

# Reformed Church

## Five: The Reformed Church (AD 1453–1678)

From the fall Constantinople to the end of the Thirty Year War.

There was still a remnant standing against false doctrine. This was a period when God raised up people to shine the light against the darkness of false doctrine.

## The Renaissance

### The light of learning

The Renaissance is a term that refers to the awakening of Europe to an interest in literature, art, and science. These are things associated with civilization.

### The light of God's Word

The Word of God brought Europe out of the dark ages. It is not a coincidence that civilization was restored when the light of God's Word was also restored to the people.

The printing press was invented by Gutenberg in 1456 and the Bible was the first book printed (200 copies of the Latin Vulgate). Bibles could now be mass produced and placed in the hands of the common people because of this invention.

**Discussion:** Can normal people understand the Bible?

### The light of truth

The movable type printing press became a powerful tool of the Reformation. The reformers printed books and pamphlets teaching against the doctrine of the Catholic Church and the doctrine of justification by faith. These new pamphlets gained in popularity and were circulated throughout Europe. Books had to be hand copied by scribes before the printing press was invented, but now books could be circulated quickly. People could read for themselves and make decisions based on fact and not only what a priest told them.

## The Reformation

*Reform* means "to amend, change or improve." Reformers were trying to bring change to the church. Some of these reformers did not realize that the Roman Catholic Church was not going to change. They stood against what they saw as false doctrine. They were restoring the Bible into the languages of the people. The Catholic Church opposed laymen reading the Bible. Those who stood for truth were persecuted and began to realize the Catholic Church was not going to change. *Protestant* is the name given to those who protested the Catholic Church.

# The Reformation in Europe

## Martin Luther (1483–1546) in Germany

Martin Luther is considered to be *the father of the Reformation*.

He nailed 95 theses to the oak door of the Wittenberg Cathedral on Oct. 31, 1517. The theses stated his position against the Roman Church. He refuted what he saw as false doctrine of the church and denied the infallibility of the pope. Printed copies quickly flooded Europe and helped to spark the light of the Reformation.

He burned the papal bull. Bull is derived from the Latin *bula* which means "a seal." The name being applied to any document stamped with an official seal. In 1520, the pope sent Luther a bull accusing him of heresy. Luther burned the bull in the yard of the University of Wittenberg.

Luther was called to the Diet at Worms. A *Diet* is a council of rulers. In June of 1521, Luther was called before an imperial diet at Worms in Germany. Luther had been guaranteed safe passage by the German nobles to and from the council. He was commanded to recant by the Catholic Church leaders. Luther replied, "Unless I am convinced by proofs from Scriptures or by plain and clear reasons and arguments, I can and will not retract, for it is neither safe nor wise to do anything against conscience. Here I stand. I can do no other. God help me. Amen."

A friend of Luther, who was a government leader, "captured" Luther and kept him in Wartburg Castle for one year. He did this to protect Luther from the church. During that year, Luther translated the New Testament and part of the Old Testament into the German language of his people.

## Ulrich Zwingli (1484–1531) in Switzerland

Zwingli became pastor of the main church in Zurich on January 1, 1519. He said he would preach through the Gospel of Matthew instead of using the lectionary. In 1522 some of his church members ate meat during lent, and he supported them by preaching on freedom. Under him priests got married, images were removed from the church, and the Mass was replaced by a simple service that emphasized preaching. He published works against the Catholics. Besides being a pastor, he was also a sort of civil leader. He was killed in civil war and John Calvin carried on the work.

## John Calvin (1509–1564) in France and Switzerland

Around AD 1533 John Calvin broke from Catholicism, left his homeland of France, and settled in Switzerland as an exile. In 1536 he published the first edition of *The Institutes of the Christian Religion*.

Calvin was an outspoken preacher and author who preached salvation by faith. He stressed the authority of Scripture. Calvin taught the predestination of the elect. He said, "You cannot manipulate God or put him in your debt. He saves you; you cannot do it for yourself." Calvin's doctrine of predestination is contrasted by Arminianism, which is based on the belief that any man can be saved if they believe.

Calvinism	Arminianism
<b>Total depravity</b> All people are so depraved (sinful) that they cannot even trust God	<b>Free-will</b> Humans can choose good or evil
<b>Unconditional election</b>	<b>Conditional election</b>
<b>Particular redemption</b>	<b>Universal redemption</b>
<b>Irresistible grace</b>	<b>The Holy Spirit can be effectively resisted</b>
<b>Perseverance of saints</b>	<b>Falling from grace</b>

## Jacques Lefevre (1455–1536) in France

He wrote a book called *Justification by faith* (1512) and preached salvation by faith. He translated the entire Bible into French. He never officially separated from the Catholic Church.

## St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre (1572)

Protestantism was growing in France despite opposition from the government. The protestants in France were called Huguenots. The Huguenots were led by admiral Coligny, and they wanted religious freedom. The French Catholics were led by the Guise family, who believed in the French tradition of "one king, one faith, one law." In the decade leading up to the massacre, France had three religious wars. Both groups used violence to try to get their way.

On August 18, 1572, the Protestant prince, Henri of Navarre, married the Catholic Margaret of Valois. The king hoped that the marriage would bring peace.

On August 22 someone tried and failed to assassinate the Huguenot leader, Coligny. The Huguenots were angered by this attack.

On August 23 the king decided that all the Huguenots should be killed, and on August 24 the massacre started before 4 in the morning.

Twenty thousand Protestants were killed by the Catholics on that day, and it is referred to as the "St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre." Many Protestant leaders were killed and many other Protestants fled the country for their own safety.

## Anabaptists (1525) in Switzerland

To try to stop confrontation, Germany was divided into states based on religion. Some states were Catholic and others were Lutheran. This was because at this time, people treated the church and the government as if they were united.

This was also true in other parts of Europe. In Switzerland, a group of Christians were not happy that the authority of Rome was just replaced with another ruling religious government (namely the leadership of Zurich). They wanted a brotherhood instead of a powerful institution. They practiced democracy in the congregation. Everyone could speak for God, and not only bishops and councils.

This group also focused on individual salvation. On January 21, 1525, this group met and baptized each other. This was against the teaching of the official church of Zurich, which promoted infant baptism. These people became known as *Anabaptists*, which means "re-baptizers," because they had been already baptized as infants.

## The Reformation in England and Scotland

### Henry VIII's Act of Supremacy (1534)

In 1521 Henry attacked Luther's view of the sacraments, and so the pope gave him the title "Defender of the Faith." It is almost humorous that the pope gave him this title, because in just a short time after, Henry would completely move away from the organization that gave him that title.

After the death of his brother, Henry married his sister-in-law, Catherine of Aragon. They had no son together, and so Henry wanted to annul his marriage and marry Anne Boleyn. He used Leviticus 20:21 to found his case for an annulment.

The pope would not grant him the annulment, and so Henry appointed Thomas Cramner archbishop of Canterbury. The new archbishop gave him the annulment that he was seeking. Henry declared that the king of England was the head of the church.

Henry had two daughters. Mary was a Catholic, and Elisabeth was a Protestant.

### Puritans and Separatists in England

King Henry VIII (1491–1547) drove the Roman Catholic Church out of England and formed the Church of England. The Church of England then became the official state church. Ministers and churches were then required to be licensed by the state. Those who opposed the official state church were called dissenters. Many of these dissenters, especially the non-licensed preachers, were put into prison. There were two groups that formed among the dissenters: Separatists and Puritans. Separatists were those who wanted to separate from the Church of England. Puritans were those who wanted to purify the Church of England.

### John Bunyan (1628–1688) in England

John Bunyan was a powerful preacher of the Gospel among the dissenters. He preached salvation by grace through faith in Jesus. Bunyan preached without state sanction and spent twelve years in jail for preaching the Gospel. He wrote *Pilgrim's Progress* while he was in jail, and it is still in print today.

### John Knox (c. 1510–1572) in Scotland

Knox fervent prayer became "Give me Scotland, or I die." He was a disciple of Calvin. He strongly opposed Mary Queen of Scots, who was a Roman Catholic. Actual physical battles were fought between the queen's men and the Protestants. He led parliament to outlaw the Catholic mass in 1560. The Protestant Church in Scotland, called the Presbyterian Church, became the official state church in 1567.

## Reformers in the "New World" (America)

The Pilgrims who came to the New World were Separatists from England. They landed in the New World in the fall of 1620. They came for religious freedom from the oppression of the Church of England. They formed the Mayflower Compact which was the first document of self-government of the New World.

## Change within the Catholic Church

### The Council of Trent (1545–1563)

The main purpose of the council was to address issues and questions raised by the Protestant reformers. The actions of the reformers forced the Catholic Church to recognize that there were issues in the church that needed to be addressed. The Council of Trent was held in three stages between 1545 and 1563. Following are some of the decisions and results from the council:

- They made reform to the clergy. They decided that bishops could only hold office in one location, so that they could focus on their flock.
- They declared that Scripture and tradition have equal authority.
- They established the position of "infused righteousness" for justification. This means that God offers to the believer the opportunities and strength to be good, and it is up to the believer to respond.
- They confirmed the seven sacraments, which are baptism, confirmation, Eucharist, penance, extreme unction (anointing of the sick), holy orders, and matrimony.
- They made clear the doctrine of the veneration of the saints. They claimed that the statues of the saints were not to be worshiped in themselves, but that there was a spiritual reality beyond the physical objects.

### The Reformed Priests (Jesuits)

Initially known as "reformed priests," the Jesuits traveled with their elected Superior General Ignatius of Loyola to Rome where they offered their services to the pope in October 1534.

Before being dispersed on various missions for Pope Paul III, the pope established a papal bull *Regiminimilitantis Ecclesiae* (Latin for "To the Government of the Church Militant") declaring official approval of the Jesuits who are still in existence today. The Jesuits led a counter reformation against the Protestants.

**Discussion:** When is it good to separate from others that believe different than you? Should we fellowship with people who believe differently than us?