation spread within the Holy Roman Empire. In 1524, the first Protestant leagues were formed between states. Protestant governments dissolved convents and monasteries, turning them to secular uses, such as hospices or schools.

The Christian crusade against the Turks in Eastern Europe and the Mediterranean preoccupied Charles and other Catholic princes as well. In

1526, the Turks defeated the Hungarian king at Mohács in Hungary. This left Lutheran missionaries an open field there, although Muslim Turks did not care about which version of Christianity their non-Muslim subjects practiced. A subsequent Turkish advance forced Charles to offer concessions to Lutheran princes in exchange for assistance against the Turks. (Luther's hymn "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God" began as a martial song to inspire soldiers against the Ottoman forces.)

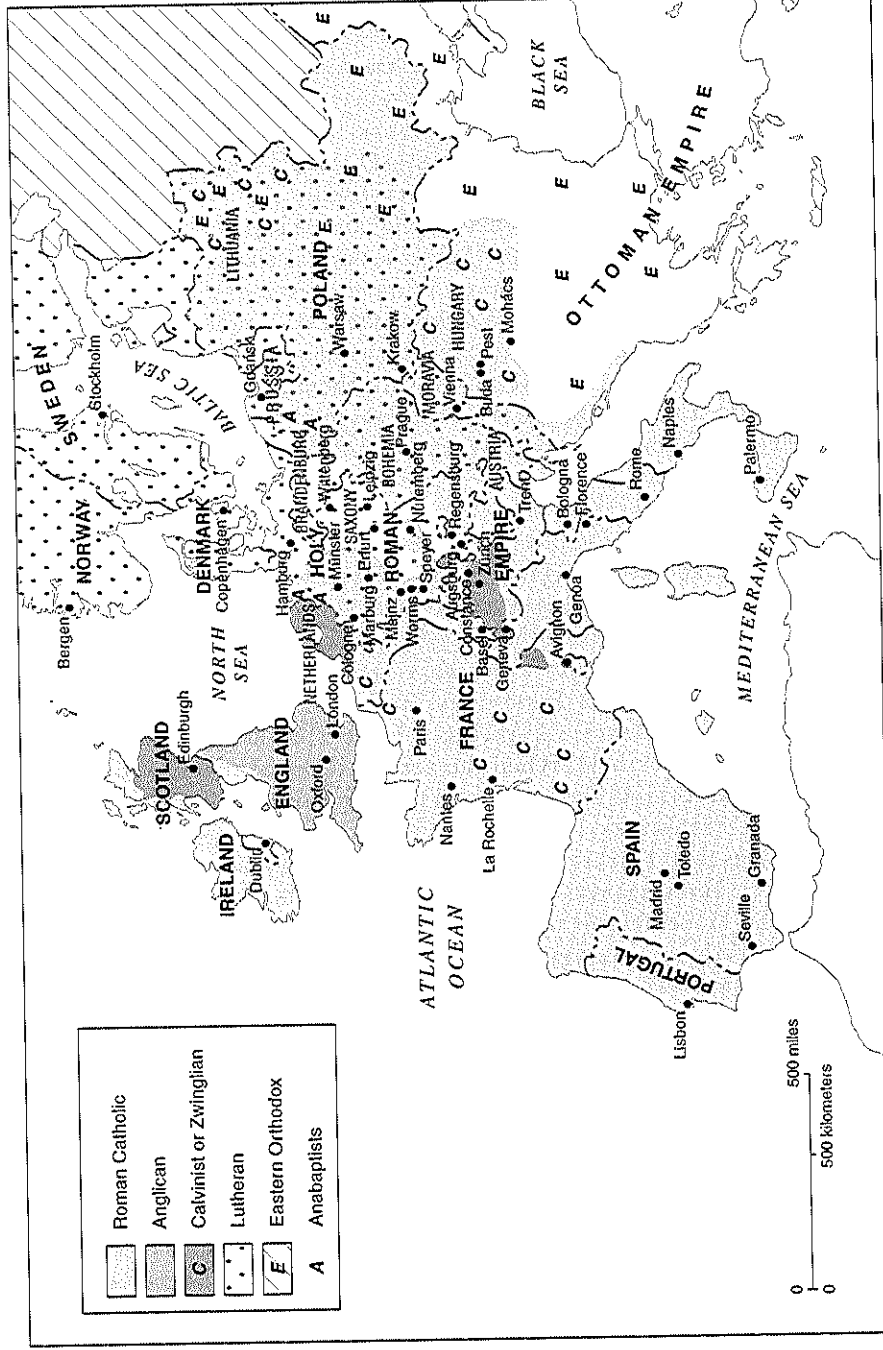
To be sure, not all political and religious leaders and their followers were intolerant of other religions. But in a time of sharp religious contention, too few shared the toleration of a French traveler to Turkey in 1652, who reported, "There are many in Christendom who believe that the Turks are great devils, barbarians, and people without faith, but those who have known them and who have talked with them have quite a different opinion, since it is certain that the Turks are good people who follow very well the commandment given us by nature, only to do to others what we would have done to us."

For a time, Charles V held out hope for conciliation with the Protestants. In 1531, however, the princes of Hesse, Saxony, and other states and cities that had adopted religious reform formed the Schmalkaldic League. Although first and foremost a defensive alliance, the princes intended that the league would replace the Holy Roman Empire as the source of their political allegiance. Up until this time, Charles had accepted temporary truces, and thus toleration of Protestants. He had suspended the Edict of Worms (which had condemned Luther as a heretic) until a general council of the Church could be held. When the pope announced that it would be held in the Alpine town of Trent (see p. 116), the stage was set for confrontation with the Protestants. Meanwhile, however, Charles was still preoccupied by hostilities with Francis I of France, who shocked many Christians by allying with the Turks against the Habsburgs. After Charles forced an end to the wars by launching an invasion of France from the Netherlands, he was finally ready to move against Protestants, routing the Schmalkaldic League in battle in 1547. He then forced reconversion on the people in about thirty German cities. By that time, however, Protestantism had established itself definitively in much of Central Europe.

The Peace of Augsburg

Charles V now tried to bring more of the German princes and their people back into the Catholic fold. He tried without success to impose moderate Catholic reform in Central Europe to answer some of the criticism of the reformers. But several of the Catholic princes took up arms against him in a short war in 1551. The political complexity of the myriad German states militated against a general settlement. The Holy Roman emperor gave up the idea of restoring Catholicism in all of the German states.

MAP 3.2 THE RELIGIOUS SITUATION IN EUROPE AFTER THE PEACE OF AUGSBURG, 1555 The Peace of Augsburg stipulated that the religion of the ruler of each of the Holy Roman Empire's states would be the religion of the state. The map indicates areas that were Roman Catholic, Anglican, Calvinist/Zwinglian, Lutheran, Eastern Orthodox, and Anabaptist.



The Peace of Augsburg of 1555 was a compromise. It was agreed upon by the imperial representative assembly after Charles, worn down by the complexity of imperial politics, refused to participate. It stipulated that the religion of the ruler of each of the empire's states would be the religion of the state (*cuius regio, eius religio*) (see Map 3.2). Protestants living in states with a Catholic ruler were free to emigrate, as were Catholics in the same situation. The Peace of Augsburg thus recognized that the institutions of the Holy Roman Empire could not provide a solution to what now appeared to be permanent religious divisions in Central Europe. It acknowledged that the Reformation in the German states was an accomplished fact. Thus, what had begun as a "squabble among monks" shaped the territorial and political history of Germany. Through the compromise that allowed each prince to determine the religion of his state, the Peace of Augsburg reaffirmed German particularism, the existence of many independent German states.

THE REFORMATION IN SWITZERLAND AND FRANCE

The next stage of the Reformation occurred in Switzerland, land of rugged peasants, craftsmen, and mercenary soldiers. The thirteen sparsely populated, independent cantons of Switzerland (then about a million people) were loosely joined in a federal Diet, closer in organization and in spirit to the Italian city-states than to the German states. Unlike the German states, where the conversion of a powerful prince could sway an entire state, there were no such territorial rulers in Switzerland. The Swiss reformers, then, would be even more closely tied to privileged residents of towns of relatively small size. Their movement would also soon spread to parts of France.

Zwingli and Reform

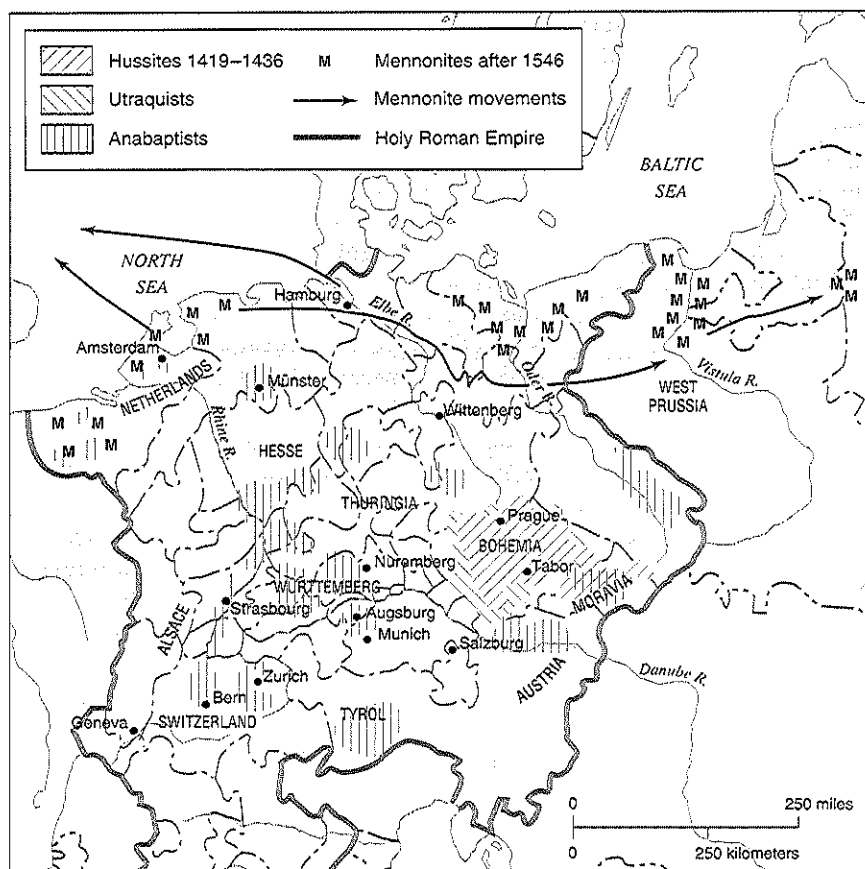
In Zurich, then a town of about 6,000, Huldrych Zwingli (1484–1531) preached salvation through faith alone. In 1522, several citizens of Zurich publicly munched sausages during Lent in defiance of the Lenten ban on eating meat. Zwingli published two tracts on their behalf in which he insisted that the Scriptures alone should be the basis of religious practice, and that as there was nothing in the Bible about sausages, they could be eaten at any time. This scriptural test also led Zwingli and his followers to iconoclasm, the stripping of images and altar decorations from churches because nothing about them could be found in the Bible. The Zurich municipal council then embraced reform. It ordered the canton's priests to preach only from the Bible, and two years later it forbade the saying of Mass. Zwingli convinced the town's magistrates that tithes should be used to aid the poor, whom he believed represented the real image of God.

A doctrinal conflict among reformers helped define the character of the Swiss Reformation. Luther maintained that communion represented the physical presence of Christ. In this he had not diverged far from the Catholic Church, which insisted that through the miracle of transubstantiation (which the pope formulated in 1215), the priest transformed bread and wine into the actual body and blood of Christ, the sacrament of the Holy Eucharist. But to Luther, who condemned Catholic worship of the Eucharist, the bodily presence of Christ in the Eucharist came from the fact that Christ and God were universally present. Zwingli, by contrast, believed that communion was only a symbol of Christ's real presence in the Eucharist and that Luther's refusal to abandon this idea demonstrated that he still stood with one foot in Rome. The "Sacramentarian Controversy" emerged as the first major doctrinal dispute among Protestants. The Augsburg Confession of 1530 sealed the rift by excluding reformers who rejected Lutheranism, such as Zwingli and his followers.

Between 1525 and 1530, some German-speaking parts of Switzerland and regions of the southern German states accepted Zwingli's reforms. In 1531, Catholic forces attacked Protestant cantons because Zwingli was actively espousing his version of reform there. Zwingli, carrying a sword and a Bible, led the Protestant forces into the Battle of Kappel and was killed in the fighting. Both Catholics and Lutherans claimed Zwingli's death to be divine judgment against his religious positions. The peace that followed, however, specified that each canton could choose its own religion.

(Left) Woodcut of Huldrych Zwingli. (Right) Burning church ornaments and religious statues in Zurich.





MAP 3.3 RADICAL RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS Areas in which there were Hussites, Utraquists, Anabaptists, and Mennonites.

Radical Reformers

The reforms of Zwingli were not the only kind spreading in southern Germany and Switzerland in the 1520s. Some groups had even more radical ideas in mind for changing religious morality and communal life. Radicals shared an impatience with the plans of more moderate reformers, although they sometimes had very different visions of what this would constitute. Some were Anti-Trinitarians who rejected the orthodox Christian teaching that God consisted of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Many radicals believed that they had been called to form the communities in which they sought to implement “godly living” (see Map 3.3).

Most radical reformers in the 1520s held apocalyptic beliefs, convinced that the world would soon end with a victory of God’s true faithful over the forces of evil, in which they included those who did not agree with them or

tolerate their views. Some radical reformers who had broken with Zwingli in Zurich became known as Anabaptists—"anabaptism" means rebaptism in Greek. Believing that neither Luther nor Zwingli had sufficiently transformed religious morality and community life, they sought to implement "godly" living on the model of the New Testament. Because they could find no reference to infant baptism in the Bible, they began baptizing adults in 1525 against Zwingli's advice. They believed that only adults could manifest true faith and therefore be worthy of baptism.

Anabaptist groups sprung up in areas influenced by Protestant reform, including Zurich, the Netherlands, parts of Italy, and Poland. Anabaptists were a very diverse group. Many Anabaptists advocated a congregational form of organization, because for them membership was through free will or voluntary self-selection, rather than through territorial organization of churches as was true for Catholics, Lutherans, and Zwinglians. Yet there were major differences between groups. Some Anabaptists in Switzerland and southern Germany formed communities of believers seeking isolation—"separation from iniquity," as they put it—from the struggles and temptations of the sinful secular world. These Anabaptists did not accept temporal government and refused to take civil oaths, pay taxes, hold public office, or serve in armies. However, other Anabaptists did seek alliances with local rulers and sought to be loyal subjects.

Catholic and Protestant states moved to crush these communities of radicals, seeing them as seditious rebels against God-given authority in church and state. At the Diet of Speyer in 1529, Charles V, along with Catholic and Protestant rulers in the empire, declared Anabaptism a crime punishable by death, usually by—with intentional irony—drowning, "the third baptism." Some of these radical reformers sought refuge in the mountains of the Tyrol and Moravia, and in the Netherlands, while others accepted a martyr's death or spoke out against authorities who persecuted them.

In 1534, a radical group of Anabaptists led by a local preacher took over the town government of Münster by election. Those not sympathetic to Anabaptism left town willingly or were expelled. Soon several thousand Anabaptists from as far away as the Netherlands arrived in Münster, believing it to be the "New Jerusalem," where God's chosen people would be protected. The Anabaptists established a council of twelve that expropriated Catholic Church property, abolished private property, banned the use of money, and established communally held property and a system of barter.

Münster's territorial ruler and his allies laid siege to the town. Inside Münster, John of Leiden, a Dutchman, gained influence as a leader and prophet. He convinced the ministers and elders of Münster to abolish private property, which they justified on biblical grounds—upon Christ's return, believers would not need possessions. Moreover, sharing possessions helped them ration goods during the siege. They also began to practice

polygamy, in part because there were four times as many women than men in town. John of Leiden, who became king of Münster, led the way by taking sixteen wives. He also ordered the burning of all books in Münster except the Bible. Forces sent by Lutheran and Catholic princes stormed the town in June 1535 and tortured to death John of Leiden and other lesser leaders, placing their mutilated corpses in iron cages that still hang in a church steeple in Münster.

After the fall of Münster, Dutch Anabaptists led by a former Catholic priest named Menno Simons (1496–1561) tried to save adult baptism by preaching disciplined, godly living and Christian pacifism. They became known as Mennonites, and some of them left for the Americas more than a century later in search of religious toleration. Other descendants of such radical reformers include the adult-baptizing Hutterites of Moravia, the forebears of a group who settled in the American Midwest and the Canadian prairies. Likewise, the Unitarian religion has roots in this period, deriving from the Anti-Trinitarian views of God as being one, not the trinity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Jean Calvin and Reform

France, too, provided fertile ground for reform. The French monarchy had traditionally maintained a stubborn independence from Rome. Pope Leo X had signed the Concordat of Bologna (1516) with King Francis I, giving the king the right to appoint bishops and abbots in France. Initially the Valois ruler was far more preoccupied with his wars against Charles V and the Habsburgs than with the stormy tracts of an obscure German monk. The threat of heresy, however, convinced him in 1521 to order Luther's writings confiscated and burned. Yet Protestant propaganda arrived in France from Germany. In 1534, reformers affixed placards in Paris denouncing the Mass and on the king's bedroom door in his château at Amboise. The "affair of the placards" convinced the king to combat reform in earnest.

Jean Calvin (1509–1564) embodied the second major current of the Reformation. He was born in the small town of Noyon in northern France, where his father worked as a secretary to the local bishop. Calvin's mother died when he was about five years old, and his father sent him to Paris to be trained as a priest. He then decided that his son should become a lawyer, because he might earn more money.

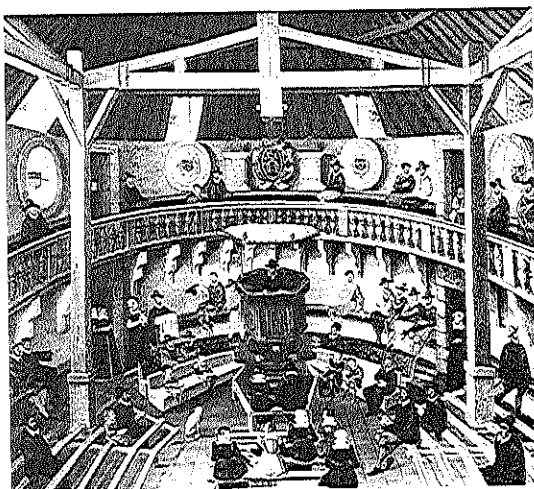
Late-Renaissance humanism and particularly the teachings of Erasmus helped stimulate in the pious young Calvin an interest in religious reform during his legal studies. In 1534, the Catholic hierarchy and the king himself moved to crush this movement. Finding exile in the Swiss town of Basel, Calvin probably still considered himself a follower of Erasmus within the Catholic Church. In Basel, he penned tracts denouncing the papacy and calling on the king of France to end religious persecution.

Throughout his life, Calvin was overwhelmed by anxiety and self-doubt, compounded by his virtual abandonment by his father and his forced exile. He was also terror-struck by the power of nature and, in particular, by storms as manifestations of God's power—rather like Luther. Humanity seemed to Calvin to be poised before an abyss, a metaphor he frequently used. He feared that oceans might rise and sweep humankind away. Around him Calvin saw only the absence of order.

Like other thinkers of the early sixteenth century, Calvin believed that he lived in a time of extraordinary moral crisis: "Luxury increases daily, lawless passions are inflamed, and human beings continue in their crimes and profligacy more shameless than ever." It seemed to Calvin that the sense of religious community that ought to bind people together was dissolving.

Calvin argued that the Catholic Church had made the faithful anxious by emphasizing the necessity of good works in achieving salvation. The anxiety of never knowing how many good works were enough had, Calvin insisted, turned Catholics to seek the intercession of saints. He attacked the sacrament of penance with particular vehemence: "The souls of those who have been affected with some awareness of God are most cruelly torn by this butchery . . . the sky and sea were on every side, there was no port of anchorage." Calvin also rejected the increasingly human-like images given God and Christ over the previous century. Unlike Luther, Calvin emphasized not reconciliation with God through faith, but rather obedience to his will. He sought to provide a doctrine that would reassure the faithful of God's grace and of their own salvation. There was hope in Calvin's thought, faith that the labyrinth—another of his frequent images—of life could be successfully navigated. The imposition of order, based upon the mo-

(Left) Jean Calvin. (Right) A Calvinist service. Note the austerity of the church.



rality dictated by the Bible, would put an end to some of life's haunting uncertainties.

With this in mind, Calvin developed in his *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (1536–1559) the doctrine of election or predestination: “God’s eternal decree. . . . For all are not created in equal condition; rather, eternal life is foreordained for some, eternal damnation for others.” The belief in predestination called into question the efficacy of good works. If one’s fate were predestined and if good works in themselves (as the Catholic Church claimed) did not bring eternal salvation, why lead a righteous life? Calvin believed that good works were signs of having been chosen by God for eternal salvation, though they did not in themselves guarantee Heaven.

Whereas medieval theologians had condemned lending money for profit, Calvin, unlike Luther, distinguished between usury and productive loans that would raise capital and increase the well-being of the entire community. Replacing penance as a means of imposing individual discipline, Calvin preached collective, communal discipline in the pursuit of holiness. Validating economic activity, later Calvinists came to view prosperity, along with “sober living,” as a sign of election by God. In the late nineteenth century, this came to be known as the “Protestant ethic.”

Late in 1536, Calvin went to the Swiss lakeside city of Geneva, a town of about 13,000 people. With the first successes of the Reformation, word of which had originally been carried there by German merchants, Geneva broke away from the domination of the Catholic House of Savoy. Earlier that year, troops of the Swiss canton of Bern, which had embraced Zwinglian reform, occupied the city. Bern established a protectorate, with Geneva retaining its nominal independence. Citizens elected magistrates and members of two representative councils.

In 1537, Calvin persuaded the smaller and most powerful of the two councils to adopt a Confession of Faith, swearing that the people of Geneva “live according to the holy evangelical law and the Word of God.” Residency in Geneva would be contingent on formal adherence to the document. The Mass was banned, and priests were informed that they had to convert to reformed religion or leave the city.

Calvin hoped to impose Christian discipline and asceticism on the city in order to construct a righteous society. His “Ecclesiastical Ordinances” would provide for the organization of religious life in reformed Geneva, but they threatened the powers of the councils. Calvin insisted that the Consistory, the judiciary of the reformed church made up of lay elders (called presbyters), would have the right to discipline all citizens and to dispense harsh penalties against those who transgressed Geneva’s religious laws. These penalties would include excommunication from the church, exile, imprisonment, and even execution. Calvin wanted municipal supervisors to monitor the religious behavior of the people, but the councils hesitated to surrender their authority to Calvin, who was French, or to assume such a supervisory role. In 1538, the councils told Calvin to leave Geneva.

In 1540, the majority of citizens of Geneva, believing that the town's ties to Bern limited its sovereignty, elected new magistrates, who executed the leaders of the pro-Bern faction. The two councils then invited Calvin to return to oversee reform in Geneva, and they adopted his Ecclesiastical Ordinances. Calvin returned to the city he had called "a place so grossly immoral."

To John Knox, a Scottish reformer, Geneva seemed "the most perfect school of Christ that ever was on earth since the days of the Apostles." But many citizens of Geneva resisted the close scrutiny of the Consistory. One man named his dog "Calvin" in protest. Always on the alert for the "many ambushes and clandestine intrigues Satan daily directs against us," Calvin forced another man who had publicly criticized him to wear a hair shirt (a shirt made of coarse animal hair) and walk slowly through town, stopping at street corners to pray and acknowledge Calvin's authority. Calvin took it upon himself to decide whether future bridegrooms were free from venereal disease and could marry in Geneva. He determined the punishment of merchants who cheated their clients. Drinking establishments were permitted (indeed part of Calvin's salary was paid in barrels of wine) if no lewd songs were sung or cards played, a Bible was always available, and grace said before meals. The Consistory imposed penalties for laughing during a sermon, having one's fortune told, or praising the pope. Calvin's death in 1564 was brought on by a variety of illnesses that were probably compounded by his chronic state of exhaustion and his fretful anxiety about the possibility of reforming a fallen and sinful world.

Calvinist Conversions

Calvinism proved the most aggressive version of the reformed religions, finding converts in places as diverse as France, the Netherlands, a number of German states, Hungary, Transylvania, Poland, and Scotland, where, following the efforts of the fiery reformer John Knox, the Scottish Parliament accepted Calvinism in 1560 as the national religion. In France, Calvinism made some inroads among all social classes during the 1530s, following the flow of reform literature coming from Switzerland and the German states. People who could not read could nonetheless listen to the Bible being read aloud.

Henry II, who came to the throne of France in 1547, denounced the "common malady of this contagious pestilence which has infected many noble towns." The Parlement of Paris created a special chamber to hear heresy cases—"the Burning Chamber"—and tried about 500 people. The sadistic king attended many of the executions himself. A magistrate from Bordeaux described the courage of the Protestant martyrs:

Fires were being kindled everywhere . . . the stubborn resolution of those who were carried off to the gallows . . . stupefied many people.

They saw innocent, weak women submit to torture so as to bear witness to their faith . . . men exulting upon seeing the dreadful and frightful preparations for and implements of death that were readied for them . . . half charred and roasted, they looked down from the stakes with invincible courage . . . they died smiling.

The judicial system could not keep up with the rapid pace of conversion, including the conversion of many nobles. By 1560, there were more than 2,000 Protestant, or Huguenot (so named after a leading French reformer in Geneva, Besançon Hugues), congregations in France.

Calvinism became the dominant religion of reform in the Netherlands. To root out Protestants there, Philip II of Spain expanded the Inquisition (which had been set up by the Spanish crown after the expulsion of the Moors and Jews from Spain in 1492 and later extended to the Spanish Empire in the Americas). When the Dutch declared independence from Spain in 1581, Calvinism quickly became part of the Dutch national movement during the long war of independence that followed (see Chapter 5).

THE ENGLISH REFORMATION

Unlike continental reform, the English Reformation began with a struggle between the king and the Church. But this dispute must also be placed in the context of discontentment with ecclesiastical venality, and the distant rule of Rome. Lollard influence persisted among the middle and lower classes, which resented the wealth of the high clergy and papal authority. Merchants and travelers returned to England from the continent with Lutheran tracts. Among Luther's small group of followers at the University of Cambridge was William Tyndale, who published the first English translation of the New Testament. Burned at the stake as a heretic in 1536, his last words were "Lord, open the eyes of the king of England."

Henry VIII and the Break with Rome

King Henry VIII of England (ruled 1509–1547) was a religious conservative who published a book in 1521 defending the Catholic view of the sacraments against Martin Luther, prompting the pope to grant him the title of "defender of the faith." The Catholic Church in England already enjoyed considerable autonomy, granted by the pope in the fourteenth century, and the king could appoint bishops.

The issue of royal divorce led to the English break with Rome. Henry's wife, Catherine of Aragon (1485–1536), had given birth five times, but only an extremely frail girl, Mary Tudor, survived. Henry not only urgently



(Left) Henry VIII. (Right) Anne Boleyn.

desired a male heir for the prestige of the dynasty but he also desired Anne Boleyn (1507–1536), a lady-in-waiting with long black hair and flashing eyes.

Henry had obtained a special papal dispensation to marry Catherine, who was his brother's widow, and now sought the annulment of this same marriage. Obtaining an annulment—which meant, from the point of view of the Church, that the marriage had never taken place—was not uncommon in sixteenth-century Europe, providing an escape clause for those of great wealth. Henry justified his efforts by invoking an Old Testament passage that placed the curse of childlessness on any man who married his brother's widow. He furthermore claimed that English ecclesiastical authorities, not the pope, had the authority to grant an annulment. Pope Clement VII (pope 1523–1534) was at this time a prisoner of Charles V, the Holy Roman emperor, whose armies had occupied Rome, and who happened to be Catherine of Aragon's nephew. In addition to these political circumstances, the pope opposed the annulment as a matter of conscience. At Henry's insistence, Lord Chancellor Thomas Wolsey (1475–1530), in his capacity as cardinal-legate, opened a formal church proceeding in London in 1529 to hear the king's case. But Pope Clement ordered the case transferred to Rome, where the English king had no chance of winning.

Furious, Henry blamed Wolsey for this defeat. Stripped of his post, Wolsey died a shattered man in 1530 on the way to his trial for treason and certain execution. The king had named Thomas More to be his lord chancellor in

1529. But More, a lawyer and a humanist, was a vigorous opponent of the reform movement. Although a layman, each Friday More whipped himself in memory of Christ's suffering. More balked at Henry's plan to have his marriage to Catherine of Aragon annulled. In 1533, Henry secretly married the pregnant Anne Boleyn. He then convoked Parliament, which dutifully passed a series of acts that cut the ties between the English church and Rome. The Act in Restraint of Appeals (1533) denied the pope's authority. Thomas Cranmer (1489–1556), archbishop of Canterbury, showed himself a loyal servant of the throne by simply declaring Henry's marriage to Catherine, who was sent to a convent, annulled. The Act of Succession in 1534 required all of the king's subjects to take an oath of loyalty to the king as head of the Church of England. Thomas More refused to do so, and Henry ordered his execution. When Pope Clement named another cleric languishing in the Tower of London a cardinal, Henry scoffed, "Let the pope send him a [cardinal's] hat when he will, but I will provide that whensoever it cometh, he shall wear it on his shoulders, for his head he shall have none to set it on."

The Act of Supremacy, also passed in 1534, proclaimed the king "supreme head of the Church of England." Another law made possible the execution of anyone who denied the king's authority over the clergy, or who supported "the bishop of Rome or his pretended power." Parliament limited fees that the clergy could assess for burials and forbade bishops of the Church of England from living away from their sees. Reforms brought the clergy under civil law. The lack of resistance to Henry's usurpation of ecclesiastical authority reflected the pope's unpopularity, as well as the growing strength of the English monarchy.

After the Break with Rome

Henry VIII's nascent Church of England remained doctrinally conservative in contrast to some of the continental reform churches. Several dozen people were burned at the stake for heresy in the 1530s after Henry broke



Sir Thomas More, painted by Hans Holbein the Younger. More, who is here shown as lord chancellor, was later executed for his beliefs.

with Rome, including twenty-five Anabaptists. In 1536, in the Church of England's first doctrinal pronouncement, Ten Articles affirmed the essential tenets of Lutheran reform: salvation by faith alone (although good works were still advised), three sacraments, and rejection of the concept of Purgatory and the cult of saints. However, six more articles promulgated two years later reaffirmed some aspects of orthodox Catholic doctrine, including transubstantiation and clerical celibacy.

Thomas Cromwell (1485–1540), Wolsey's ambitious protégé, oversaw the dissolution of England's 600 monasteries, completed in 1538 despite a northern insurrection (the "Pilgrimage of Grace") in defense of the Roman Catholic Church. Two-thirds of the monasteries were sold within ten years, the largest transfer of land in England since the Norman Conquest of 1066. The appropriation of Church lands doubled royal revenue, allowing the construction of forts along the troublesome border with Scotland and on the Channel coast, and financing the purchase of new ships of war. Nobles, particularly those living in the more prosperous south, were the chief purchasers of monastic lands. Many turned their acquisitions into pastureland for sheep, or undertook more intensive agricultural production.

A few months after she married Henry, Anne Boleyn gave birth to a daughter, Elizabeth, a future queen of England. But Henry then had Anne tried on charges of adultery with one of his courtiers, claiming that she had coyly dropped her handkerchief in order to attract him. Anne was executed in 1536, insisting to the end that "a gentler nor a more merciful prince [than Henry] was there never." Next the king married Jane Seymour, who died shortly after giving birth to a son. Another Anne, this one from a small German state, was next in line, as Henry sought allies against Spain and the other Catholic powers. But this Anne did not please Henry—he claimed he had never consummated his marriage to this woman he disparaged as a "Flemish mare." He divorced her, too. Catherine Howard became Henry's fifth wife, but in 1542 he ordered her dispatched for "treasonable unchastity." Henry's sixth wife, a pious older woman named Catherine Parr, could have been excused for entering the marriage with considerable trepidation, but managed to outlive her husband.

THE CATHOLIC REFORMATION

The Catholic Church responded to the schism within Christendom by reasserting the pope's authority and strengthening its own organization. The Catholic Reformation (sometimes called the Counter-Reformation) was both a defensive response by the Church to the success of Protestantism and an aggressive attempt to undertake reform within the limits determined by Catholic theology.

Retreat to Dogmatism

In 1536, Pope Paul III (pope 1534–1549) designated a commission to report on possible reforms in the Church. This commission documented the lack of education of many clergy and the scandalous cases of bishops and priests earning benefices from sees and parishes they never visited. But the papacy held firm on matters of Catholic Church doctrine. Paul III rejected a last-ditch attempt in 1541 by one of his cardinals and several German bishops to reach agreement on the thorny theological issue of salvation by faith alone. Luther, too, vehemently refused to accept compromise. The papacy then went on the offensive. The next year, the pope ordered Cardinal Gian Pietro Carafa to establish an Inquisition in Rome to root out Protestantism in Italy.

Carafa became Pope Paul IV (pope 1555–1559) despite the opposition of Holy Roman Emperor Charles V. He once declared, “If our own father were a heretic, we would gladly carry the wood to burn him!” The new pope retreated into doctrinal orthodoxy and aggressive repression. He formalized pre-publication censorship, establishing a list—the Index—of forbidden books in 1559. Censors ordered other books altered, and refused to authorize the printing of publications they deemed controversial.

As part of the Catholic Reformation’s efforts to combat, contain, and eliminate “error” in all forms, Paul IV invented the “ghetto,” ordering Jews living in the Papal States to reside in specific neighborhoods, which they could leave only at certain times. In a 1555 bull, he stated that the Jews were guilty of killing Christ, and therefore ought to be slaves. In much of Catholic Europe, Jews had to wear yellow caps to identify themselves, could not own land, and were excluded from most professions.

Ignatius of Loyola and the Jesuits

Ignatius of Loyola (1491–1556), a dashing Basque noble, became one of the leading figures of the Catholic Reformation. While recovering from a grave injury suffered in battle, Loyola read an account of the life of Christ and a book on the lives of saints. He vowed to help rekindle Catholic orthodoxy throughout Europe. Loyola made a pilgrimage to a Spanish monastery, left his sword in a chapel, gave his rich robe to a poor man, put on a sackcloth, and traveled through Spain and Italy. Gradually Loyola attracted followers. The Inquisition came to suspect him because his claims to help people through “spiritual conversion” seemed dangerously close to heresy. He defended himself ably, however, receiving only a short prison sentence.

Loyola wanted to establish a new order that could inculcate the same kind of intense religious experience that he had undergone while lying wounded. He traveled to Rome, offered his services to the pope, and organized the Society of Jesus, which was officially approved by the pope in 1540. Under

Loyola's military-style leadership, the Jesuits, as the order's members became known, grew rapidly in number and influence as aggressive crusaders for the Catholic Reformation.

The Jesuit order provided a model for Church organization, orthodoxy, and discipline. Jesuits underwent a program of rigorous training and took a special oath of allegiance to the pope. They combined the study of Thomas à Kempis's mystical *Imitation of Christ* (1418) and Loyola's own intense devotional reflections.

When Loyola died in 1556, there were more than a thousand Jesuits. Counselors to kings and princes and educators of the Catholic elite, the Jesuit religious order contributed greatly to the success of the Catholic Reformation in Austria, Bavaria, and the Rhineland. Jesuits also contributed to the Church's reconquest of Poland, where religious toleration had been proclaimed in 1573 and some landowners had converted to Calvinism. In the service of the Catholic Reformation, Jesuits began to travel to North America, Latin America, and Asia, eventually establishing a presence even in the court of the Chinese emperors. They led "missions," delivering fire-and-brimstone sermons, which were aimed at rekindling loyalty to the Church.

The Council of Trent

In 1545, at the insistence of Holy Roman Emperor Charles V, Pope Paul III convoked the Council of Trent (1545–1563) to assess the condition of the Catholic Church and to define its doctrines. While such an internal reckoning had seemed inevitable for some time, the papacy had long viewed conciliarism as a potential threat to its authority and invoked every possible reason for delay. Once convened, the Council of Trent, which met off and on for eighteen years, made the split within Western Christendom irreparable. Most of the prelates who came to the Alpine town of Trent believed the central goal of the council was a blanket condemnation of what the Church viewed as heresy, as well as the reaffirmation of theological doctrine. Although the pope himself never went to Trent, the Italian delegates dominated the proceedings, coughing and sneezing during speeches with which they disagreed.

The council rejected point after point of reformed doctrine, declaring such positions "to be anathema." It reaffirmed the authority of the pope and of the bishops, the seven sacraments, and the presence of Christ in the Eucharist. It also unequivocally opposed the marriage of clerics and reaffirmed belief in Purgatory and in the redeeming power of indulgences, although the practice of selling them was abolished.

In 1562, Pope Pius IV (pope 1559–1565) convoked the last session of the Council of Trent. The council ordained the creation of seminaries in each diocese to increase the number and quality of priests. The priests were henceforth to keep parish registers listing the births, baptisms, and

deaths of the faithful, which in recent times have provided historians with extraordinarily useful demographic information. Some monastic houses undertook reforms. The infusion of better educated clergy in the southern German states and Austria aided the Church's efforts to maintain its influence there.

The papacy emerged from the Council of Trent much more centralized, better organized and administered, and more aggressive, like the most powerful European states themselves. Gradually a series of more able popes helped restore the prestige of the papacy within the Church.

Putting Its House in Order

"The best way," one churchman advised, "to fight the heretics is not to deserve their criticisms." Some leaders within the Catholic Church reasoned that the Church should put its own house in order and seek to reconvert people who had joined the reformed religions. Pius V (pope 1566–1572) declared war on venality, luxury, and ostentation in Rome. But abuses still seemed rampant. In 1569, the Venetian ambassador to France reported that the French "deal in bishoprics and abbeys as merchants trade in pepper and cinnamon." Pius V sent some bishops living in Roman luxury packing to their sees, putting those who refused to leave in prison.

Reformers wanted to bring order and discipline to members of religious orders and the secular clergy. "No wonder the Church is as it is, when the religious live as they do [in monasteries and convents]," Teresa of Avila (1515–1582) exclaimed in response to the demeaning battles between religious houses in Spain, struggles that she tried to end. Some churchmen, however, now rejected monastic life as irrelevant to the activist missionary tasks of the Church, another sign of the influence of Protestant reform. New orders, such as the Capuchins—an offshoot of the Franciscans—and the female order of the Ursulines, worked to bring faith to the poor and the sick. The missionary work of Vincent de Paul (1581–1660) also helped restore faith among the poor. Seeing the success Reformation preachers had with mass-produced pamphlets, the Catholic Church also produced catechisms that spread Church teachings, along with accounts of the lives of the saints. The Catholic Reformation encouraged other new devotional confraternities (religious brotherhoods of people who heard Mass together), some bringing together laymen of various social classes. The cult of the Virgin Mary became more popular. The Protestant Reformation had emphasized the religious life of the individual and the development of his or her personal piety through Bible study and personal reflection. The Catholic Reformation, too, now encouraged individual forms of devotion and spirituality.

The Protestant Reformation began as a religious reaction against abuses within the Church. But it also reflected profound changes in European society. The Reformation followed not only the discovery of the printing press but also the expansion of commerce, the arteries of which became the conduits of reform. Both the Protestant and Catholic Reformations affected art, architecture, print culture, education, popular culture, and family life at a time when religious belief and practice had an enormous impact on daily life.

Print Culture

The printing press did not cause the Reformation, but it certainly helped expand it. A rapid expansion in the publication of pamphlets, books, and other printed material occurred at a time when reformers were challenging Church doctrine and papal authority. The printing of Luther's works facilitated their rapid diffusion, with perhaps a million copies circulating through the German states by the mid-1520s. The German reformer called the printing press "God's highest and ultimate gift of grace by which He would have His Gospel carried forward." Luther's Wartburg translation of the Bible went through fifty printings in two years. He wrote 450 treatises and delivered more than 3,000 sermons; his collected works fill more than 100 volumes and 60,000 pages. Luther also published a hymnal containing

many hymns that are sung today. He directed many of his dialogues, poems, and sermons to ordinary Germans, and even to children, adopting popular religious themes and images.

Since about 1480, the diffusion of printing had contributed to the expansion of a lay culture in the German states. Much of what was printed was published in the vernacular, that is, German, as opposed to Latin. Although religious literature was the greatest output of early printing presses, other favored themes of books and pamphlets included nature, the discoveries of the explorers, the acquisition of technical skills (such as medical skills from self-help medical handbooks), manuals of self-instruction (such as how to



Private devotion: an old woman reading the Bible.

defend oneself in court, or how to make beer and wine), and everyday morality. Visual, often satirical images such as woodcut illustrations and broadsheets, directed at those who could not read, probably reached far more people than did printed tracts, however. Caricatures portrayed Luther as Hercules, as an evangelical saint doing battle with wretched animals representing the Church, as a new Moses, as a miracle worker, and, in one popular legend, as the inventor of bratwurst sausage.

Lay Education and Reading

The Reformation, drawing on printing, also profited from increased educational opportunities for laypeople in Europe, which engendered a critical spirit among students and scholars. The number of universities rose steadily during the last half of the fifteenth century. More people could read than ever before—although in most places no more than 5 to 10 percent of the population. Lutherans and Calvinists stressed the importance of education as essential to individual and critical study of the Scriptures, and de-emphasized the clergy's role in religious instruction.

During the Reformation, princes and ecclesiastical leaders intensified their efforts to secure religious conformity by controlling what people read. The "blue library" (so called because small books or pamphlets were wrapped in blue paper) helped diffuse pamphlets deemed acceptable and sold at a low price by itinerant peddlers. Each Western European country had such a "literature of bits and pieces." Didactic stories were meant to instruct people about religious events, saints, and ideals approved by the Church, and to distance them from the "superstitions" of popular culture. Yet many people living in England probably still knew far more about Robin Hood than they did about the Bible. A chapbook (a small book of popular literature) published in Augsburg in 1621 told the story of Saint George slaying the dragon. The Catholic hierarchy removed the dragon from the story, while Protestants left out Saint George.

Popular Rituals and Festivals

Protestant ministers, like their Catholic counterparts, tried to root out such rituals as baptizing a child by dunking her three times for good luck. Songs rife with pagan imagery had survived virtually unchanged since medieval times. Religion and magic remained closely intertwined; the Catholic Church had been unable to eradicate the difference in the popular mind between prayer and good luck charms, for example.

Many a village became the site of an elaborate tug-of-war between state and ecclesiastical authorities and ordinary people. The clergy, often previously active participants in festive occasions, were caught in the middle and moved away from what they considered "profane" amusements. The Catholic hierarchy tried to suppress some popular festivals and rein in



Pieter Brueghel the Elder's *Combat between Carnival and Lent* (1559). Note the contrast between the church on the left with the somewhat more pious-looking people near it, and the drinking place on the other side of the square. Revelry seems to be winning out.

others, returning them to the control of the clergy by imposing a religious purpose that seemed to have been lost in all the fun. A dance known as the "twirl" in southern France was banned in 1666 because boys tossed girls into the air "in such an infamous manner that what shame obliges us to hide most of all is uncovered naked to the eyes of those taking part and those passing by." Ecclesiastical and lay hierarchies, Catholic and Protestant, came to view popular festivity as immoral, or at least licentious. *Combat between Carnival and Lent* (1559), a painting by Pieter Brueghel the Elder (see above), depicts Carnival as a fat man and Lent as a thin woman. Under the twin assault of absolutism and ecclesiastic hierarchy, Lent won. The clergy also began a long and often unsuccessful struggle for control over lay confraternities, which had their origins in religious devotion, but they now were often fiercely independent and more like festive clubs, especially during Carnival. Carnival was largely eradicated in Protestant countries, but it survived in some Catholic ones, although often much transformed.

Social and political elites contrasted the "civility" of their beliefs, conduct, and manners with the "barbarity" or "savagery" of popular beliefs and customs. Didactic literature stressing polite comportment and etiquette became popular among people of wealth, further separating them from the

poor. The Church tried to impose strict sexual mores on ordinary people, while encouraging gestures of deference toward social superiors.

The Role of Women

Although convents and nunneries were almost always abolished in a Protestant state, reformers nonetheless encouraged women to take an active role in the religious process of being saved. Protestant women, like men, were encouraged to read the Bible themselves, or, as most could not read, to have it read to them. In the case of Anabaptists, women appear to have made decisions about not baptizing their children; most Anabaptist martyrs were female. More women than men seem to have converted to Calvinism in France, perhaps attracted by special catechism classes, or by the fact that in Calvinist services, men and women sang psalms together.

Yet Protestant reformers still believed women were subordinate to men. Although a few women published religious pamphlets in the early 1520s and others undertook devotional writing and publishing later, women could not be ministers nor could they hold offices within the new churches. Calvin believed that the subjugation of women to their husbands was crucial for the maintenance of moral order. Protestant denominations provided a domestic vision of women, emphasizing their role in the Christian household.

The fact that a Protestant minister could now marry, however, reflected a more positive view not only of women but of the family as a foundation of organized religion. One pamphleteer admonished husbands that their wives were "no dish-clouts . . . nor no drudges, but fellow-heirs with them of everlasting life, and so dear to God as the men."

Because they no longer considered marriage a sacrament, Protestants also reluctantly accepted divorce in limited cases. Luther viewed adultery, impotence, and abandonment as reasons for divorce, but he condemned Henry VIII's effort to divorce Catherine of Aragon. Divorce remained quite rare and occurred only after a long, expensive legal process only the rich could afford.

In Catholic areas, women could still rise to positions of importance in convents, or in the new charitable religious orders. But the Council of Trent reaffirmed the Catholic Church's ideal of female chastity, reinforced by the widespread cult of the Virgin Mary. The chapbooks of the Catholic Reformation still taught that the female body was a source of sin, and therefore had to be controlled.

Witches came to reflect superstitious aspects of popular religion. Catholic and Protestant churchmen identified and persecuted witches as part of the campaign to acculturate the masses with "acceptable" beliefs. Witch hunts peaked during the first half of the seventeenth century. In the southwestern states of the Holy Roman Empire alone, more than 300 witch trials resulted in the execution of 2,500 people between 1570 and

1630, almost all women (in itself not surprising, as Church authorities and priests were all male).

Theologians and judges sought to demonstrate that accused witches embodied the kingdom of the devil. To some extent, the Catholic Reformation wanted to create the idea of a satanic realm of evil on earth with which to juxtapose orthodoxy. "Witches," identified by common reputation, sometimes stood accused of saying Latin prayers backward or performing "black Masses" while standing facing their "congregations," instead of facing the altar, defiantly inverting the kingdom of God. One woman was accused of "consuming" several husbands. Often "witches" were blamed for evil that had befallen villagers: a fire, the unexplained death of a cow, or a male suddenly smitten with impotence.

Most of those accused of being witches were rural, poor, and single women who were victims of other villagers, particularly small town officials and wealthy peasants (it was the opposite in 1692 in Salem, Massachusetts, where many of the women accused of witchcraft had just inherited property, and therefore were resented by the community). Some "witches" confessed under pain of torture, such as one woman in southern France, who was "scorched like a pig" and cooked alive, having been accused of spreading an "evil powder" while committing crimes.

Women stood out as targets because they were transmitters of the collective memory of popular culture. They were genealogists, storytellers, and healers, but almost always without formal education. Women were in many ways the guardians of tradition, although also regarded by the Catholic hierarchy as the source of sin. The social exclusion or even execution of women had a social value for those in power, affirming authorities' position and role as interpreters of beliefs and customs deemed appropriate.

After the persecution of witches ebbed, some lay authorities then turned their attention to outcasts, the socially marginal. In the Austrian Netherlands, a sign "useless to the world" was hung above the head of a beggar. Monarchies increasingly demonstrated their authority in carrying out sentences of royal justice and, therefore, the justice of God. Those found guilty of capital crimes—at least those of the lower classes—were tortured and then executed in public, their mutilated bodies exhibited for all to see.

The Baroque Style

The monumentalism, flamboyance, and theatrical religiosity of the baroque style complemented the Catholic Reformation. "Baroque" refers to a style of extravagant and irregularly shaped ornamentation (the term itself comes from Old French for "irregularly shaped pear"). As an architectural, artistic, and decorative style, the baroque triumphed in southern Germany, Austria, Flanders, Spain, and other Catholic regions during the first decades of the seventeenth century (but was also popular in Protestant England, where it merged with the classical style).

As in the Renaissance, in Rome the Church remained a major patron of the arts, expressing religious themes through visual representation. Its goal was to impress—indeed, to overwhelm—the emotions through awe-inspiring dimensions, opulence, movement, and, in painting, lurid color. The Baroque style sought to express the experience of the soul. Baroque palaces and churches featured exuberant curves and ornate decoration and were cluttered with lustrous marble altars, ornate statues, golden cherubs, and intensely colorful murals and ceiling paintings. The baroque merged easily with neoclassicism—the revival of an architectural design dominated by Greek and Roman forms. The



Gianlorenzo Bernini's *The Ecstasy of Saint Theresa* (1645–1652).

Gesú Church of the Jesuits in Rome is a masterpiece of baroque style. With its vast ceilings and enormous paintings of the ascension of Christ and the assumption of the Virgin Mary, it symbolizes the spirit of the Catholic Reformation. The baroque style used optical illusions such as Gesú's false cupola to achieve the impression that the viewer is reaching for Heaven.

The monumental fountains in Rome of the Venetian sculptor Gianlorenzo Bernini (1598–1680) best represent the period of high baroque of the Catholic Reformation. He also sculpted the magnificent canopy over the high altar of St. Peter's. Bernini sought to communicate the intensity of religious experience. In the altarpiece *The Ecstasy of Saint Theresa* (1645–1652), Bernini depicted the saint's convulsions of joy when an angel stabs her with a spear as beams of sunlight engulf the scene. Bernini wrote, "It pleased the Lord that I should see this angel in [this] way. . . . In his hands I saw a long golden spear and at the end of the iron tip I seemed to see a point of fire. With this he seemed to pierce my heart several times so that it penetrated to my entrails." This highly sexual description stands in marked contrast with the puritanical impulse that had seen Renaissance popes order the painting of fig leaves on nudes.

In 1600, more than half of Europe remained primarily Catholic, including Spain, France, and Habsburg Austria, three of the four most powerful states in Europe. The fourth was England, and it was overwhelmingly Protestant. The Dutch Netherlands, at war with its Spanish overlords, was largely Protestant as well. Unlike the case of the German states, where the religion of the princes determined the religion of the state, the Reformations in France, the Netherlands, and Scotland were to a great extent movements from below. The Reformation generated a strong missionary impulse among Protestants and Catholics alike. With the gradual opening up of the world to European commerce and colonization, the Jesuits, particularly, ranged far and wide. In the burgeoning Spanish Empire, conquest and the quest for religious conversion, which was remarkably successful, went hand in hand. More than a few missionaries, however, found martyrdom, for example in Asia.

In Central Europe, the complexity of the state system facilitated reform. The Peace of Augsburg of 1555, as we have seen, reinforced German particularism, the persistence of small, independent states. In contrast, the larger, centralized, and more powerful states like Spain and France most successfully resisted the reform movement, despite the wars of religion that lay ahead in the latter. Yet, in both states, the Catholic Church remained subordinate to the monarchy, with both the French and Spanish kings retaining considerable authority over ecclesiastical appointments.

Protestant reformers accepted a separation of functions within the community, what Luther called the "realm of the spirit" and the "realm of the world." Henceforth, the political institutions of the Protestant states remained relatively secularized. In the German states and in Scandinavia, Lutheranism was introduced as a state church, in part because reformers originally needed the protection of princes against Catholic rulers, notably Charles V, the Holy Roman emperor. In England, Anglicanism also took on the status of a state religion. Both Lutheran and Anglican reforms rigorously subordinated the church to the state, separating the spiritual and temporal realms. Whereas Zwingli had called for the complete fusion of church and state, Calvinism alone provided for the institutional separation of both; after Calvin's death the magistrates of Geneva restricted the church's autonomy. Anabaptist sectarians, in contrast, wanted their communities to have nothing at all to do with the state.

The Lutheran and Calvinist states were not necessarily any more tolerant of religious dissent than those that remained Catholic. Following the Peace of Augsburg, German princes used their control of the reformed churches to consolidate their political authority. Lutheranism remained wedded to a patriarchal structure of society, which appealed to property owners at all social levels.

In an attempt to obtain religious adherence, some princes declared that church attendance would be mandatory and those who were absent would be punished. Nonetheless, compelling people to attend Sunday services did not guarantee what or even if they believed. One can never know how typical were the thoughts of one girl who related that the sermon she had just sat through was "such a deale of bible babble that I am weary to heare yt and I can then sitt downe in my seat and take a good napp." In one English parish in 1547, it was reported that "when the vicar goeth into the pulpit to read what [he] himself hath written, then the multitude of the parish goeth straight out of the church, home to drink."

In some places, to be sure, ordinary Protestants and Catholics coexisted and even shared churches. In Saxony, Catholics heard Mass in the lavishly decorated front part of a church and Lutherans used the end of the nave, which had little adornment, for their own services, by common accord. The division of the church was marked by a painting of the Last Supper, the importance of which both sides agreed upon. In some towns in the Netherlands in the late sixteenth century, dissenters from the Dutch Reformed religion, including Catholics, could worship in churches that were deliberately hidden from public view. Ordinary people thus greatly contributed to the religious peace that emerged in the immediate post-Reformation period, sometimes defying tyrannical rulers who insisted on religious orthodoxy.

The Peace of Augsburg and the Council of Trent did not end the rivalry between Catholics and Protestants, nor, for that matter, the rivalry between different Protestant denominations. Religious intolerance and conflict would, to a great extent, help define the first half of the seventeenth century, the age of the wars of religion.

THE WARS OF RELIGION



On May 23, 1618, a crowd of protesters carried a petition to Prague's Hradcany Palace, where representatives of the royal government of Bohemia were gathered. The crowd stormed into the council chamber, engaged Catholic officials in a heated debate, organized an impromptu trial, and hurled two royal delegates from the window. The crowd below roared its approval of this "defenestration" (an elegant term for throwing someone out a window), angered only that neither man was killed by the fall. Catholic partisans construed their good fortune as a miracle, as the rumor spread that guardian angels had swooped down to pluck the falling dignitaries from the air. Protestants liked to claim that the men had been saved because they fell on large dung heaps in the moat below.

The different reactions to the Defenestration of Prague illustrate how the Reformation left some of Europe, particularly the German states, a veritable patchwork of religious allegiances. Religious affiliation, like ethnicity, frequently did not correspond to the borders of states. The Peace of Augsburg in 1555 ended the fighting between German Protestant and Catholic princes. It stated that the religion of each state would henceforth be that of its ruler. Hundreds of thousands of families left home and crossed frontiers in order to relocate to a state where the prince was of their religious denomination.

The German states entered a period of relative religious peace, but in France in 1572, the Huguenots (the popular name for the French Protestants) rebelled against Catholic domination, setting off a civil war. Moreover, after years of mounting religious and political tension, Dutch Protestants led the revolt against Spanish Catholic authority in 1572, beginning a bitter struggle that lasted until the middle of the next century.

Then in 1618, religious wars broke out again in the German states with unparalleled intensity. The Thirty Years' War (1618–1648) devastated Central Europe, bringing into the conflict, in one way or another, almost all of the powers of Europe. Armies reached unprecedented size, and fought with a cruelty that may also have been unprecedented.

The wars of religion in France and the Thirty Years' War began because of religious antagonisms, but the dynastic ambitions of French princes lay