

The Reformation of Christianity

SECTION 3

If YOU were there...

You live in a small town in Germany in the 1500s. The Catholic Church has a lot of influence here. Often, church officials clash with local nobles over who has the final say in certain political issues. The church also demands that the nobles pay high taxes. Lately, however, a local priest has been openly criticizing church leaders. He wants to make some changes.

How do you think the nobles will respond to him?

BUILDING BACKGROUND By the early 1500s Renaissance ideas had caused many Europeans to view their lives with a more critical eye. They thought their lives could be changed for the better. One area that some people thought needed improvement was religion.

Reformers Call for Change

By the late Renaissance some people had begun to complain about problems in the Catholic Church. They called on its leaders to end corruption and focus on religion. Their calls led to the **Reformation**, a reform movement against the Roman Catholic Church.

Unpopular Church Practices

Those who wanted to reform the church had many complaints. Some thought that priests and bishops weren't religious anymore. Others felt that the pope was too involved in politics, neglecting his religious duties. Many thought the church had grown too rich. The Roman Catholic Church had become one of the richest institutions in Europe because it didn't have to pay taxes.

Many people objected to the ways the church earned its money. One common method was the sale of indulgences. An indulgence was a document given by the pope that excused a person from penalties for the sins that he or she had committed.

What You Will Learn...

Main Ideas

1. Reformers called for change in the Catholic Church, but some broke away to form new churches.
2. The Catholic Reformation was an attempt to reform the church from within.
3. The political impact of the Reformation included religious wars and social change.

The Big Idea

Efforts to reform the Roman Catholic Church led to changes in society and the creation of new churches.

Key Terms and People

Reformation, p. 569
Martin Luther, p. 570
Protestants, p. 570
John Calvin, p. 571
Catholic Reformation, p. 572
Jesuits, p. 572
federalism, p. 575



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TAKING NOTES

Use the graphic organizer online to take notes on efforts to reform the Catholic Church, both by Protestants—people who broke away from the church—and by Catholics.

According to the church, an indulgence reduced the time that a person would serve in purgatory. In Catholic teachings, purgatory was a place where souls went to make up for their sins before they went to heaven. Many Christians thought that by selling indulgences, the church was letting people buy their way into heaven.

Martin Luther

By the early 1500s scholars in northern Europe were calling for church reforms. On October 31, 1517, a priest named **Martin Luther** added his voice to the call for reform. He nailed a list of complaints about the church to the door of a church in Wittenberg (VIT-uhn-berk) in the German state of Saxony. Luther's list is called the **Ninety-Five Theses** (THEE-seez). Thanks to the newly invented printing press, copies of this list spread to neighboring states.

Luther's complaints angered many Catholics. Pope Leo X called Luther a heretic and excommunicated him. Germany's ruler, the Holy Roman Emperor, ordered Luther to appear before a diet, or council of nobles and church officials, in the German city of Worms (VOHRMS). The emperor called Luther an outlaw and ordered him to leave the empire. But one noble secretly supported Luther and helped him to hide from the emperor.

Luther's ideas eventually led to a split in the church. **Those who protested against the Roman Catholic church became known as Protestants** (PRAH-tuhs-tuhnts). Those Protestants who followed Luther's teachings were specifically known as Lutherans.

Luther taught that anyone could have a direct relationship with God. They didn't need priests to talk to God for them. This idea is called the **priesthood of all believers**.

Martin Luther's Message



When Martin Luther nailed his **Ninety-Five Theses** to a church door in Wittenberg, Germany, the Reformation began. Soon, others unhappy with church practices also began to criticize the church.

BIOGRAPHY

Martin Luther

1483–1546

Martin Luther is credited with starting the Reformation, but he never wanted to leave the Catholic Church. He just wanted to correct what he saw as the church's mistakes. After

he was excommunicated, Luther began to depart more and more from church teachings. For example, although the Roman Catholic Church didn't let priests get married, Luther married a former nun in 1525. Still, as an old man Luther regretted that his actions had caused a split in the church.

Drawing Inferences Why do you think Luther regretted causing a split in the church?

It challenged the traditional structure and power of the church. But Luther encouraged people to live as the Bible, not priests or the pope, said.

To help people understand how God wanted them to live, Luther translated the Bible's New Testament into German, his native language. For the first time many Europeans who didn't know Greek or Latin could read the Bible for themselves. In addition to translating the Bible, Luther wrote pamphlets, essays, and songs about his ideas, many of them in German.

Many German nobles liked Luther's ideas. They particularly supported Luther's position that the clergy should not interfere with politics. Because these nobles allowed the people who lived on their lands to become Lutheran, the Lutheran Church soon became the dominant church in most of northern Germany.

Other Reformers

Even before Luther died in 1546, other reformers across Europe had begun to follow his example. William Tyndale (TIN-duhl), an English professor, thought that everyone should be able to read and interpret the Bible. This belief went against the teachings of the Catholic Church, which held that only the clergy could interpret the Bible. When Tyndale translated the Bible into English, Catholic authorities had him executed.

A more influential reformer than Tyndale was **John Calvin**. One of Calvin's main teachings was predestination, the idea that God knew who would be saved even before they were born. Nothing people did during their lives would change God's plan. However, Calvin also thought that it was important to live a good life and obey God's laws.

THE IMPACT TODAY

Many of the songs Luther wrote are still sung in Protestant churches around the world.

Primary Source

HISTORIC DOCUMENT

Luther's Ninety-Five Theses

In Wittenberg, nailing documents to the church door was a common way of sharing ideas with the community. The Ninety-Five Theses Martin Luther posted, however, created far more debate than other such documents. The items listed here, selected from Luther's list, argued against the sale of indulgences.

Luther thought that only God—not the pope—could grant forgiveness.

Luther thought buying indulgences was useless.

(5) The pope will not, and cannot, remit [forgive] other punishments than those which he has imposed by his own decree [ruling] or according to the canons [laws].

(21) Therefore, those preachers of indulgences err [make a mistake] who say that, by the pope's indulgence, a man may be exempt from all punishments, and be saved.

(30) Nobody is sure of having repented [been sorry] sincerely enough; much less can he be sure of having received perfect remission of sins.

(43) Christians should be taught that he who gives to the poor, or lends to a needy man, does better than buying indulgences.

(52) It is a vain and false thing to hope to be saved through indulgences, though the commissary [seller]—nay, the pope himself—was to pledge his own soul therefore.

—Martin Luther, *Ninety-Five Theses*

ANALYSIS SKILL

ANALYZING PRIMARY SOURCES

Why did Martin Luther argue against the sale of indulgences?

BIOGRAPHY

John Calvin

1509-1564

Calvin was probably the most influential figure of the Reformation after Luther. Through his writings and preaching, Calvin spread basic Reformation ideas such as the right of the common people to make church policy. Unlike many other religious leaders, Calvin didn't think that the pursuit of profits would keep businesspeople from being saved. This idea would eventually help lead to the growth of capitalism.

Making Inferences Why might Calvin's economic ideas have been popular with the people of Geneva?

In 1541 the people of Geneva, Switzerland, made Calvin their religious and political leader. He and his followers, called Calvinists, passed laws to make people live according to Calvin's teachings. Calvin hoped to make Geneva an example of a good Christian city.

In England the major figure of the Reformation was King Henry VIII. Henry asked the pope to officially end his marriage, but the pope refused. Furious, Henry decided that he was not going to obey the pope anymore. In 1534 he declared himself the head of a new church, called the Church of England, or Anglican Church.

Henry broke from the Catholic Church for personal reasons, not religious ones. As a result, he didn't change many church practices. The rituals and beliefs of the Anglican Church stayed very much like those of the Catholic Church. But Henry's actions opened the door for other Protestant beliefs to take hold in England.

THE IMPACT TODAY

The Jesuit Order runs Catholic schools and universities all around the world.

READING CHECK Summarizing What were Martin Luther's main religious teachings?

The Catholic Reformation

As Protestantism spread in the later 1500s and 1600s, Catholic leaders responded. Their effort to stop the spread of Protestantism and to reform the Catholic Church from within was known as the **Catholic Reformation**, or the Counter-Reformation.

Catholic Culture in Spain

Even before the Catholic Reformation, Spain's rulers had been battling to drive non-Catholics from their lands. In 1492 the king and queen defeated the last Muslim forces in Spain. They then forced all Muslims and Jews remaining in the country to convert to Catholicism.

The Spanish monarchs also ordered the Spanish Inquisition to find and punish any Muslims or Jews who had converted to Catholicism but still secretly kept their old beliefs.

The Inquisition was ruthless in carrying out this duty. It later sought out Protestants. Once the Inquisition had punished all Muslim, Jewish, and Protestant believers, Spain's Catholic Church had no opposition.

Catholic Reforms

In other parts of Europe, Catholic leaders were responding to the criticisms of Protestants. Catholic reformers created new religious orders, or communities, in southern Europe. These orders wanted to win people back to the Catholic Church.

The first of the new orders was founded in 1534 by a Spanish noble, Ignatius (ig-NAY-shuhs) of Loyola. This new order was the Society of Jesus, or the Jesuits. The **Jesuits were a religious order created to serve the pope and the church.** Ignatius had fought as a knight, and the Jesuits were trained to be as disciplined as soldiers in their religious duties. By teaching people about Catholic ideas, Jesuits hoped to turn people against Protestantism.

The Council of Trent

Many Catholic leaders felt more change was needed. They called together the Council of Trent, a meeting of church leaders in Trent, Italy. Clergy from across Europe came to discuss, debate, and eventually reform Catholic teachings.

The council restated the importance of the clergy in interpreting the Bible, but it created new rules that clergy had to follow. One rule ordered bishops to live in the areas they oversaw. The council also officially rejected the ideas of the Protestant leaders.

Some Catholic Reformation leaders wanted to punish Protestants as heretics. To lead this campaign, the pope created religious courts to punish any Protestants found in Italy. He also issued a list of books considered dangerous for people to read, including many by Protestant leaders. People reading books on this list could be excommunicated from the Catholic Church.

Catholic Missionaries

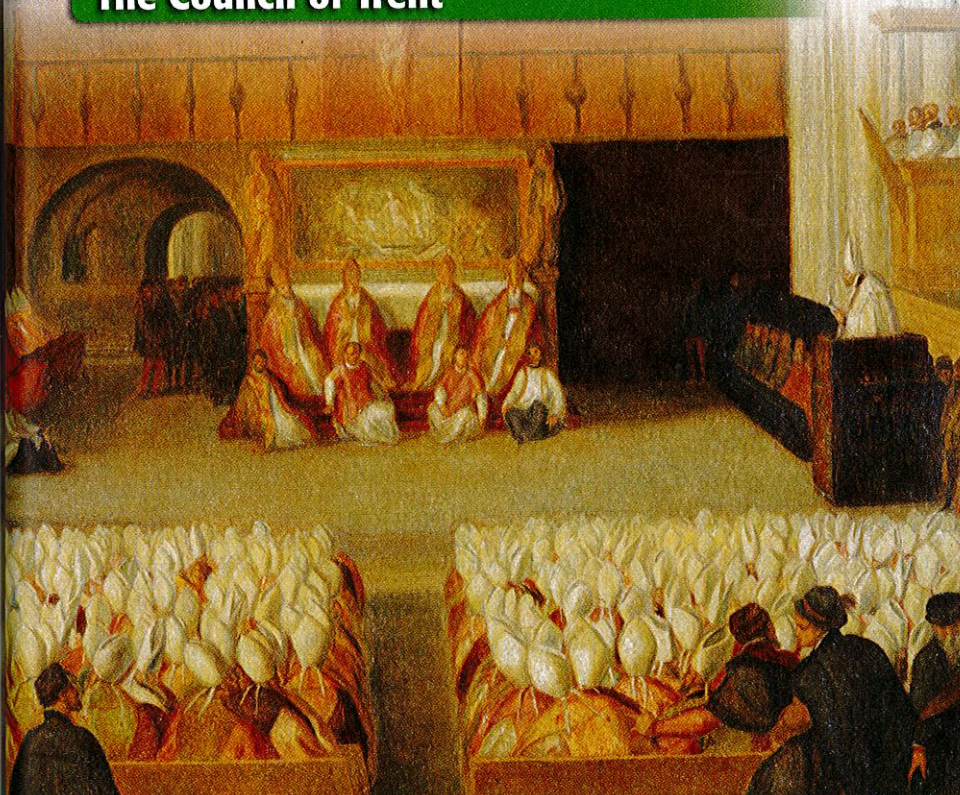
Many Catholics dedicated their lives to helping the church grow. They became missionaries, traveling to foreign countries to spread their faith. As this missionary activity greatly increased during the Catholic Reformation, Catholic teachings spread around the world.

Many of the new missionaries were Jesuits. Jesuit priests went to Africa, Asia, and America. Probably the most important missionary of the period was the Jesuit priest Francis Xavier (ZAYV-yuhr). He brought Catholicism to parts of India and Japan in the mid-1500s.

Around the world Catholic missionaries baptized millions of people. Through their efforts the Catholic Reformation reached far beyond Europe.

READING CHECK Finding Main Ideas What were the goals of Catholic Reformation leaders?

The Council of Trent



Results of the Council of Trent

QUICK FACTS

- The selling of indulgences is banned
- Bishops must live in the areas they oversee
- The ideas of Luther, Calvin, and other Reformation leaders are rejected

The Council of Trent met between 1545 and 1563 to clarify church teachings that had been criticized by Protestants. The council played a key role in revitalizing the Catholic Church in Europe.

Protestant Self-Government

This painting from the 1600s shows a Protestant church in France. Members of a congregation like this one would elect leaders and make their own rules. The rise of self-government was one result of the Reformation.

Some Results of the Reformation

QUICK FACTS

- Religious conflicts spread across Europe
- Church leaders reform the Catholic Church
- Missionaries spread Catholicism around the world
- Northern Europe becomes largely Protestant
- Local Protestant churches practice self-government



The Political Impact

The Reformation created division within Europe. In Spain most people were Catholic. In the northern countries most people were Protestant. The Holy Roman Empire was a patchwork of small kingdoms, some Catholic and some Protestant. These divisions often led to political conflicts.

Religious Wars

Although most people in France were Catholic, some became Protestants. French Protestants were called Huguenots (HYOO-guh-nahts). Tensions increased between the two religious groups after the French king, who was Catholic, banned all Protestant religions. In 1562 violence broke out.

The war between French Catholics and Huguenots continued off and on for

decades. The conflict finally ended in 1598. In that year King Henry IV issued the Edict of Nantes (NAHNT), a law granting religious freedom in most of France. Protestants could worship anywhere except in Paris and a few other cities.

Religious wars caused even more destruction in the Holy Roman Empire. There, the king of Bohemia sparked a conflict when he forced everyone in his kingdom to become Catholic. In 1618 Protestants rose up in revolt. The rebellion spread through the Holy Roman Empire, starting what is known as the Thirty Years' War.

The Holy Roman Emperor sought help from other Catholic countries. The Protestants also sought allies. The Catholic king of France agreed to help them because he didn't like the Holy Roman Emperor.

After 30 years of fighting, Europe's rulers worked out a peace agreement in 1648. This **agreement**, the Treaty of Westphalia, allowed rulers to determine whether their countries would be Catholic or Protestant. The treaty also made the states of Germany independent of the Holy Roman Empire.

Social Changes

The Reformation led not only to political changes but to social changes too. Before the Reformation, most Europeans had no voice in governing the Catholic Church. They simply followed the teachings of their priests and bishops. However, many Protestant churches didn't have priests, bishops, or other clergy. Instead each congregation, or community of worshippers, made its own rules and elected its own leaders. People began to think that their own ideas, not just the clergy's, were important.

Once people began to govern their own churches, they also wanted political power. In some places congregations ruled their towns, not just their churches. In the American colonies of New England, for instance, congregations met to decide how their towns would be run. These town meetings were an early form of self-government, in which people rule themselves.

As time passed, some congregations gained even more power. Their decisions came to affect more aspects of people's lives or to control events in larger areas. The power of these congregations didn't replace national governments, but national rulers began to share some power with local governments. **The sharing of power between local governments and a strong central government is called federalism.**

Once people began to think that their ideas were important, they began to raise questions. They wanted to know more about the world around them. In addition,

many people refused to accept information based on someone else's authority. They didn't care if the person was an ancient writer or a religious leader. The desire to investigate led people to turn to science.

READING CHECK Analyzing How did Europe change after the Thirty Years' War?

SUMMARY In the 1500s Protestants challenged the Catholic Church. Catholic leaders adopted religious reforms to preserve the church's influence. The religious changes of the Reformation led to conflict and social changes.

ACADEMIC VOCABULARY

agreement
a decision reached by two or more people or groups

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ANIMATED HISTORY
Spread of Protestantism, 1500s

Section 3 Assessment

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ONLINE QUIZ

Reviewing Ideas, Terms, and People

- a. Recall** What were three complaints people had about the Catholic Church in the early 1500s?

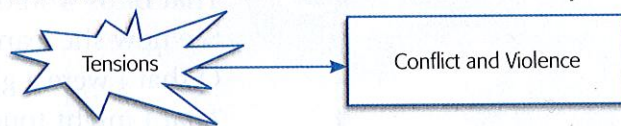
b. Contrast How did **Martin Luther's** ideas about interpreting the Bible differ from Catholics' ideas?
- a. Define** What was the **Catholic Reformation**?

b. Analyze What was the goal of the Spanish Inquisition?
- a. Identify** Where did the Thirty Years' War begin?

b. Sequence How did the **Reformation** lead to the growth of **federalism**?

Critical Thinking

- Analyzing** Using your notes on the reformers and a diagram like the one below, explain how tensions between Protestants and Catholics led to conflict and violence in Europe.



FOCUS ON WRITING

- Choosing Important Details** Write the main idea and supporting details of the section in your notebook. Then go over your notes to choose the most important or intriguing details to include on your book jacket. Put a check mark next to the details you think you'll include.