Church History

The Reformation

I

1. Western Church Accretions
   1. The Papacy
   2. Veneration of Mary
   3. Veneration of Icons
   4. Prayers to Angels & Saints
   5. Infant Baptism
   6. Purgatory – this is not only cleansing, but it is punitive and for forgiveness. There is good evidence that the early church prayed for the dead. However, there is a difference between prayers for the dead and purgatory. The Eastern Church recognizes that the early church did not universally believe in this doctrine.
   7. Indulgences
2. Political Landscape
   1. Europe is no longer a united country but is becoming decentralized
   2. Nationalism is on the rise. People now began to think of themselves as French, German, English, Italian – rather than Roman
   3. The Holy Roman Empire is now broken up into smaller states with limited allegiance to Roman Empire
   4. Charles V came to be the Emporer in 1519. France had aligned with the Otterman Turks and so Charles V needed the support from German princes. Therefore, he was weakened to help the Pope in the condemnation of Luther.
3. Independent Thinking Across Europe
   1. The Renaissance created the rise of individual thinking, not always seeking approval of the Roman Catholic church. (This would allow Luther to teach on the “priesthood of all believers”, and that one could study the Bible on his own)
   2. Scholars who were studying the classics, began to place new emphasis on the Greek and Hebrew – giving rise to new understandings of the Bible – and criticism of the Roman Catholic Church
   3. The invention of the **moveable-type printing press**. Books (and pamphlets) could be mass-produced. Ideas circulated, and the church could not contain them as easily.
4. Religious Dissatisfaction
   1. The power of the Church had been greatly weakened by the “Babylonian Captivity” the great schism
   2. The clergy was corrupt. There was little respect for them among the people
   3. Calls for reformation had already been sounding in the Church – so people were familiar with the idea of reformation
5. Social-Economical Developments
   1. Feudalism was on decline – being replaced with city and town governerments
   2. The rising middle class began to recognize its own influence
   3. The lower class peasants were very restless, and were seeking ways to escape the oppression that they had experienced
   4. With the middle class earning more money, the resentment towards the Church’s efforts to drain them of resources was on the increase.

II The Reformation

**1. Martin Luther**

· Was born Nov 10, 1483, the son of a poor copper miner

· Luther had a very hard life. He was beaten severely by both parents. Once, he later wrote, that his mother whipped “him to a pulp” for stealing a nut

· Hans Luther wanted Martin to become a lawyer. He earned his Masters in 1505

· On July 2, 1505, while walking home from the university, a lightning bolt struck very close. Luther called out to St. Anne (saint of the miners), and promised to become a monk if his life was spared.

· He entered an Augustinian monastery July 17, 1505.

· Luther threw himself into monastic life. He was greatly troubled with a profound sense of guilt, of which he could not shake.

· Luther devoted himself to fasts, long prayers, pilgrimages, and constant confession. He confessed every sin possible so that the priest was weary of him

· Johann Staupitz, his superior, took Luther under his wing. He recommended that he pursue academics as a way of handling his guilt

· Ordained a priest 1507, he began lecturing at the University of Wittenburg in 1508.

· From 1510 – 1520 he lectured on Psalms, Romans, Galatians & Hebrews (books that contained much anti-Roman Catholic thought)

· Around 1515, while on the toilet in Wittenburg, Luther read Romans 1:17 and came to appreciate justification by faith.

· Luther’s teaching changed. Students packed his classroom to hear him teach, but he was not out to change anything

**2. John Tetzel**

· Tetzel was a Dominican friar charged with selling indulgences

· Pope Leo X was building the sisteen chapel and needed funds and Archbishop Albrecht of Brandenburg needed money to pay off his debts from buying his bishopric.

· Jesus, Mary and the apostles had left the church with a “treasury lf merit” and if someone did the church a favor, they could be given an indulgence

· Soon, contributions could buy an indulgence, and forgive sin

· Tetzel was a slick salesman, and had a song like “as soon as the coin the coffer rings, a soul from purgatory doest spring!”

· Tetzel was not well-received in many German areas

· Luther was incensed by the sale of indulgences

· On Oct 31, 1517, Luther posted his 95 Thesis on the Wittenburg Church door. These were 95 arguments against the selling of indulgences

· Luther probably believed that the pope was against it too, and he did not intend to accuse the Catholic church of anything – just Tetzel

· The 95 Thesis were translated from Latin into German, and spread like wildfire. Luther became an overnight sensation

· In two weeks the pamphlets spread through Germany, in two months they were spread over all of Europe

**3. John Eck**

· A Roman Catholic theologian, Eck was incensed by Luther’s arguments and went to Leipzig, Germany to engage him in 1519

· However, because a truce of sorts had been reached between Luther and Pope Leo X, Eck invited Karlstadt to a debate

· Scripturally speaking, Eck was at a loss to his opponent. However, he was able to manipulate the argument and gain a confession from Luther stating that he sided with John Huss – a convicted heretic.

**4. Diet of Worms**

Just before the Leipzig debate, Charles V was elected emporer. The pope no longer felt he needed to keep peace with Fredrick, and so he decided to go after Luther

· The Pope issued a bull ordering all of Luther’s books be burned, and that he was to submit to Roman authority in 60 days.

· When Luther got the bull, he burned it publicly – there was no turning back now

· It was finally ordered that Luther appear before the Diet of Worms in 1521

· At the Diet, the pope hoped to have the emperor’s favor in convicting Luther.

· Luther was granted a promise of safe travel – just like Huss

· Unknown to Luther, the soldiers who accompanied him had vowed that if Luther recanted, they would kill him

· The building was packed. Luther appeared before the Diet. His books and pamphlets were laid out and he confirmed that they were his. He was given the opportunity to recant. Luther flinched. He said he needed time – he was given a day

· Luther returned the following day and when asked if he recanted, responded in German, “UNLESS I AM CONVINCED BY SCRIPTURE AND PLAIN REASON. I DO NOT ACCEPT THE AUTHORITY OF POPES AND COUNCILS. FOR THEY HAVE CONTRADICTED EACH OTHER. MY CONSCIENCE IS CAPTIVE TO THE WORD OF GOD. I CANNOT AND I WILL NOT RECANT ANYTHING, FOR TO GO AGAINST CONSCIENCE IS NEITHER RIGHT NOR SAFE. HERE I STAND, I CANNOT DO OTHERWISE. GOD HELP ME. AMEN

· By burning the bull he challenged the pope. At Worms he challenged the Empire.

· The Edict of Worms was issued. Luther was a heretic. Giving food or aid to Luther was illegal, and anyone could kill Luther without legal consequence

**5. Frederick the Wise**

Fredrick the Wise, born 1463, was sovereign of Saxony – where Wittenburg was located

· Fredrick the Wise was not a disciple of the Protestant movement, but was favorable to Luther

· Fredrick was present at the Diet, saw Luther, and was unimpressed

· As Luther was returning home, Fredrick had Luther kidnapped and taken to Wartburg Castle, and became Squire George

· Even Fredrick did not know where he was taken

· He grew a beard and hid for about a year. He translated the Bible into German during this time, and wrote, “A Mighty Fortress is Our God”

**6. Wittenburg**

Back at Wittenburg (?) things were getting out of hand

· Monks and nuns were leaving monasteries and marrying one another

· Lutherans began tearing down images of saints

· Then, three layman came to Wittenburg – the Zwickau prophets – who claimed God spoke to them directly and there was no more need of scripture.

· Luther could take no more. He left his hiding place and returned to public life in Wittenburg

**7. The Augsburg Confession**

· Pope Leo X died. Pope Adrian replaced him. The Empire then was assaulted with rebellions, wars and invaders. Both the emperor and the pope could pay no attention to Luther

· Emperor Charles V needed a united Germany to face the Turks

· the Ausburg Confession of 1530 united the Protestants beneath their German princes

· This gave Lutherans the right to exist

· The peace accord allowed the princes of a particular region to decide if their country was Catholic or Lutheran – but no other

**8. Ulrich Zwingli**

As the upheaval in Germany was taking place, a parallel movement in Zurich, Switzerland was underway.

· Zwingli, a Roman Catholic priest, was reaching many of the same theological conclusions as Luther – by simply studying the Bible.

· Zwingli won the favor of his local canton, and soon his ideas spread to other Swiss districts

**9. The Anabaptists**

Out of Zwingli’s faction sprang another distinct movement of Protestantism: the Anabaptists

· It was mainly spearheaded by **George Blaurock and** **Conrad Grebel**, former disciples of Zwingli. They were very learned men who excelled in Greek and Hebrew. They had gathered around Zwingli when he was converted (1520) so that he could teach them the classics. They became converted under his teaching.

· During a town-hall meeting (in 1523) with Zwingli and Zurich leaders, the matter of ending the mass was discussed. All agreed that the mass had to go. Zwingli wanted it to end by Christmas of that year. The leaders thought that was too soon. Zwingli was inclined to let the leaders decide.

· George Blaurock stood up and asked that a date be set. Zwingli said that was for the leaders to decide. Another disciple of Zwingli stood up and said that it was up to the Bible to decide, and that is should end immediately.

· Zwingli sided with the leaders rather than go with his convictions. He had taught his followers to go with the Bible, but in the end he went another way.

· After this the disciples of Zwingli felt that they were sold out by him and they broke off to do their own studies.

· These men began to study on their own in around 1524. They called themselves “The Swiss Brethren.”

· One of their conclusions of study was that water baptism should not be administered to infants. They attempted to convince Zwingli, but he rejected it and turned against them.

· On Jan 18-19, 1525, they debated Zwingli publicly on this issue. The town leaders decided that Zwingli won, and that any who believed in “believer baptism,” or who had rejected infant baptism, had 8 days to repent or flee.

· Rejecting infant baptism for believer-baptism they “re-baptized” themselves and their group on 21 January 1525. This act was tantamount to signing their own death warrants.

· Grebel (1498-1526) was very missionary minded and took his ideas to other cities. Many were converted.

o Grebel spent his short life on the run, hiding or in prison.

o While in prison he wrote a thesis on baptism and challenged Zwingli to a debate

o He died of the plague at age

· **Flelix manz** – was second to Grebel.

o Manz was the first Anabaptist to be martyred

o It was in Manz’ home that the first “re-baptism” took place

o He did a lot of evangelism – even door to door

o He was arrested once, escaped, but was arrested three weeks later

o He was arrested with Blaurock in December, 1526, in a Grüningen forest, and sentenced to death January 5, 1527. The sentence read: “Manz shall be delivered to the executioner, who shall tie his hands, put him into a boat, take him to the lower hut, there strip his bound hands down over his knees, place a stick between his knees and arms, and thus push him into the water and let him perish in the water...”

o As he was carried bound to the Limmat river to be drowned, he witnessed to all the bystanders, and praised God that, though he was a sinner, he had the privilege of dying for the truth. His mother followed in the crowd, continually encouraging her son to remain faithful to the Lord in this hour of temptation. His last words were (in Latin), “Into thy hands, O Lord, I commit my spirit!” (age 29)

· **George Blaurock** – exceeded Manz and Grebel in preaching

o Was the first to be “rebaptized”

o Was not a scholar, but more of a brute. Would sometimes interrupt RC services and physically remove the priest

o The day Manz was drowned Blaurock was stripped to the waist, severely beaten, and banished from Zurich

o Moving from place to place he ended up in southern Germany and pastored a small Anabaptist congregation

o He was arrested in Aug. 1529 and sentenced to death

o On his way to execution (burning) he preached to the crowds (age 38)

· **Michael Sattler** (1490-1527)

o Was a Dominican monk but was influenced by Luther

o Became proficient in Hebrew and Greek

o Left monastery and married a nun

o In 1525 he fled Austria to Switzerland because of the non-Catholic persecution. There, he met Anabaptists and was converted

o He eventually settled in Germany and was arrested in 1527

o He was tried and condemned. However, it was decided that he be made a special example by extreme torture

o Part of his tongue was removed with red hot tongs

o While enroute to the place of execution, there were six stations set up where tongs were heated in fires. There, the crowd was permitted to rip out pieces of his flesh

o He was affixed to

· Pacifistic to a fault, these brave men and women endured some of the harshest treatment that the institutional church could devise. They were beheaded by the emperor and burned by Roman Catholics. The Protestants, who seemed to have forgotten what it was like to be in the crosshairs of persecution, were particularly fond of drowning them.

· There were “Anabaptist” movements that made the movement unpopular. These were the Zwickau Prophets who came to Wittenburg while Luther was in hiding (1522), and the Munster Episode in 1529.

· In both cases the leaders of those movements held to many of the same doctrines as the Anabaptists did, and were associated with them. However, they were violent people who advocated violence.

o Many Anabaptists fled to Moravia. A leader arose there, Jakob Hutter, who began a movement called the Bruderhofe. They

were later called the Hutterites. They became known for their expertise in agriculture,

**10. John Calvin**

His life overlapped Luther’s, and so he might be considered a second-generation reformer.

· Unlike Luther’s conversion experience, it is difficult to footnote Calvin’s with date or details. He was at first a humanist theologian. He probably embraced Protestantism around 1535, and desired only to be a theologian.

· His greatest contribution to the Reformation was a systematical articulation of theological thought. Posthumously, Calvin’s work gained momentum, and would continue to leave a wide mark into Protestant history. His theological legacy would become known as Reformed Theology.

· Calvin is known best today by his work on predestination – or election as the means of salvation. He derived most of this from St Augustine

**11. Henry the VIII**

At about the time Calvin was breaking from Rome, Henry VIII, King of England, was setting the stage for eventual reformation in Great Britain.

· He was not a radical like Luther, or a great theologian like Calvin. Instead, he was a selfish man with political designs who had grown weary of keeping his marital covenant with his first wife – Catherine of France

· When the pope hesitated to give him an annulment, Henry VIII sought the counsel of Thomas Cranmer and began to separate from Rome. He would eventually be declared “the supreme head of the Church of England” by Parliament. Over the next several decades England’s reformation would pendulum swing between Roman Catholicism and a form of Protestantism (Anglicanism) while various kings and queens throned in Great Britain.

· In 1558 Queen Elizabeth gained the throne and finalized Britain’s Protestant direction.