

# **HISTORY OF THE CHURCH - LESSON 3**

## **THE REFORMATION (A.D. 1300-1700)**

### **INTRODUCTION:**

1. Protestant Reformation Defined:
  - a. **"Reformation:"** Act of reforming. The great religious movement in the 16th. century which had for its object the reform of the Western Catholic church, and which led to the establishment of the Protestant churches" (American College Dictionary).
  - b. **"Protestant:"** Individual or churches who/which protested against the Catholic church.

### **I. CONDITIONS LEADING UP TO THE REFORMATION**

#### **A. Printing press invented by Gutenberg in 1454.**

#### **B. Scientific thought was moving from viewing the earth as the center of the universe (geocentric) to the sun being the center (heliocentric).**

1. Two out of three people in Western Europe were illiterate.

#### **C. The Black Death (probably the Bubonic Plague, 1348-1350) first appeared in Italy, then to Europe.**

1. Some villages and towns lost 40% of their population.
2. By 1500, the population of western Europe was about 60,000,000.

#### **D. Division of religious power (This period called the Babylonian Captivity of the papacy).**

1. From A.D. 1309-1377, French popes ruled from Avignon.
2. Last French pope , Gregory XI, came to Rome in 1377 and died there.
3. Italian cardinals elected Urban VI, but French electors declared the election illegal because of his Roman interest.
  - a) They then elected Clement VII (1379-1409) who ruled from Avignon.
4. The Cardinals called a Council at Pisa (A.D. 1409) and declared the papal chair vacant.
  - a) they elected a Greek, Alexander V (A.D. 1409-1410).
  - b) Result of Council: Cardinals are at least as authoritative as popes, since they called this Council and disposed a pope.
  - c) There were now three contemporaneous popes.
5. Council of Constance (A.D. 1415) called to rectify the divided pope problem.

6. In 1417, Martin V was elected - the whole church accepted him .

### **CHURCH HISTORY - LESSON 3**

#### **PAGE 2**

7. Hard to over estimate the worldliness of the popes in the 1400's.
  - a) Illegitimacy, greed.

#### **E. The condition of the parish priests:**

1. Often did not understand the Latin he read and recited.
2. Since celibacy was enforced, many priests had concubines or pursued other immoral lifestyles.

#### **F. Devotion to relics**

1. Elector Frederick the Wise had collected over 17,000 relics.
  - a) These included straw from the manger of Jesus, and a vial of Mary's milk.
2. Indulgences could be had for visiting shrines containing relics.

#### **G. The Spanish Inquisition**

1. Begun in A.D. 1478 by Pope Sixtus IV, at the request of Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain.
2. Originally organized to deal with Jews who "converted" to Catholicism, but secretly reverted to Judaism.
  - a) In 1492, he issued an order for Jews to convert or leave the county. 50,000 were baptized; 165,000 were driven from Spain.
  - b) In 1502 the Moors (Moslems in Spain) were given the same alternative.

## **II. LEADERS OF THE REFORMATION**

### **A. John Wycliff (A.D. 1320-1384) - "The morning star of the Reformation"**

Doctor at Oxford University.

Outspoken critic of Rome.

Organized poor priests (Wycliffites) to spread his ideas throughout England.

Translated Bible into English.

Died a parish priest in Lutterworth.

Remains were unearthed and burned in A.D.1415 by order of the Council of Constance.

Remembered for giving the Bible to the people in their own language.

### **B. John Huss (A.D. 1369-1415), Bohemia.**

1. Dean of theological faculty of the University of Prague.

2. He admired the writings of Wycliffe: "I am attracted to his writings, for all his efforts are to lead men back to the law of Christ."

### **CHURCH HISTORY- LESSON 3**

#### **PAGE 3**

3. Excommunicated and sentenced to die by Council of Constance, July 6, 1415.
4. Books were burned at the gate of the church, and led to the suburbs to be burned alive.
5. His ashes were thrown in the Rhine.

#### **C. Martin Luther (A.D. 1483-1546).**

1. Most prominent and influential of the Reformers.
2. He was an Augustinian friar and a lecturer in Wittenberg, Germany.
3. Protested the selling of indulgences as contrary to scripture.
4. He posted on the door of the Castle church his 95 thesis inviting debate (October 31, 1517).
5. Answered the charge of heresy before papal legate at Augsburg. Refused to recant and appealed to the Pope and general council.
6. After debate with Dr. Eck in Leipzig, he declared his stand against some of the doctrines of Catholicism.
7. He was excommunicated in 1520 and declared an outlaw in May of 1521.
8. Translated the New Testament into German (published in 1522). Ten years later he completed the German Bible.
9. Died in Eisleben and was buried in Wittenberg.
10. Most notable work: freed the bible from control of the Roman Catholic church.
11. While believing all things had to be determined by the scripture, he was guided more by the spirit of the law than by letter.
12. Retain in the church what was not expressly contradicted by scripture.
13. Passed judgment on parts of the Bible:
  - a) Jude: "An unnecessary epistle"
  - b) James: An epistle of straw
  - c) Questioned Hebrews because of Heb. 6,10,12.

14. Reformed worship: Retained two of seven sacraments: Baptism, Eucharist.
15. Revived justification by faith, but inserted "only" in translation of Rom. 3:28.

**CHURCH HISTORY - LESSON 3**  
**PAGE 4**

**D. Ulrich Zwingli (A.D. 1484 - 1531)**

1. He was an ordained priest (1506).
2. Student of Greek.
3. Recognized the Bible as supreme authority.
4. Attacked Rome for selling indulgences.
5. His concept of authority: To abolish all that could not be proved by the scriptures. "I will never cease to restore the primitive unity of the church of Christ."
  - a) Contrast: Luther's' concept was to maintain in the church all that was not expressly contrary to the scriptures.

**E. John Calvin (A.D. 1509-1564)**

1. Born in Noyon, France.
2. Renounced Catholicism in 1533.
3. Embraced the Reformation and became founder of the Presbyterian Movement.
4. In Geneva, he developed his religious system:
  - a) Total Depravity
  - b) Unconditional Election
  - c) Limited Atonement
  - d) Irresistible Grace
  - e) Perseverance of the Saints

**F. John Knox (A.D. 1514-1572)**

1. Born in Scotland
2. Arrested in 1547, sent to France and endured 19 months as a galley slave.
3. He was summoned to Scotland to assist in reforming Scottish churches.

- a) Riots occurred wherever he preached, images destroyed, priests assaulted, monasteries entered and pillaged.
  - b) Established the Presbyterian Church in Scotland.
4. Helped prepare the Book Of Common Order in 1564, modeled after Calvin.

**G. Henry VIII (A.D. 1492-1547)**

1. King of England and a Roman Catholic.

**CHURCH HISTORY - LESSON 3**

**PAGE 5**

2. Divorced Catherine of Arogon to marry Anne Boleyn.
3. Caused Catholic church in England to break all ties with Rome and become a distinct body-- church of England. Later called the Episcopal Church in America.
4. All papal jurisdiction ended in England.
5. Recognized as supreme head of the Church of England (1539).
6. Archbishop declared marriage to Catherine invalid. Married Ann Boleyn in 1533.
7. Excommunicated by Pope in 1534.

**H. John Wesley (A.D. 1703-1791)**

1. Most influential man of the 18th. century.
2. Member of the Church of England.
3. A "reformer of the Reformation."
4. Methodist societies he had formed while at Oxford eventually resulted in the establishment of the Methodist Church in England, and the Methodist Episcopal Church in America.

**III. THE WORK OF THE REFORMERS RESULTED IN THE FORMATION OF DENOMINATIONAL CHURCHES.**

- A. Lutheran Church (1530)
- B. Presbyterian Church (1536)
- C. Congregational Church(1608)
- D. Episcopal Church (1609)
- E. Baptist Church (1611)
- F. Methodist Church (1739)

#### **IV. CREEDS COMING FROM THE REFORMATION:**

- A. Augsburg Confession of Faith (Luther)
- B. The Thirty-nine articles (Church of England)
- C. Westminster Confession (Presbyterian)
- D. Methodist Discipline
- E. Philadelphia Confession of Faith.