

RENAISSANCE AND REFORMATION IN WESTERN EUROPE

THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE

Social Origins

Political Independence. For much of Italy, the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries were times of trouble, as Italian city-states and the popes struggled for independence against the Holy Roman emperors of Germany. By the middle of the fourteenth century, however, the German emperors had essentially relinquished their claims to dominion in Italy, leaving the region politically fragmented into numerous competing city-states lacking a strong central government. By the 1380s four city-states had to come to dominate northern Italy: Milan, Venice, Florence and Papal Rome. In addition to these major powers, there were a host of smaller, but often significant city-states as well. After a century of decay, the prestige and independence of the papacy was finally restored at the Council of Constance (1414-1417). For the next century under the “Renaissance Popes” Rome became one of the leading city-states in Italy, and a significant participant in the Renaissance.

Social and Economic Foundations of the Renaissance. Unlike many other regions of medieval Europe, Italy had never lost its urban and mercantile foundations. With the withdrawal of German ambitions from Italy, the city-states flourished as never before. Italy’s central geographical location made it the natural avenue for trade from the eastern Mediterranean. The great maritime cities such as Venice grew wealthy from their control of the luxury trade to the Orient. An example of the international scope of this trade was Marco Polo’s famous trading journey throughout the Orient (1271-1295). Other cities, such as Florence, grew prosperous through manufacturing and banking.

Italian governments were dominated not by a landed military aristocracy, but by alliances of great mercantile families, who directed government policies to maximize their manufacturing and trading profits. Although frequently dominated by the Sforzas of Milan or the Medici of Florence, these rulers recognized the importance of a strong economic policy and became some of Italy’s greatest patrons of the arts and letters. Thus in the fifteenth century, Italy underwent a period of tremendous economic growth and prosperity. This wealth laid the foundation for the cultural age of the Italian Renaissance.

Humanism

Learning for the Wealthy Laity. The new literary and philosophical ideas which were characteristic of the Renaissance are called humanism. Education and scholarship in medieval Europe had been dominated by the clergy, whose concerns centered on theology. The rise of the merchant class in the fourteenth century in Italy created a new set of circumstances which led to the transformation of education and scholarship in Italy. Merchants sought educations for their children both as a requirement for the complexities of government, law and accounting and to provide entertainment and cultural sophistication. Thus a new curriculum developed to meet the educational needs of the new upper class.

Humanistic Curriculum. Humanistic studies were based on the seven liberal arts as designated by the ancient Roman philosopher Cicero. These included grammar, rhetoric, poetry, moral philosophy, history, music, and mathematics. The goal of these studies was to create an educated gentleman, who could fulfill his responsibilities in government, law and trade, but who could also lead a cultured and sophisticated life at the great courts and palaces of Italy. The humanist was thus a person who had been educated in the humanities, as opposed to a theologian, who had been educated in traditional religious studies. It should be noted that there was nothing necessarily antireligious in a humanistic education. Indeed, many of the great Renaissance humanists are often called Christian humanists, due to their efforts to integrate traditional religious studies with the new humanistic curriculum.

The Revival of Classical Studies. The basic texts for the new humanistic studies came from ancient Roman models. Classical scholarship flourished as humanists searched for, edited, printed and analyzed the great works of the Greek and Roman world, which had been previously housed in Constantinople. A wide range of Classical Latin sources were studied in monasteries. The written and spoken Latin of the fifteenth century was “purified” as efforts were made to make current usage conform to the patterns of Classical Roman Latin; the language of Cicero was seen as the supreme manifestation of Latin prose.

Humanists and the Bible. This spirit of returning to the Greek and Latin sources of literature, philosophy and art, infected religious scholarship as well. Scholars began searching both for improved texts of the Bible and early Church Fathers, and to attempt to determine their original meaning after centuries of medieval scholastic commentary. The impact of the revival of Greek studies on religious thought is clearly seen in the great Christian humanist Erasmus, who published the first printed edition of the Greek New Testament in 1516. Other Christian scholars began to study Hebrew with Jewish rabbis in order to reach back to the original language of the Old Testament. These new interpretations of ancient biblical and Christian sources would have a tremendous impact on the development of the Reformation. Thus the Reformation was due in part to the application rabbis in order to reach back to the original language of the Old Testament. These new interpretations of ancient biblical and Christian sources would have a tremendous impact on the development of the Reformation. Thus the Reformation was due in part to the application of new humanistic methods of textual criticism and interpretation to the Bible.

THE HUMANISTIC WORLD VIEW

Vies of Mankind. The Renaissance humanistic worldview was essentially that of the educated Italian upper classes. Humans were seen as fundamentally free to choose their own destiny; they could control their lives through exercising will and reason. Christian moral concepts were mixed with those of Classical moral philosophy. For many the “good life” was as a search for wealth and physical and aesthetic pleasures. The greatest manifestations of human achievement came in the arts and literature. “Virtue” (in its original sense of manliness), as manifest in discipline, courage, individualism and genius, was the most important characteristic a man could have. While the Renaissance forms of individualism created many masterpieces of art and literature, it also bred arrogant egocentrism as manifested in the *Autobiography* of Benvenuto Cellini. The negative side of the philosophy of the Renaissance can be seen in the self-centered hedonism and self-serving political and economic policies which plagues Italian cities.

Political Thought. During the Renaissance, Italy was divided into numerous small city-states, each of which was split by internal factions. While recognizing that this situation created a fundamental political weakness which threatened the independence of Italy as a whole, no one could agree on a solution to the problem. The most important political thinker to grapple with these problems was Niccolo Machiavelli (1469-1527). A typical man of the Renaissance, Machiavelli viewed the Roman republic as the perfect model for political organization. Believing that conventional Christian morality was irrelevant for political behavior, Machiavelli became the quintessential advocate of the philosophy that “the ends justify the means.” Indeed, his name has become an adjective to describe the unscrupulous pursuit of power politics. The goal of Machiavellian politics was to achieve power, and all necessary means were justifiable in its pursuit. The ultimate purpose of political power, however, was not the aggrandizement of a single individual, but the restoration of unity to Italy.

Renaissance Arts

The economic and political rivalry among the Italian city-states stimulated the arts in a manner which would have been impossible in a single united kingdom: instead of one king and royal court patronizing the arts in Italy, there were dozens. Renaissance cultural competition through patronage of the great artists, architects, poets and scholars of the age was in many ways similar to the sports competition in the modern United States. Just as the civic or college pride of many Americans is intricately bound to their urban sports teams, Italian citizens took pride in the cultural adornment of their cities through the presence and patronage of the great artistic and scholarly geniuses of their age. The results of this cultural competition can be seen in the magnificent works of art and architecture which adorn every city in Italy.

Literature. Literature of the Italian Renaissance was written in many genres, including poetry, short stories, drama, epistles, essays and histories. Most of these forms were derived from classical models and were frequently written in Latin, although Italian became an increasingly important literary language. The greatest Renaissance poet was Petrarch (1304-1374), who is sometimes called the “Father of the Renaissance,” and was noted for his splendid sonnets and odes. Ariosto’s (1474-1533) massive poem *Orlando Furioso* is a remarkable blend of fantasy, love story, and chivalrous adventure. The master of Renaissance short stories was Boccaccio (1313-1375), whose *Decameron* contains a hundred tales told by people during the Black Death. Drama was widely written and produced for Renaissance courts, including works of light comedy by the political theoretician Machiavelli.

The Essay. The essay was the most important literary form of the Renaissance, represented by moderate-sized rational and erudite discussions of important topics. The subjects of Renaissance essays were limitless, ranging from science to magic, or from love to war. A remarkable example of the Renaissance essay was *The Courtier*, by Castiglione (1478-1529), which describes the ideal education, behavior and lifestyle of the Renaissance courtier. Picco della Mirandola (1463-1494) wrote the famous *Essay on the Dignity of Man*, describing the Renaissance ideal of the unlimited potential of the human mind and will.

Art. Although other genres were represented, the most important forms of Renaissance art were painting and sculpture. Religious themes and imagery were predominant in both art forms, although secular subjects such as portraits became increasingly popular (egocentric ideas). In painting, Renaissance artists developed a wide range of new styles and techniques, including individualism, naturalism, and the use of perspective. Among the greatest Renaissance painters were Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519), Michelangelo (1475-1564), Raphael (1483-1520) and Titian (1477-1576). Among the greatest works of painting are the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel by Michelangelo and the *Mona Lisa* by da Vinci. Michelangelo is also considered the greatest Renaissance sculptor. His *Pieta*, depicting Mary holding the dead Jesus in her arms, is widely considered the finest sculpture in the world.

Architecture. Numerous beautiful examples of Renaissance architecture styles grace the great cities of northern Italy. As in the medieval period, cathedrals were the major architecture form in the Renaissance, followed in importance by the palaces of the great political and merchant families. Brunelleschi's (1379-1446) cathedral in Florence formed the prototype for Italian Renaissance cathedral architecture. The masterpiece of Renaissance architecture, however, is the splendid St. Peter's Cathedral in Rome, designed by Bramante (1444-1514) and Michelangelo. The largest cathedral in the world, the magnificence of St. Peter's perfectly evoked the arrogance and greed of the Renaissance popes.

THE NORTHERN RENAISSANCE

The spread of the Renaissance to northern Europe was based on changing conditions and circumstances of the sixteenth century. The centers of wealth and economic power began to shift from Italy to the north as the discovery of the Americas and new maritime routes to the Orient undermined Italy's monopoly on the eastern trade. The rise of absolutist monarchies in Spain and France brought a shifting of the balance of military power which allowed those countries to intervene in Italy, undermining the independence and prosperity of the Italian city-state system. Between 1498 and 1516 Italy became the battleground between the great powers of France, Spain and Germany. In 1527 Rome itself was plundered. The Reformation also caused the centers of intellectual vitality to shift northward. As Germans, French, Dutch, and English grappled with the great intellectual and religious questions of the day, intellectual inquiry in Italy and Spain was restrained by the religious wars. Although Italy had lost its cultural supremacy in Europe by the late sixteenth century, it nonetheless was the fundamental inspiration for the northern Renaissance.

Printing. Invented in China in the eighth century AD, the idea and technology of printing eventually made their way to Europe by the fifteenth century. The first major book printed in Europe with moveable type was the Latin Bible published by Johann Gutenberg at Mainz in 1456. In the next half century printing spread rapidly throughout Europe; there were printing presses in every major European town by the beginning of the sixteenth century.

The social and intellectual effects of printing, both on Europe and on world history as a whole, cannot be overemphasized. Books became less expensive and more numerous, allowing for both the preservation of texts from the past and the dissemination of new books and ideas. With the proliferation of inexpensive books, many more people could become literate and participate in intellectual life; the age of domination of ideas by a small group of literate priests and rulers had passed. Printing gave scholars access to a far wider range of ideas and texts than had been possible in the age of manuscripts. This, in turn, created an intellectual environment in which new ideas could be widely published and discussed, laying the foundation for the social and intellectual changes of the Reformation, Enlightenment and scientific revolution. The invention of printing thus created a new mechanism for the exchange of ideas; the intellectual revolution brought about by printing laid the foundation for the modern age.

Literature. The northern Renaissance was most known for the great literature that it produced, while other forms of the arts tended to lag behind the genius of the Italians. In France, Montaigne (1533-1592) perfected the art of the humanistic essay, while Rabelais (1495-1553) wrote biting satires of French

society. Cervantes (1547-1616) wrote his masterpiece *Don Quixote*, a satire on Spanish society in the form of the adventures of a crazed would-be knight. The greatest literary figure of the northern Renaissance, however, was Shakespeare (1564-1616), whose dramatic works include perhaps the finest plays ever written.

THE PROTESTANT REFORMATION

Martin Luther is usually thought of as the founder of the Reformation, but by the time he posted his famous ninety-five theses on the door of the church at Wittenburg Castle there was already a climate in Europe charged with religious discontent and political rivalries.

DECLINE OF PAPAL PRESTIGE

Dissatisfaction was aimed all levels of the Church hierarchy, beginning with the papacy, whose spiritual and political prestige had been waning over two centuries. Most disturbing were the negative images bred by papal involvement in secular affairs. Rigid control over income-producing church lands; a military establishment; conduct of diplomacy on the same basis as any secular prince; fund raising, often through the buying and selling of ecclesiastical office; elaborate courts; fortunes dispensed on patronage of the arts: all these and more helped undermine the papacy's spiritual image. In addition, kings, princes and people of wealth chafed at the political and economic power the pope could wield over them with the mere threat of excommunication.

OTHER REASONS FOR DISCONTENT

Indulgences. Abuses were seen at all levels. One of the most disturbing was the sale of indulgences, which involved relief from the earthly penalties of sin in return for financial contributions to the Church. The opportunity for exploitation was obvious.

Clerical Immorality. Critics were also dismayed at the fact that local parish priests were often in abject poverty, many were nearly illiterate and the state of priestly morality was distressingly low. Clerical vows of celibacy were broken often, drunkenness, gambling and other unacceptable behavior were not uncommon.

Personal Piety. At a different level, many people seeking a more spiritually satisfying personal piety were vexed by the pomp and ceremony of church service, as well as the emphasis upon sacraments and the role of the priest. It all seemed to make salvation less a matter of personal faith and more a matter of form, and it was not uncommon for dissatisfied individuals to seek fulfillment in other ways. Some looked for it in the Bible, and some found solace in lay religious fraternities dedicated to simple, pious living.

Printing and New Ideas. Technology and the arts also contributed to the spread of discontent. The printing press had found its way into some 250 European cities by 1500, and books, including the Bible, were becoming common. In addition, a profusion of satire, criticism of the clergy and outrage at some Church practices appeared with increasing frequency in printed matter as well as in the works of artists.

Erasmus, 1466-1536. The greatest of the Christian humanists also helped pave the way for opposing thought to the Church's hierarchy. He was the Dutchman Desiderius Erasmus, who told lay people that they should seek to live by "the philosophy of Christ": an inner piety that was not related to Church routine and ceremonies. His most well-known book, *In Praise of Folly*, was a satire on both the Church and the wisdom of the world. But more than that, it was also an appeal to his readers to go back to the simple Christian life. Erasmus also scandalized at the thought that anyone should be kept from reading the scriptures. He tried to encourage the study of the Bible and published a new edition of the Greek New Testament (1516). He was the most important intellectual forerunner of the Reformation, but, ironically, as it progressed he was rejected by both sides: the Church because he wanted to reform it and the leaders of the Reformation because he refused to break with the Church. He wanted reform to come from within.

THE GERMAN REFORMATION

There was no more likely place for reformation to occur than in the German states. Politically, the power of the emperor had long been in decline. But despite their desire for political independence, most of the German princes found it impossible to resist the Church, with its rich, financially independent hierarchy

and its hold on the minds of the people. City governments, too, resented the privileges and immunities enjoyed by the clerics, such as the fact that priests, monks and nuns were exempt from civic responsibilities and paid no taxes, even though religious orders held large amounts of urban property. People at all levels throughout the German lands were resentful toward the Church for many reasons, yet too divided to do anything about it.

MARTIN LUTHER AND THE INDULGENCE CONTROVERSY

Origins. Indulgences were initially granted during the late eleventh century, at the time of the First Crusade, as a reward for those willing to fight to regain the Holy Land for the Church. Eventually, the Church proclaimed that it could dispense a “treasury of merit” to free believers from the earthly penalties of sin.

Abuse. By the early sixteenth century, however, the belief had developed that indulgences granted total pardon for all the penalties of sin – both in this life and after – and the sale of indulgences had become a common way of raising revenue for the Church. In 1517, Pope Leo X (1513-1521) revived an earlier indulgence proclaimed to raise funds for the rebuilding of St. Peter’s Cathedral in Rome. The archbishop of Magdeburg, who badly needed funds to repay the debt he had incurred to hold more than one ecclesiastical office, then hired the Dominican friar John Tetzel to sell indulgences throughout his territory. Tetzel’s sensational advertising campaign appealed especially to the ignorant, who were told that through their donations they could not only buy relief from the consequences of their own sins, but could do the same for their deceased families and friends. “As soon as coin in coffer rings, the soul from purgatory springs,” was reported to be one of his more melodramatic slogans.

Martin Luther, 1483-1546. Such tactics brought phenomenal success to the campaign in Magdeburg, but they also stirred Martin Luther to action. An Augustinian monk in Wittenberg, Luther was already aching inside as a result of his long and troubled quest for personal piety and his conclusion that faith, not works, was the only means of salvation.

Martin Luther began his clerical career in 1505 after being frightened badly in a thunderstorm and making a vow to become a monk if he survived the ordeal. In 1507 he was ordained a priest. Later he obtained a doctorate in theology, and in 1512 he became a professor of Scripture at the University of Wittenberg. As a young friar he became deeply introspective, worrying constantly about salvation and living with a highly troubled conscience. He found little help in the sacraments and forms of the Church. Only after he gained an insight that moved him in a new theological direction did he begin to find personal peace of mind.

Ninety-Five Theses. After intensive study of the writings of Paul, Luther finally concluded that the external forms of the Church – elaborate ceremonies, formal liturgy, even penance – had nothing to do with salvation. Faith alone was the only way to receive God’s grace, and this was a free gift that could not be earned. The indulgence campaign flew in the face of everything Luther believed and was the final straw. On October 31, 1517, he posted on the door of the church at Wittenberg Castle a list of ninety-five theses, or propositions, on indulgences. He raised searching questions also about papal wealth and other related topics.

Impact. Luther’s intent was to inaugurate a public theological discussion, but the impact was much greater than he had anticipated. Printed copies of his theses circulated widely, evoking discussions of even broader theological issues. The most crucial of these was that of the pope’s authority, which had always been a tenuous issue in the German lands: Did he or did he not have the right to authorize indulgences at all? Luther said he did not, for indulgences were not sanctioned by Scripture and therefore had no effect on salvation. His opponents argued that questioning the authority of the pope undermined the Church itself. At first Pope Leo X characterized the affair as merely a “squabble among monks,” but eventually he issued a letter condemning some of Luther’s propositions, ordering his books burned and giving him two months to recant his theses. Luther defiantly burned the letter in public and the result was excommunication.

Charles V. It seemed impossible at that point for Holy Roman Emperor Charles V (also Charles II, King of Spain), who felt it was his duty to protect the Church, to remain aloof from the controversy, and when he held his first imperial diet (an assembly of the empire’s cities and princes) at Worms in April 1521, he summoned Luther to appear. When ordered to recant, Luther again refused, saying he was bound by Scriptures and would be convinced by no other authority. The already excommunicated monk soon found himself also condemned and outlawed by the emperor. He went into hiding at the Wartburg Castle, under the protection of Frederick the Wise, elector of Saxony. He had little to fear, however, for even princes

who would remain Catholic were antagonistic enough toward imperial power, especially that of a Spanish ruler, that they would not deliver to the emperor someone who promised to continue to erode it.

Reception to Luther's Ideas. The attraction of Lutheran teachings was obvious. Princes who had chafed at the rule of Rome welcomed a theology that subordinated the Church to the state. Laymen saw in the possibility for eliminating clerical abuse. The masses admired Luther's defiance of Church authority, as well as his advocacy of a simpler, more personal religion, based on the spirit of early Christianity and the centrality of the Scriptures.

CONSEQUENCES IN GERMANY

Peasant Revolt. Luther did not anticipate most of the consequences for what he was doing, and he was stunned by some of those he lived to see. His teachings intensified social unrest among the peasants, for example, and in 1525 many angrily condemned their lay and ecclesiastical lords who were imposing new economic burdens. Luther sympathized with them, but he did not believe in using armed force; when they threatened outright rebellion he warned against it. Angry revolts nevertheless broke out in several states, with the peasants using slogans taken directly from Luther's writings. They were soon crushed by the nobility (even those nobles who agreed with Luther's teachings), but only after an estimated 75,000 people lost their lives.

Protestant Origins. As Luther urged the princes to confiscate ecclesiastical wealth and promote other Church reforms, he also strengthened nationalistic feelings in the princes' domains – feelings that fed on opposition to the emperor and to his support of the Church. Rulers throughout Germany took up the cause of Lutheranism by secularizing Church property (a means of bringing the Church and its wealth directly under their control as opposed to that of the pope), and instituting simple, uncomplicated worship services (in their native tongues). Luther believed that true worship was an inner matter, and that the elaborate forms of the mass did nothing for personal salvation. In 1529, however, at the Diet of Speyer, the emperor withdrew his policy of toleration. The Lutheran princes responded with their own declaration, "protesting" the emperor's decree. With this, the term *Protestant* was born. Realizing the emperor was willing to use military force against them, in 1531, they formed a defensive alliance, known as the Schmalkadic League, that effectively deterred him for over a decade. When war did break out even the Catholic princes refused to support the emperor. The result was the Peace of Augsburg, in 1555, which formally recognized the right of each prince to decide whether his state should be Catholic or Lutheran.

Protestantism was irreversibly established in Germany, and perhaps half the population of the empire was Lutheran. But the ink was hardly dry on the ninety-five theses before unorthodox teachings began to appear in many other places as well, and in many forms.

ULRICH ZWINGLI

Swiss Reformation. Switzerland was a patchwork of small, disunited states and cantons, one of which was Zurich. There in 1518, came Ulrich Zwingli (1484-1531), a reformer who, like Luther, emphasized the primacy of scriptural authority and rejected the role of churchly forms. But he went further than Luther by rejecting all the sacraments, putting more emphasis on the role of the individual, and teaching that people are inherently good.

By 1529 Zurich and five other cantons had become Zwinglian. Two years later war broke out between them and the Catholic cantons. Zwingli's forces were defeated, and the reformer himself, serving as a chaplain, was killed in battle. Switzerland remained split, however, between Catholics and the reformers.

JOHN CALVIN

John Calvin (1509-1564) was second only to Martin Luther in his importance to the Reformation. French by birth, Calvin devoted himself early to the study of theology. When, in 1534, he became identified with Lutheranism, he was forced to leave France. He found his way to Geneva where a friend, William Farel (1489-1565), was attempting to establish a reformed church. Farel persuaded Calvin that it was his obligation to stay and help.

Calvin's Theocracy. In 1537, the year after he was elected a preacher, Calvin's plan for church reform was accepted by the citizens of Geneva, but the following year he and Farel were exiled for making too many intrusions into political affairs. Three years later, however, the citizens invited Calvin to return; he soon instituted a powerful theocracy in Geneva patterned after his idea of the ideal Christian community. It was governed by two councils, the municipal council and a church consistory. The consistory, which had

the authority to excommunicate, assumed the task of supervising the morals as well as the religious activities of the inhabitants of Geneva. Eventually, the majority were converted; those who remained Catholic were excommunicated and forced to leave.

Religious Laws. The rules in Calvin's Geneva were strict, and the regimen was stern. People were regulated in the way they dressed, were required to attend religious services, and were forbidden to participate in such activities as card-playing, dancing and even trivial singing. Fines and punishment for the smallest offenses were severe enough, but the most serious offence, open heresy, was punishable by death.

The Spread of Calvinism. Calvin founded an academy in Geneva and its students helped spread his ideology far and wide. By the time he died in 1564 there were more than a million Calvinists in France, called Huguenots. In Scotland, meanwhile, John Knox (1502-1572) founded the Presbyterian Church on Calvinist principles, and persuaded the parliament to make it the state religion. In the Netherlands most of the population of the northern provinces joined the Calvinistic Dutch Reformed Church.

THE ENGLISH REFORMATION

Henry VIII, 1509-1547. The spark that ignited the English reformation, however, had little to do with church reform and everything to do with the politics of the monarchy. King Henry VIII was married to Catharine of Aragon (Spain), who had given him six children but no surviving male heir. He had fallen in "love," meanwhile with Anne Boleyn and wanted a divorce from Catherine. He sent a petition to Pope Clement VII asking for an annulment (no male son was, at the time, a rightful petition for annulling a marriage), but Clement delayed, hoping that Henry's own fickleness would make the problem go away. One complicating problem for the pope was the fact that Charles V, who held considerable influence over him at the time (due to the German issues), was Catharine's nephew. Not wanting to lose some influence in the English monarchy, Charles was not about to let the pope hurt Catharine's standing in England. Henry was not to be denied, however; he personally appointed Archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas Cranmer, granted the annulment and, in 1533, performed the marriage between the king and Anne Boleyn.

Formation of the Church of England. Henry soon decided to take the English church away from the jurisdiction of the Bishop of Rome. In 1534 Parliament's Act of Supremacy declared him the head of the Church of England. Certain prominent dissenters who refused to recognize this act – including the great humanist writer Thomas More who resigned his lord chancellorship in protest – were beheaded for their opposition. Despite the apparent decisiveness of the break, however, under Henry the doctrines and practices of the church saw only minor change, though he dissolved the monasteries and confiscated their lands.

Edwardian Reform. Edward VI (1547-1553) was the son of Jane Seymour, whom Henry had married after having Anne Boleyn beheaded because she did not produce a male child. During his reign several significant reforms for the Church of England were promoted. Clergymen were allowed to marry, the liturgy was simplified (into English), and Archbishop Thomas Cranmer produced the *Book of Common Prayer*, to be used in all services in the Church of England. He also revised some doctrines and ceremonies to bring them more in line with reformed churches on the continent (i.e. Borrowed Luther's idea that the Eucharist was just a symbol of the body and blood of Jesus of Nazareth, and not the actual transforming of the bread and wine into Jesus, which the Catholics believed happened), but when young Edward died the reforms stopped.

The Catholic Restoration. The new monarch was Mary Tudor (1553-1558), Henry's eldest daughter by his first wife. Determined to restore Catholicism, she earned herself the nickname "Bloody Mary" by having almost three hundred Protestants burned at the stake. Her brief reign temporarily wiped out all Protestant reforms, but in another way it built support for Protestantism as it created a hatred for Catholics in the hearts of many English citizens.

Elizabeth I. When Mary died the throne went to Elizabeth I (1558-1603), the daughter of Anne Boleyn. Ruling as a Protestant, Elizabeth nevertheless resisted pressures from some to conduct a ruthless anti-Catholic witch-hunt. But everyone had to attend the Church of England (those who did not were arrested and punished severely); the *Book of Common Prayer* again became the basis for a uniform liturgy. The Thirty-Nine Articles, approved in 1563, outline the fundamental tenets of the Anglican Church, but they were vague enough to satisfy a wide variety of people (including many Catholics). This settlement, however, was not universally accepted. In Ireland the Catholics, upset already of the invasion of their territory by the English, bitterly resisted any efforts to impose Anglicanism upon them. In addition, people known as Puritans (Calvinists in England) because they wanted to purify the Anglican Church further by

eliminating more of its forms and modifying more of its doctrines, began to challenge the Anglican establishment.

RADICAL PROTESTANTISM

The Anabaptists. There were some similarities among all the reformers discussed so far, particularly their insistence that the church and state were linked and their retention of many Catholic doctrines, such as infant baptism. There were more radical reformers, however, who believed that in order to make the church more like early Christianity individuals must not be baptized until they were adults – old enough to be converted. Their enemies called them Anabaptists, “re-baptizers,” for even though they had been baptized as infants they insisted on having this ordinance performed again.

Anabaptists rejected all forms of church authority but joined together in voluntary associations of adult believers. Some formed utopian communities where they abolished private property and shared everything in common. They also believed the complete separation of church and state and in the ideal of religious liberty (at least if you believed in the right things). These things, however, alarmed other Protestants as well as Catholics, all of whom insisted that church and state went hand-in-hand and that there was no room for religious dissent. As a result, Anabaptists were brutally persecuted from all sides. Tens of thousands were executed in northwestern and central Europe, while others fled to such places as Bohemia and Poland. They survived as Brethren, Hutterites and Mennonites, and later some filtered back into Germany and, eventually, to North America.

THE CATHOLIC REFORMATION

Early efforts. Though there were some commendable efforts at reform in the early sixteenth century, they depended largely on the whims of individual popes. Julius II (1503-1513) made a few moderate changes but his successor, Leo X, seemed too concerned with the secular splendor of the papacy to pay much attention to reform. Hadrian VI (1522-1523) practically eliminated the luxurious papal court, cut back on the bureaucracy, halted the buying and selling of Church offices, and curtailed the lavish patronizing of the arts, but Clement VII (1523-1534) restored many of the old practices. Clement VII also became absorbed in political conflict between France and the Holy Roman Empire that resulted, in May 1527, in the emperor’s troops thoroughly sacking the city of Rome.

PAUL III (1534-1549)

The new reformism. It remained for Paul III to lay the foundation for permanent internal reform. Determined to reassert papal authority throughout the church and to carry whatever reforms were needed, in 1537 he appointed a committee to advise him. Its report was a frank, realistic assessment of abuses, and Paul immediately put into effect many of its proposals aimed at the hierarchy. He also decided to call a general church council for the purpose of reexamining church theology and, it was hoped, resolving some of the uncertainties that still plagued it. There was heavy resistance in Rome to such a move, however, and he was unable to convene the council for another ten years (1545). It took nearly twenty years to conclude its deliberations.

THE INQUISITION

Origins. Paul was also determined to root out heresy. Based on medieval models, in 1542 he founded the Sacred Congregation of the Holy Office, with jurisdiction over the Roman Inquisition. Composed of a committee of six cardinals, the Inquisition could impose both religious and secular penalties, and could even order executions.

Abuses. Under Paul III its activities were kept under control but in later years its excesses became legendary. It accepted hearsay as evidence of heresy and other wrongdoing, felt no obligation to inform the accused of charges against them, applied torture, and often destroyed heretics themselves along with their heresies. The mere threat of being called before the Inquisition was a fearsome experience, and the atmosphere of suspicion, spying and accusation it created to some like a reign of terror. The Inquisition was most effective in restoring the Papal States of Central Italy (12 city-states around Rome) to the control of the Church.

Paul’s Reforming Legacy. Paul’s achievements as a reformer set the stage for even more sweeping reforms to come. Realizing, however, that the permanency of reform depended upon his successors, he appointed to the College of Cardinals (which elected popes) men well known for their piety

and learning and who were also dedicated to reform. The result was succession of popes who, by the early seventeenth century, had restored to the papacy and the Church an image of spirituality and morality.

New Religious Orders. Internal reform was strengthened also by the rise of several new religious orders, such as the Capucines, founded in 1528. This group became well known as missionaries and preachers, and their poverty, austerity and simple preaching even convinced some Protestants to return to the Catholic fold. The Ursuline order of nuns, founded in 1535 and approved in 1544, focused on training young girls for their future roles as wives and mothers. The Society of Jesus (Jesuits), founded by Ignatius Loyola (1491-1556) became the most important order of the reformation period. They took vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, with special emphasis on obedience to the pope. They led lives of service, indifferent to personal discomfort and safety. They also founded schools that provided the best education available for children of both the rich and the poor. The Jesuits also became known throughout the world as they spread their message, and that of the pope's, to all the continents of the world.

Paul IV. For the most part, the fourteen popes who reigned between 1549 and 1621 were faithful in continuing the reforms begun by Paul III. Paul IV (1555-1559) was particularly zealous, and his nephew, Cardinal Carlo Castra, pursued the Inquisition with ruthlessness unprecedented in Rome. Paul also attacked abuses at all levels, imposing heavy penalties on anyone that resisted or evaded his reforms. He tightened discipline among the cardinals themselves, drastically reduced the bureaucracy and severely punished simony (the buying and selling of church offices), despite the loss of Church revenue. In addition the Holy Office published an *Index of Forbidden Books* (1559), which banned Catholics from reading the listed books and pamphlets on the grounds that they contained heretical ideas. Books were burned by the thousands, and the people were punished for possessing indexed works. His excesses, sadly for him, shocked even his own cardinals and made him highly unpopular in Rome. Nevertheless, building on the foundation laid by Paul III, his reforms permanently changed the image of the papacy and enhanced the unity of the Church.

The Decrees of the Council of Trent. Paul III's general council finally assembled in Trent in 1545 and met intermittently until 1563. It had a stormy history, characterized by rivalry and intense disagreement among various national factions. Most of the council's time was spent on doctrinal issues, and in the end most people were amazed that it could agree on so many questions.

Doctrinal Unity. One symbol of this newfound unity was the astounding fact that by the time the final session of the Council of Trent concluded in 1563, the delegates had fully agreed on all the questions of doctrine and reform that had been submitted to them. Moreover, the predominance of the pope over councils had been reasserted, and it was he who was responsible for confirming and executing the council's mandates.

The council's most important decrees were those reaffirming the truth of all the doctrines Protestant reformers had rejected (importance of sacraments, infant baptism, infallibility of papal doctrine, etc). It also reaffirmed the importance of the priest as well as the elaborate ritual connected with worship services (especially concerning the Eucharist), insisted on sweeping clerical reforms, forbade the sale of indulgences, and required every diocese to establish a seminary where the clergy could be trained.

Results of the Catholic Reformation. The first two popes to hold office after the council concluded, and particularly Pius V (1566-1572), completed most of the internal reforms and expanded the work of the Inquisition. Another pope, Sixtus V (1585-1590), completely reorganized the Curia by fixing the number of cardinals at seventy and instituting fifteen permanent congregations to handle specific administrative and doctrinal matters. Reform was a gradual, sometimes difficult, process, and it never succeeded in making reconciliation with Protestantism, but it added a new vitality to the Church. It appealed to many who were appalled at the austerity and self-denial they saw in Protestantism, as well as the doctrine of predestination; they were delighted to participate in a newly invigorated Catholicism.

LEGACY OF VIOLENCE: THE WARS OF RELIGION

Background. Among Charles V's imperial problems was a series of wars with the Valois kings of France over certain Hapsburg lands in Italy. These wars helped advance the cause of Protestantism when Charles, in an attempt to gain support of Lutheran princes in Germany, signed the Peace of Augsburg in 1555. All his efforts had failed: the Protestant states were officially recognized, leaving his title of emperor with little effective power.

In 1556 Charles abdicated, dividing his territories between his brother Ferdinand and his son Philip. Ferdinand received Austria and the empire, while Philip inherited Spain, the Low Countries

(present-day Holland and Belgium), Milan, Sicily, and Spain's American possessions. As Philip II of Spain (1556-1598), the new king continued the war with France and won in 1559. In England, meanwhile, Queen Elizabeth felt constantly threatened by the presence of Mary, Queen of Scots, a Catholic and rival heir to the English throne and the favorite of many of Elizabeth's opponents. These political intricacies, with religion as one of their most volatile elements, provided part of the complex and often confusing background for the tragic wars of religion that plagued Europe in the Reformation Era.

France. By 1559 perhaps ten percent of the population of France were Huguenots, but the weak French monarchy could do little to check their growth. Even French nobles became Protestants, which led to inevitable clashes with Catholic lords. Peasants, too, fought and killed each other. Protestants frequently attacked Catholic cathedrals, destroying statuary, stained-glass windows and other sacred items that, to them, were symbols of idol worship. On August 24, 1572 3,000 Huguenots were killed in the infamous St. Bartholomew's Days massacre. Within three days thousands more (variously estimated as from 12,000 to 20,000) were killed in well-orchestrated strikes throughout the country.

The Catholic-Protestant struggle soon became intertwined with the three-sided rivalry for the throne that ended, in 1589, with the assassination of Henry of Guise and King Henry III. A Protestant, Henry of Navarre, ascended to the throne as Henry VI (1589-1610). Henry believed that a strong monarchy was the only way to keep France from collapsing. Knowing that only being part of the religious majority could he promote the cause of the monarchy as well as that of religious toleration, Henry compromised his religious principles and joined the Catholic Church, proclaiming "Paris is worth a Mass." On May 13, 1598, he proclaimed the famous Edict of Nantes, guaranteeing freedom of conscience to the Huguenots. Nonetheless, many Huguenots fled France, seeking religious liberty in Holland, England or North America.

Philip II and the Revolt of the Netherlands. In the Netherlands, meanwhile, the Calvinist population was growing, especially in the north, and gaining the support of wealthy merchants who wanted independence from Spain. The Dutch Protestants openly encouraged resistance to Catholic authority and Philip finally ordered the regent, his half-sister Margaret, to eliminate them. Her answer was the infamous Spanish Inquisition. This, along with heavier taxes and other grievances, resulted in a rash of anti-government and anti-Catholic violence in 1566. The response was brutal, as Philip's troops ruthlessly exterminated religious and political dissidents. Civil War ensued.

Appeal to Elizabeth. In 1576 the rebel provinces came together under William of Orange (1572-1584). The ten southern provinces gradually fell to Philip's troops and remained Catholic. The other seven declared their independence in 1584 as the United Provinces of the Netherlands and became Protestant. They also begged Queen Elizabeth to come to their aid. Elizabeth, however, had no desire to offend Philip, either by executing Mary, Queen of Scots, or by supporting the Dutch Protestants. But finally, convinced that if the Protestants lost, Philip would invade England anyway. And increasingly fearful of Mary's plots, she did both.

The Spanish Armada. Philip's response was to mount a vast armada of 130 ships to escort barges carrying an army of perhaps 30,000 invasion troops across the English Channel and invade England to restore Catholicism on the islands. The fleet sailed on May 30, 1588, but it was soundly defeated because of the treacherous waters of the channel and 150 British ships. The war dragged on until 1609 when Philip III (1598-1621) finally consented to a truce. Technically, at least, this recognized the independence of the northern provinces as another Protestant state.

THE THIRTY YEARS' WAR. the most disastrous of all the religious wars of this period was the Thirty Years' War (1618-1648), which grew from religious and political struggles within the German empire and the surrounding states. As Protestant-Catholic tension continued to increase, two armed camps in Germany arose, the Protestant Union (backed by England and the Netherlands) and the Catholic League (backed by France, Spain and the Papacy). The shooting began in 1618 after a religious struggle for control of the throne of Bohemia. In the course of the war, many of the old rivalries renewed their fights throughout Europe, which entangled all the great powers of western Europe. However, the most intense fighting in the war was throughout Germany. In October 1648 the Peace of Westphalia finally ended the conflict.

The Peace of Westphalia. The Peace of Westphalia marked what amounted to the end of any remaining power for the Holy Roman Empire in Germany, though it continued to exist in name, and with a politically impotent emperor, for another 150 years (Any power of the empire was only found in the Austrian regions of Germany). Instead, there were over three hundred independent German states, as well as hundreds of tiny semi-independent principalities. The ruler of each state had the right to determine the

religion of that domain. The treaty reaffirmed the Peace of Augsburg, though broadening it to include Calvinism as well as Catholicism and Lutheranism.

Devastation of Germany. The tragedy of the Thirty Years' War was in the devastation it wreaked on the people of Germany and Bohemia. Over a third of them died as disease, pestilence, and starvation followed the marauding armies. Economic devastation was also long lasting, as the already dwindling trade and commerce of some areas was thoroughly destroyed. The war brought nothing but decline for most of the German population.