



The Reformation

– The Catholic Church Breaks Apart over the Struggle for the Right Faith

The modern thinking of the Renaissance period also affects religious aspects. At a time when people regard heaven and hell as real places, it is extremely important to believe the right way. When doubts grow that the path shown by the Church in Rome may not be the right one, the whole system threatens to collapse.

The German theologian Martin Luther starts the Reformation in 1517 by attacking the sale of indulgences and by questioning the authority of the pope. At first it seems impossible that Luther could win his struggle against mighty Rome. Luther has a charismatic personality, however, his attacks on the pope turn him into a national hero. So Luther wins powerful friends who can protect him. The Church is unable to silence Luther.

The Reformation is not the first attack against the authority of the Catholic Church but it is the first one which has such dramatic consequences. The religious conflict started by a Saxon monk eventually causes the Catholic Church to split. New Protestant churches are created. In some European regions the new faith triumphs while in other countries the Catholic Church remains in control.

[collapse v: break apart; indulgence n: 'Abläss'; pope n: 'Papst']

Extra: Saints and Martyrs 1

1. The German Reformation 2

Martin Luther I 3	Martin Luther III 7
Dogma and Heresy 3	The Antichrist 8
Pope Leo X 4	The Peasants' War 9
Indulgences 5	Luther and the Peasants 9
Woodcuts 5	Charles V 10
Martin Luther II 6	The Münster Rebellion 11
Printing Press 6	

2. The Reformation in Switzerland 12

Vadianus 13

3. Calvinism 14

4. Catholic Reform – Counter-Reformation 15

5. The Thirty Years' War 16

Reformation


Stephen († c. 40)

According to the Acts of the Apostles (the fifth book of the New Testament), Stephen was the first Christian martyr. He lived in Jerusalem and belonged to the first Christian community there. He was put on trial and sentenced to death by the Jewish judges. Stephen was stoned to death. Saul of Tarsus (later Saint Paul) was present at the execution and encouraged people to throw stones. Stephen's death was the beginning of a massive persecution of Christians.

Feast Day: 26 December

Attribute: stones, gospel book

Patronat: Pferde, Pferdeknechte, Kutscher, Steinhauer, Maurer, Zimmerleute, Weber, Schneider, Böttcher und Küfer; gegen Besessenheit, Steinleiden, Seitenstechen und Kopfweh; für einen guten Tod

[put on trial v: 'vor Gericht stellen'; judge n: 'Richter'; encourage v: 'ermuntern'; persecution n: 'Verfolgung']



MARTYRS AND SAINTS

The worship of saints by Catholics has its origin in early Christian times, in the first few centuries after Jesus Christ's death. Christians worshipped martyrs, men and women who had died for their faith. Services were often held in secret by the graves of the martyrs. Later this form of worship was extended to people who had led a particularly holy life – saints.

Why were martyrs important for the early Church?

Saints were regarded as intermediaries between God and humanity – people asked a saint for help, who would then pass on the request to God. Particular saints were usually responsible for certain areas of problems. Furthermore, saints became the patrons of certain groups of people, professions or even towns. Saints had a feast day which often coincided with the day on which they had died. Most saints had their own legends, stories which showed their true faith, described miracles which had happened around them and told the circumstances of their deaths. These legends ("vitae") were first passed on orally. Later they were written down and published.

Why did – and do – people worship saints?

The actual worship of saints focussed on paintings and on relics. Relics, a saint's body parts or pieces of their personal belongings, were worshipped because people thought that they had miraculous powers. Especially in the Middle Ages relics became an actual cult – every church, every monastery needed to possess some relics.

Why were relics so important for a church or a monastery? What were the problems?

In the Catholic Church a saint must be officially acknowledged by the pope. This process, the so-called canonisation, can only begin after the person has died. It often lasts years or even decades because the Church investigates the life of a candidate extremely carefully. These days the Catholic Church acknowledges several thousand saints.

The Protestant churches sometimes accept saints as well. However, they regard them as role models for a pious life and refuse to pray to them or even ask them for divine help.

Do phenomena exist today which are similar to the worship of saints?

Peter († c. 65)

(Francesco del Cossa, 1473)

Simon Peter was one of the twelve apostles – the missionaries who spread the Gospel after Jesus' crucifixion. Peter became one of the most important figures of the early Christian community. According to Catholic tradition, Peter (together with Paul) founded the church in Rome and became its first bishop. He is said to have been crucified during the persecution of Christians following the fire of Rome. In popular tradition Peter was fleeing from execution, when he saw a vision of Jesus. Peter asked 'Quo vadis, Domine?' Jesus replied that he was going back to Rome, encouraging Peter to return to face his martyrdom.

Feast Day: 29 June

Attributes: keys, book, boat, cock

Patronat: Rom; der Päpste und Brückenbauer; der Reuigen, Büssenden, Beichtenden; der Metzger, Glaser, Schreiner, Schlosser, Schmiede, Bleigiesser, Uhrmacher, Töpfer, Maurer, Ziegelbrenner, Steinhauer, Netzweber, Tuchweber, Walker, Fischer, Fischhändler, Schiffer und Schiffbrüchigen; der Jungfrauen; gegen Besessenheit, Fallsucht, Tollwut, Fieber, Schlangenbiss, Fussleiden und Diebstahl

[Gospel n: 'Evangelium']


Sebastian († c. 288)

(El Greco, 1577-78)

Sebastian was a captain of the Praetorian Guard, the bodyguard of the Roman emperors. Emperor Diocletian was unaware of the fact that Sebastian was a Christian. When he found out, Sebastian did not deny his faith but admitted that he was a Christian. Diocletian had him sentenced to death by arrows. Sebastian was tied to a stake and shot at by archers. Miraculously, he survived. Sebastian returned and gave aggressive speeches against Diocletian. The emperor had him arrested again and beaten to death. This time Sebastian died.

Feast Day: 20 January

Attribute: arrows

Patronat: Brunnen; der Sterbenden, Schützengilden, Soldaten, Kriegsinvaliden, Büchsenmacher, Eisengiesser, Zinngiesser, Steinmetze, Gärtner, Gerber, Töpfer, Bürstenbinder und Leichenträger; gegen Pest und Seuchen; Sportler; Homosexuelle und AIDS-Kranke

[emperor n: 'Kaiser'; deny v: 'leugnen'; admit v: 'zugeben'; stake n: 'Pfahl'; archer n: 'Bogenschütze']

worship n: 'Anbetung, Verehrung'; faith n: strong belief; extend v: 'ausweiten'; holy adj: 'heilig'; intermediary n: 'Vermittler'; patron saint n: 'Schutzherrliche/r'; coincide v: 'zusammentreffen mit'; miracle n: 'Wunder'; circumstances n: 'Umstände'; monastery n: (Männer-) Kloster; afford v: 'sich etw. leisten'; acknowledge v: 'anerkennen'; pope n: 'Papst'; decade n: a period of ten years; investigate v: 'untersuchen'; role model n: 'Vorbild'; pious adj: 'fromm'; divine adj: from God, godlike; similar to: 'ähnlich wie'.



Martin Luther, by Lucas Cranach the Elder (1529)

'THE REFORMATION'

The term 'Reformation' generally describes a series of events in the 16th century during which large parts of Scandinavia, Germany, Switzerland, Great Britain and the Netherlands broke away from the Roman Catholic Church to found independent Protestant churches.

People at the time, however, did not use this term. It was coined by Protestant historians of the 18th century. As such, 'Reformation' is not a neutral term but belongs to one of the sides involved in the conflict. It can therefore be seen as a great propaganda victory for the Protestants that 'their' expression is generally used.

'Reformation' is a positive expression, suggesting that the break with the Catholic Church was justified and the right thing to do, which – naturally – the opposite side disagrees with. From a Catholic perspective, the word 'desertion' would be more accurate.

[term n: word; reformation n: 'Umgestaltung, Erneuerung'; found v: establish, 'gründen'; independent adj: 'unabhängig'; coin v: 'prägen'; therefore adv: 'deshalb'; expression n: 'Ausdruck'; justify v: 'rechtfertigen'; disagree with sth: 'nicht einverstanden sein'; desertion n: 'Flucht, im Stich lassen'; accurate adj: 'genau, zutreffend']

1. The German Reformation

The faith and charisma of a single man – Martin Luther – start a development which will not only change the Roman Catholic Church but also the political landscape of Europe for ever. At the end of a long power struggle the Catholic Church, which has existed for more than 1,000 years, breaks apart. The Lutheran Church – the first Protestant church – is founded.

This is how the popular story goes:

On the evening of 31 October 1517 – the night before All Saints' Day – Martin Luther, a monk and professor at the local university, pinned a sheet of paper at the door of the main church in the town of Wittenberg in Saxony. These so-called *Ninety-Five Theses* attacked the teachings of the Catholic Church. The contents of the theses were quickly spread throughout Germany thanks to the new invention of book printing. They caused a power struggle between Martin Luther and the leaders of the Catholic Church. Because Luther refused to give in, the Church eventually broke apart.

How was it possible that a single man's faith caused the collapse of the mighty Roman Church?

Did Luther plan it all or was it just a series of coincidences?

Would the Reformation have occurred anyhow, even without Luther?

Underlying Causes of the Reformation

Had people been waiting for someone like Luther to show them a new path to salvation?

Why did the Reformation start in Germany rather than any other European country?

The Importance of Religion

500 years ago religion had an enormous influence on people's lives. Ordinary people were deeply interested in the 'next world' because life on earth was often miserably short. Child mortality was high, many women died in childbirth, adults were old at 40 years of age. Only a small part of the population reached a biblical age, namely 70 or more. Life was therefore generally seen as a brief period between birth and eternal existence afterwards. It was therefore extremely important what would happen to a person after death – whether a soul would suffer for ever in hell or whether it would be allowed to enter heaven

and spend eternal life with God. To be able to reach salvation, people in Western Europe had to turn to the Roman Church.

The Church had a clear concept of what was needed for a soul to enter heaven. A soul first had to explain to God why it deserved to enter. If God accepted, the soul entered a state of Grace and was allowed to pass through the gates of paradise and enjoy eternal life with God.

According to the Church, Christ's death on the cross had created a 'store' of Grace, which God used to save people from the flames of hell. Most importantly, people now had a choice what to do with the amount of Grace given to them at birth. They could try to keep it or even add to it in order to go to heaven, or they could use it all up and go to hell. In other words, God gave people free will to decide on the fate of their souls.

charisma n: great attractiveness which makes other people adore a person; development n: 'Entwicklung'; landscape n: 'Landschaft'; monk n: 'Mönch'; Saxony n: 'Sachsen'; throughout adv: in every part; invention n: the creation of sth that has not existed before; eventually adv: finally, in the end; coincidence n: 'Zufall'; occur v: happen; salvation n: 'Erlösung'; influence n: 'Einfluss'; brief adj: short; eternal adj: lasting forever; suffer v: feel great pain; reach v: get; Grace n: (relig) Gnade Gottes; store n: a quantity of sth kept for use when needed; amount n: quantity; fate n: 'Schicksal'.

Good Works, Saints, Purgatory

People's actions decided how big the store of Grace remained at the moment of their deaths. Every good deed added to it, every sin reduced it. This fundamental idea led to four major concepts, which Martin Luther later attacked as being false: the idea of 'good works', indulgences, the worship of saints and the concept of purgatory.

Most people were realistic enough to see that it was impossible to lead a life that was free of sin. However, one could balance out sinful acts with good deeds – so-called **good works**. For example by giving money to the poor or going on pilgrimages, people could earn Grace. Going to church regularly or fasting during certain periods also helped.

The store of Grace could also be increased by the pope, who could sell **indulgences**, documents which promised forgiveness for sins. (For more see p. 5)

People believed that **saints** entered heaven with a surplus of Grace because they had led pure lives free of sin. God now had the choice to give that surplus to other people if they deserved it. This idea led to the widespread worship of saints. (For more see p. 1)

One could even earn Grace after death – many Catholics left money to a church or monastery so that priests or monks would pray for their

souls. The most common form was an annual mass on the date of the death of a person.

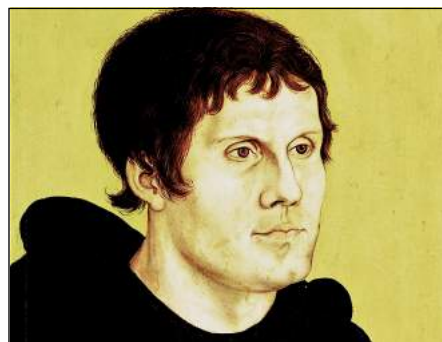
Despite good works or indulgences, it was generally believed that only few people had accumulated enough Grace at the moment of their deaths to enter heaven straightaway. Most people would first have to enter **purgatory** – a kind of halfway house between hell and heaven. There people would be purified. The amount of Grace one had already earned determined how long a soul would have to stay in purgatory.

Discuss these concepts. What problems do you see?

Luther later attacked these concepts, claiming that they were useless. Had people been waiting for someone like Luther to tell them that most things they had been doing to save their souls were wrong? Hardly. For most people good works were useful and worshipping saints was the most natural thing in the world. So if one was baptised, led a normal life, repented one's sins and received the last rites before death, one would go to purgatory. Then it would only be a matter of time before one was allowed to enter heaven.

The Role of the Church

For the ordinary person the local priest was a very important and powerful figure. He alone was able to perform the rites of the sacraments which would make sure that people's souls



Martin Luther I – Inspiration

Luther (1483-1546) was born the eighth son of a wealthy silver miner in Saxony. He was pushed into studying law by his father. In 1505 Luther was caught in a severe thunderstorm. He prayed to St Anne, the patron saint of miners, and pledged to her that he would become a monk if his life was spared. Luther survived the storm and later joined the Augustine monastery at Erfurt.

Trained as a lawyer, Luther's logical mind found little spiritual comfort in the rituals of the Catholic Church. He turned to reading the Bible to get closer to God. In 1516, while studying the new translation of the New Testament by Erasmus of Rotterdam, Luther came across a phrase which would change his life – and history. The phrase was 'The righteous shall live by faith' (Romans 1:17). To Luther it meant that 'faith alone' (*sola fide*) was what got a soul into heaven. 'Good works' were useless. God was not a merciless judge, God was love. He offered salvation to everyone through Jesus Christ – all one needed to do was to believe. Luther was completely inspired by this insight. He later said: 'I felt that I was altogether born again and had entered paradise itself through open gates.' Since this event occurred in Luther's study in the south tower of the Augustine monastery, it has become known as the 'tower experience.'

[**pledge v:** make a serious promise; **righteous n:** the morally right; **merciless adj:** 'unbarmherzig']

were saved. He was largely responsible for preventing souls from going to hell and for determining how long souls would have to spend in purgatory.

Priests were also expensive. People had to pay ten per cent of their income to the local priest, which was mainly used to support the churchman and to repair or improve the church. Considering how important and expensive a priest was, people expected them to act professionally. However, this was often not the case. The Catholic Church was in a poor state almost everywhere in Europe.

Churchmen were often badly educated, poorly motivated and more concerned with amassing wealth for their private use rather than to look after the people they were supposed to help.

The most important abuses were:

- selling church positions or sacraments (simony)
- giving church posts to friends and family rather than the best candidates (nepotism)
- holding more than one post at the same time (pluralism)
- priests being away from their parish for a long time (absenteeism)



Dogma and Heresy

Czech reformer Jan Hus is burnt at the stake for being a heretic (Konstanz, 1415)

During the first millennium of its existence the Catholic Church established a clear system of what the Catholic faith was about. Important theologians – the Church Fathers – as well as the popes interpreted the Bible, laying down the rules of what Catholics must believe in. Important aspects of the Catholic faith were dogmata, which meant that they must not be denied or even questioned. For example, the belief that Jesus Christ is God's son is a central dogma.

Heresy was a new religious concept which was in conflict with an established dogma. For instance, claiming that Jesus Christ was an ordinary human being would be heretic – a false belief. In the later Middle Ages the Catholic Church often persecuted heretics, forcing them to withdraw their new ideas or sometimes even executing them.

Why did Catholic Church feel that it needed to persecute heretics?

[**rule n:** 'Regel'; **deny v:** say that sth is not true; **heresy n:** 'Ketzeri, Irrglaube'; **persecute v:** 'verfolgen']

deed n: action, act; **sin n:** 'Sünde'; **purgatory n:** Fegefeuer; **pilgrimage n:** journey to a holy place; **forgiveness n:** 'Vergebung'; **surplus n:** quantity that is higher than needed; **accumulate v:** collect more and more; **purify v:** make pure, clean; **determine v:** 'bestimmen'; **baptise v:** 'taufen'; **repent v:** (relig) say that one is truly sorry; **state n:** condition, 'Zustand'; **amass v:** accumulate; **wealth n:** 'Reichtum'; **parish n:** 'Pfarrei'; **abuse n:** 'Missbrauch'.



Pope Leo X

Leo (1513-1521) was a member of the Medici, one of the most famous ruling families of Florence. He was made a cardinal at the age of 14. As Leo was Luther's **opponent**, he became the symbol of shameless corruption and extravagance at the time. Some of it was of course propaganda spread by his enemies. Modern historians agree that Leo was a **flawed** character but that he was much less corrupt than the popes before him.

Leo was a pleasure-seeker. When he became pope, he reportedly said: 'Since God has given us the papacy, let us enjoy it.' He loved to travel round Rome at the head of parades which featured panthers and a pet elephant called Hanno. Leo had the reputation of being more interested in politics than religion.

However, Leo also **donated** generously to **charity**. He also helped turn Rome into a centre of art and culture by, for example, sponsoring great artists like Raphael.

Leo died suddenly of malaria in 1521.

[**opponent** n: 'Gegner, Widersacher, Gegenspieler'; **flawed** adj: having a weakness, imperfect; **donate** v: give money freely; **charity** n: organisation which help people in need]

These abuses were not new at all but by the early 16th century many people felt that the situation was dramatically bad and that something needed to be done. Someone like Luther who would attack the corruption and abuses in the Church would certainly be popular.

The Role of the Pope

The pope was the head of the Catholic Church. He ran the central government of the Church at the Vatican in Rome. He had the power to declare new **laws** (papal bulls). He **appointed** cardinals and gave the official permission who would become a bishop and archbishop. He even had the right to excommunicate kings from the Church.

The personal **integrity** of the pope was therefore extremely important for the **reputation** of the Church. By 1500, however, it was at an extremely low level. The popes of the Renaissance were no spiritual leaders but unscrupulous **warriors** and cynical politicians. Powerful Italian families (the Medici and the Borgia) controlled the **papacy**, using their position to increase their wealth and power, even waging war if necessary. Alexander VI (1492-1503), for instance, had four children while he was a cardinal and later invited prostitutes to parties

at the Vatican. Julius II (1503-13) was known as the 'Warrior Pope' because he personally led the armies of the Vatican into battle.

In the early 16th century the popes were deeply unpopular throughout Europe, especially in Germany.

Pope Leo X and Germany

When Martin Luther published his *Ninety-Five Theses* in 1517, Pope Leo X (1513-21) was the Bishop of Rome, the head of the Roman Catholic Church. Leo needed a lot of money to improve St Peter's Church in the Vatican and turn it into the greatest church on earth. He also fought expensive military campaigns. Leo raised huge sums of money by starting a massive sale of indulgences and by selling church positions.

Germany was a particularly interesting area for Leo. Unlike in France or England, there was no strong central government **ruling** Germany. The so-called 'Holy Roman Empire' was a mishmash of more than a hundred territories of various sizes, which covered the whole German-speaking region but also the Netherlands and Northern Italy. The German **emperor** was forced to share power with many princes and archbishops. As a conse-

quence, there was a lot of **competition** among the German princes and archbishops.

Pope Leo was able to use the competition among the ruling German families to his advantage. The German princes often wanted to buy important Church positions for their younger sons because these posts promised power and wealth. Leo could ask for enormous sums if he offered the post of a bishop, for example. The price was even higher if the candidate was under-age or already had a church post, both of which were illegal.

*Why was the ordinary population also **affected** if their ruler bought a church post?*

Simony – the sale of church positions – had had a long tradition. It had been a **source** of income for the papacy for centuries. It was extremely unpopular in early 15th century Germany because many Germans were furious that huge amounts of money – in the form of gold and silver – left Germany each year to go to Rome. That the pope was morally corrupt made matters worse. The massive sale of indulgences added to this feeling – German nationalist pride was deeply hurt. Thus, the pope was deeply unpopular in Germany. This did not mean that there was a mass movement against the pope but it meant that a potential enemy of the pope might be seen as a friend of the German people. It is no coincidence that Luther was soon shown in woodcuts as a 'Hercules Germanicus' – a German superhero fighting against the pope in Rome.

The Role of Humanism

A German historian famously wrote 'No humanism, no Reformation.' Were humanism and humanists responsible for the Reformation?

What were the main elements of humanism?

Most **contemporaries** saw a connection between humanism and the Reformation. A cardinal said that 'Erasmus laid the egg and Luther **hatched** it'. Erasmus of Rotterdam was one of the leading humanists at the time. He had published a new and much improved translation of the Greek New Testament in 1516, which allowed people like Luther, who were critical of the teachings of the Church, to form their own **opinions** on passages in the Bible. Erasmus himself was also critical of the Church as an institution and believed that it was in serious need of reform. However, Erasmus **rejected** Luther when the German monk attacked the teachings of the Church because Erasmus feared – rightly – that the Church would break into pieces. A broken Church, he believed, would lead to chaos and bloodshed because the two camps would never tolerate each other.

law n: 'Gesetz'; **appoint** v: give a job or a role to; **integrity** n: honesty; **reputation** n: 'Ruf'; **warrior** n: experienced fighters; **papacy** n: the office of the Pope. **rule** v: 'herrschen'; **emperor** n: 'Kaiser'; **competition** n: 'Konkurrenz'; **be affected** adj: betroffen sein'; **source** n: origin, 'Quelle'; **contemporary** n: a person living at the same time as another; **hatch** v: 'ausbrüten'; **opinion** n: 'Meinung'; **reject** v: refuse to agree to sth; **require** v: need.

QVICUNQ. ORAT PRO REGE FRANCIAE
HABET DECEM DIES DE INDULGENTIA
A PAPA INNOC. IV.
S. THOM. IN SUPPLEM. QVÆST. XXV.
ART. III. AD SECUNDUM
ET IN IV. SENTENTIA. DIST. XX. QVÆST. I.
ART. III. QVÆSTIUNC. III. AD SECUNDUM

Indulgences

Indulgence in Church San Luigi dei Francesi in Rome

According to the Church, only souls completely free of sin would enter heaven immediately. The majority of people would have to wait in purgatory, where their souls would be purified. Now Jesus' death on the cross and the pure lives of the saints had created a 'Treasure House of Merit' (*Gnadenschatz*), which could be distributed among ordinary people. This concept is behind the idea that the Church was allowed to grant indulgences which would reduce the time a soul would have to spend in purgatory. Sometimes a prayer was enough to gain a few days, often it was a paper document which could be bought for a certain price. People with a higher income would normally have to pay more for the same number of days as people with a lower income.

Indulgences are still part of the Catholic faith in the 21st century. The papal blessing *Urbi et Orbi* on Easter Sunday is a plenary indulgence – to every Catholic who hears the blessing (even on TV or the internet) all sins are forgiven. The Church, however, no longer teaches that indulgences reduce time in purgatory. It also says that indulgences are useless if a person does not truly regret his sins and does not truly believe in God.

[**indulgence** n: (relig) 'Abläss'; **grant** v: 'gewähren'; **plenary** adj: absolute]

Most leading humanists thought like Erasmus and refused to join Luther. They wanted to change the Church from within. They did not want to risk a revolution. Erasmus said: 'I laid a hen's egg but what Luther hatched was a bird of a quite different sort.'

Why do most people prefer reforms to revolutions?

The Indulgences Controversy – Luther Starts a Debate

What were Luther's revolutionary views?

What made Luther decide to go public with his personal beliefs?

Why did he choose the sale of indulgences to attack the Church?

Why did anyone listen to the theories of a little-known monk and professor from Saxony?

Luther's Central Ideas

In his early years Luther had accepted the Church's teaching that people could gain salvation if they were free of sin at the time of death. This could be assured by carrying out good works in life which could counterbalance any sins people had committed. He became slowly convinced that this task was impossible because humanity was weighed down by the original sin committed by Adam and Eve. Luther began to fear God as a figure of vengeance who wanted to punish humanity in eternity.

When he turned to studying the Bible – reading the new and improved translation by Erasmus of Rotterdam – Luther's fears slowly

disappeared. He realised that God was not a terrible judge after all but the God of love. God was freely offering salvation to all who believed in Him and His Son, Jesus Christ. In a flash of inspiration he interpreted the phrase 'by faith are ye saved' as 'by faith alone are ye saved'. '**By faith alone**' (*sola fide*) became Luther's central idea: If one truly believed in God, one would be saved – everything else was unnecessary, or worse wrong. If one relied on good works for salvation as a substitute for faith, it could even lead to damnation.

The Sale of Indulgences

Indulgences were official paper documents authorised by the pope which promised forgiveness for sins. They typically offered to shorten the time a person had to spend in purgatory dramatically, depending on how much money one wanted to spend. The Catholic Church officially stated that indulgences were only effective if buyers truly repented their sins.

Dominican Friar Johann Tetzel (1465-1519) was allowed to sell indulgences in the Diocese of Magdeburg. Tetzel is important as the man who made Luther take action and compose the *Ninety-Five Theses*, a list of complaints which kick-started the Reformation.

In autumn 1517 Tetzel was selling indulgences for the Archbishop of Mainz, Albert of Brandenburg. Albert was in his early twenties but he had already bought himself a bishopric and two archbishoprics! He had borrowed the

huge sums needed to pay the pope for these lucrative posts from the Fugger family, Germany's richest merchants at the time. Now he wanted to pay back his debts through the sale of indulgences.

Tetzel was particularly unscrupulous when it came to selling indulgences. He even preached to people that buying indulgences could not only save their own souls but also those of dead relatives, which was clearly against the teachings of the Church. Tetzel is supposed to have coined the phrase:

'As soon as the coin in the coffer rings,

So the Soul from purgatory springs.'

Tetzel was highly successful. Tens of thousands of people bought indulgences, sometimes investing their whole savings. Some of them were from Wittenberg, people Luther knew, who made special journeys to reach Tetzel. Luther now felt that he needed to act.

Discuss the following statement:

'People in Germany had been waiting for someone to tell them that buying indulgences was a waste of money because it would not get them into heaven sooner.'



Woodcuts

The Pope Selling Indulgences

Woodcuts were extremely popular in Renaissance Europe. They could easily be combined with movable type, which made them ideal for book illustrations. Woodcuts were also important propaganda tools because pictures can create a powerful message, especially at a time when few ordinary people could read.

[**movable type** n: 'bewegliche Lettern'; **message** n: 'Botschaft']

gain v: achieve, get; **commit** v: (crime, sin) make; **task** n: job; **vengeance** n: 'Vergeltung'; **judge** n: 'Richter'; **rely on** v: 'sich verlassen auf'; **substitute** n: 'Ersatz'; **authorise** v: bewilligen; **compose** v: write; **complaint** n: 'Beschwerde, Klage'; **merchant** n: 'Kaufmann'.

The Ninety-Five Theses

Why was Luther convinced that the sale of indulgences needed to be stopped? Luther's idea of 'by faith alone' meant that buying indulgences was useless. It was also dangerous because most people would keep committing sins because they thought they could simply do more good works later. Luther believed that these people were heading for damnation rather than salvation, that the teachings of the Church were fatally wrong. To Luther this was not just an academic debate, it was a matter of life and death – salvation, or eternal damnation in hell. Luther could not simply sit back, his conscience told him to act.

On 1 November, All Saints' Day, Frederick, the Elector of Saxony, traditionally sold indulgences to people who wanted to visit his huge collection of famous relics¹. Luther felt that he needed to protest against this custom and – supposedly – nailed his *Ninety-Five Theses* on the door of the main church in Wittenberg on the evening before. Whatever really happened, Luther definitely wanted to start a general discussion about indulgences. Nailing a document on a church door was not unusual because there were no magazines or newspapers which could print such a paper. The original text was in Latin, which shows that it was meant to start an academic discussion rather than for ordinary people to read.

¹ Frederick owned 19,000 relics, among them – allegedly – a piece of Moses' burning bush and the cloth Jesus had been wrapped in as a baby.

conscience n: 'Gewissen'; **custom** n: 'Brauch';



Printing Press

The invention of the printing press in the 15th century allowed information and ideas to be spread much more widely and quickly than before. It can be compared to the impact of the internet 500 years later.

The production was still relatively slow but the output was massive. 300,000 copies of Luther's works were printed between 1517 and 1520. Luther's German Bible sold 120,000 copies in 12 years. It took two weeks for the *Ninety-Five Theses* to be spread across Germany, mostly to towns and cities where most literate people lived.

[**spread** v: 'verbreiten'; **impact** n: 'Wirkung'; **literate** adj: able to read and write]



"Luther Before the Diet at Worms",
Anton Werner (1843-1915)

Martin Luther II – His Positions

Luther needed a powerful friend to avoid being punished by the Church. He found him in Frederick the Wise. However, Luther's character and motivation are important to explain why the Saxon monk refused to give in to the pope or the emperor. Luther was not interested in making a great career as a professor, he did not want to acquire wealth. He was no politician. He did not care about the factors which influence most people's lives – to be happy, rich, famous, loved or successful. He did not even really care if he survived. Luther's interests were selfish but truly other-worldly. His only concern was his salvation. He realised that life on earth was short and often painful. What mattered was the soul because it had the potential for eternal life. Many people at the time thought like Luther but only few were prepared to draw the conclusions as radically as the Saxon monk.

In the early 1520s Luther published three major pamphlets in which he clarified his views. The following are extracts from various works and speeches:

'1. Our Lord and Master Jesus Christ, when He said Poenitentiam agite, willed that the whole life of believers should be repentance.'

[*"1: Da unser Herr und Meister Jesus Christus spricht "Tut Busse", hat er gewollt, dass das ganze Leben der Gläubigen Busse sein soll."*]

'62. The true treasure of the Church is the Most Holy Gospel of the glory and the grace of God.'

[*"62: Der wahre Schatz der Kirche ist das allerheiligste Evangelium von der Herrlichkeit und Gnade Gottes."*]

'Unless I am convinced by the testimony of the Scriptures or by clear reason (for I do not trust either in the pope or in councils alone, since it is well known that they have often erred and contradicted themselves), I am bound by the Scriptures I have quoted and my conscience is captive to the Word of God. I cannot and will not recant anything, since it is neither safe nor right to go against conscience. May God help me. Amen.'

[*"Wenn ich nicht mit Zeugnissen der Schrift oder mit offenbaren Vernunftgründen besiegt werde, so bleibe ich von den Schriftstellen besiegt, die ich angeführt habe, und mein Gewissen bleibt gefangen in Gottes Wort. Denn ich glaube weder dem Papst noch den Konzilien allein, weil es offenkundig ist, dass sie öfters geirrt und sich selbst widersprochen haben. Widerrufen kann und will ich nichts, weil es weder sicher noch geraten ist, etwas gegen sein Gewissen zu tun. Gott helfe mir, Amen."*]

'I must deny that there are seven Sacraments, and must lay it down, for the time being, that there are only three, baptism, penance, and the bread, and that by the Court of Rome all these have been brought into miserable bondage, and the Church despoiled of all her liberty.'

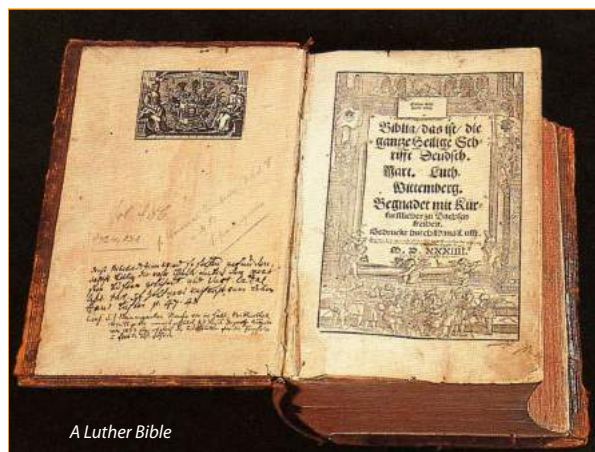
[*"Grundsätzlich und als erstes muss ich verneinen, dass es sieben Sakramente gibt, und kann zur Zeit drei dafür setzen: die Taufe, die Busse, das Brot. Und diese alle sind uns durch die römische Kurie in elende Gefangenschaft geraten, und die Kirche ist all ihrer Freiheit beraubt."*]

'It has been devised that the Pope, bishops, priests, and monks are called the spiritual estate, princes, lords, artificers, and peasants are the temporal estate. This is an artful lie and hypocritical device, but let no one be made afraid by it, and that for this reason: that all Christians are truly of the spiritual estate, and there is no difference among them, save of office alone. As St. Paul says (1 Cor. xii.), we are all one body, though each member does its own work, to serve the others. This is because we have one baptism, one Gospel, one faith, and are all Christians alike; for baptism, Gospel, and faith, these alone make spiritual and Christian people.'

[*"Man hats erfunden, dass Papst, Bischöfe, Priester und Klostervolk der geistliche Stand genannt wird, Fürsten, Herrn, Handwerks- und Ackerleute der weltliche Stand. Das ist eine sehr feine Erdichtung und Trug. Doch soll niemand deswegen schüchtern werden, und das aus dem Grund: alle Christen sind wahrhaftig geistlichen Standes und ist unter ihnen kein Unterschied ausser allein des Amts halber. [...] Demnach werden wir allesamt durch die Taufe zu Priestern geweiht, wie Petrus (I. Petrus 2) sagt: »Ihr seid ein königliches Priestertum und ein priesterliches Königreich«, und Offenbarung 5, 10: »Du hast uns durch dein Blut zu Priestern und Königen gemacht."*]

[**concern** n: 'Sorge'; **pamphlet** n: '(Streit-) Schrift, Flugblatt]

What are Luther's main points of criticism?



A Luther Bible

The first thesis said:

'1. Our Lord and Master Jesus Christ, when He said *Poenitentiam agite*, willed that the whole life of believers should be repentance.'
[1. Da unser Herr und Meister Jesus Christus spricht: "Tut Busse", hat er gewollt, dass das ganze Leben der Gläubigen Busse sein soll.]

This was a theological point, hardly the reason why so many people later wanted to read the *Ninety-Five Theses*. There were other points which were much more attractive to ordinary Germans. For example:

86. 'Why does not the pope, whose wealth is today greater than the riches of the richest, build just this one church of St Peter with his own money, rather than with the money of poor believers?'

The great unpopularity of the pope in Germany was the main reason why Luther's theses, with its many attacks on the pope, spoke to the heart of many Germans. But how did people know about the contents of a document written in Latin? Luther profited from a recent invention, which turned an academic paper of a little-known Saxon professor into a mass movement throughout Germany – book printing. Luther's text was quickly copied, translated into German, printed and then distributed all over the country. Practically over night, Luther became a national figure. By 1520 Luther was the most successful German author of his time.

How would the Catholic Church react to Luther's attack? Would they ignore him or try to silence him?

Luther's Revolt – Attempts to Silence Luther, 1517-21

What steps were taken to deal with Luther?

Why did the Church fail to control Luther?

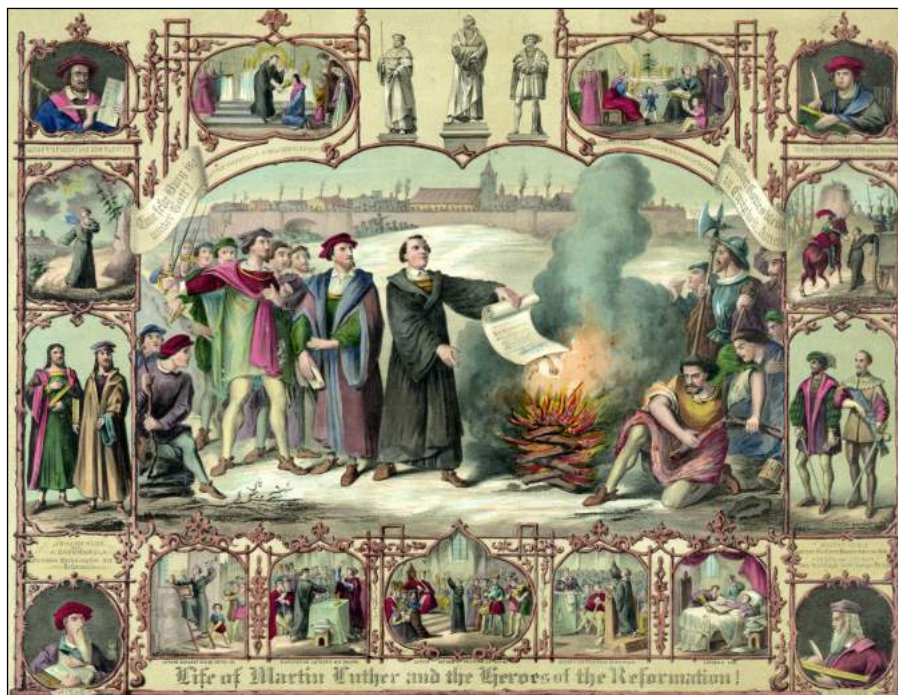
Why did Luther not give in?

How was Luther able to escape with his life?

Threats

Albert, Archbishop of Mainz, was not happy. He felt threatened by Luther's attacks against the sale of indulgences. He asked the pope for support against Luther. Pope Leo X reacted promptly and ordered Luther to come to Rome. Luther refused. A cardinal was then sent to Germany to threaten Luther with terrible punishment if he did not withdraw his criticism of the Church. Luther replied that he would only give in if the cardinal could show him evidence in the Bible that Luther's views were wrong. The cardinal stated the typical position of the Church, claiming that only the pope had the right to interpret the Bible. It was the duty of every Christian to obey. Luther remained unmoved.

threaten v: 'drohen'; **support n:** help; **withdraw v:** 'zurückziehen'; **evidence n:** 'Beweis'; **duty n:** 'Pflicht'; **obey v:** 'gehören'; **conviction n:** 'Überzeugung'; **mention v:** 'erwähnen'; **deny v:** 'leugnen'; **(holy) scripture n:** the Bible; **stake n:** strong, wooden post; **contradict v:** 'widersprechen'.



Martin Luther III – Legends and the Man

While he was hiding at Wartburg Castle, Luther translated the New Testament into German. Studying the Bible had not been encouraged by the Catholic Church. It was the task of the Church to explain and interpret Bible passages. Latin was the official language of the holy mass, which sometimes even priests did not understand. Luther believed that every Christian needed to study the Bible for himself – the 'priesthood of all believers'. There were already 18 German translations of the Bible at the time but Luther's was based on the much improved version of Erasmus' and, importantly, it was written in the every day language Germans spoke at that time. It was occasionally translated relatively freely, containing many powerful expressions and images which are still used today. **Luther's Bible** was enormously successful and had a great influence on the development of standard German.

Although Luther believed that everybody was a priest through baptism, he realised that many people needed someone to explain things to them. Luther was an enthusiastic preacher, his sermons usually lasting more than an hour. He also wrote two **catechisms** for adults and children in which the central beliefs of the Lutheran Church were explained. In many Lutheran families the father would test his family on the catechism every Sunday.

Like most of his contemporaries, Luther's attitude towards **Jews** was full of **prejudices**. He fought the Jewish faith in some of his pamphlets: "Erstlich, das man jre Synagoga oder Schule mit feur anstecke und, was nicht verbrennen will, mit erden überheufe und beschütte, das kein Mensch ein stein oder schlacke davon sehe ewiglich Und solches sol man thun, unsern Herrn und der Christenheit zu ehren damit Gott sehe, das wir Christen seien."

Luther also believed in the existence of **witches**, who were able to make a pact with the Devil. He did not actively hunt **witches** but he approved of their execution: "Die Zauberrinnen sollen getötet werden, weil sie Diebe sind, Ehebrecher, Räuber, Mörder... Sie schaden mannigfaltig. Also sollen sie getötet werden, nicht allein weil sie schaden, sondern auch, weil sie Umgang mit dem Satan haben."

Luther accepted that paintings were removed from churches but he loved **music**, which he called God's greatest gift to humanity. Thanks to Luther, music remained an important part of Protestant masses.

Some quotes: "Die Jugend soll nicht traurig sein, sondern heiter und fröhlich." "Trau keinem Wolf auf wilder Heiden // Auch keinem Juden auf seine Eiden // Glaub keinem Papst auf sein Gewissen // Wirst sonst von allen Drein beschissen." [**encourage v:** 'ermutigen'; **prejudice n:** 'Vorurteil'; **witch n:** 'Hexe']

Debates

The pope now realised that threats would not work. Luther was no pushover. It was decided to try and prove in public that Luther's views were wrong. A formal debate was arranged to take place in Leipzig in July 1519. Luther was facing Doctor Johann Eck, who used cold logic against Luther's passion and inner conviction. At one stage during the debate Eck made a serious mistake. He agreed with Luther that the Bible offered no evidence that indulgences could guarantee salvation. But the Bible, Eck added, did not mention purgatory or the pope either. Surely Luther did not deny the authority of these things as well? Luther, completely convinced that he was right, was left with no choice. To Eck's surprise, Luther said that he did indeed reject purgatory and the pope too.

Luther's first central idea had been that entry into heaven could only be gained through *sola fide* (by faith alone). He now developed his second revolutionary concept: the way of searching for the faith needed was through *sola scriptura* (scripture alone) – only by studying the Bible could people find faith in God.

What is the significance of this debate?

Luther had started off by saying that the pope was abusing his powers, now he claimed that the pope had no special powers at all! The Church had tried to push Luther into a corner but his conscience would not allow him to give up. The Saxon monk who had started an academic discussion about indulgences had turned into a revolutionary. This also meant that Luther's life was in danger. A century before Czech reformer Jan Hus had been burnt at the stake for saying that the teachings of the Catholic Church contradicted the Bible.



The Antichrist

'Sermon and Deeds of the Antichrist', Luca Signorelli (1499-1502)

According to a prophecy in the New Testament, an Antichrist will appear one day. He is the enemy of Jesus Christ. The Antichrist will be deceptively similar to Christ, which will make it difficult for ordinary people to recognise him for what he truly is. The Antichrist will preach to people and promise them salvation but will lead them to damnation instead. Many reformers of the 16th century identified the Roman papacy as the Antichrist.

[**deceptively adv.**: 'täuschend'; **similar adj.**: almost the same as]

Excommunication

Pope Leo now tried a powerful new weapon to silence Luther once and for all - he threatened to excommunicate Luther from the Church if he did not admit within 60 days that he was wrong.

Why was excommunication a particularly serious form of punishment?

The Bull of Excommunication was a legal document which was issued by Pope Leo in June 1520. In the days before television or internet, copies of the document were taken to Germany to be read from the pulpit of every church so that everyone knew that Luther would be excommunicated. Luther still refused to give in – he even burned his copy of the Bull in public!¹ Luther had reached the point of no return: In early 1521 he was officially excommunicated from the Church.

The Diet of Worms²

Luther was excommunicated but he was still a best-selling author in Germany - to many Germans he was a national hero. The Church needed to prove that Luther's views were wrong, that Luther was a heretic – a person

who held beliefs which were not accepted by the Catholic Church. Pope Leo asked Emperor Charles V for help (see p. 10). Charles was not only a powerful ruler but a devout Catholic. Frederick of Saxony, where Luther lived and taught, had to obey Charles. The emperor eventually ordered Luther to appear at the Diet in the German city of Worms. Charles also decided that Luther would be allowed to defend his positions – the emperor wanted to make sure that no German could later say that their national hero had been treated unfairly. Luther was promised safe conduct.

Luther's friends advised him not to go to Worms because they feared for his life, despite the emperor's promises.³ Luther decided to go because he believed that he was God's instrument and that God wished him to preach the truth as widely as possible. Luther travelled to Worms on an open cart, receiving a hero's welcome in every town he passed.

At the hearing in Worms, Luther was accused of being a heretic. Luther stood by his conviction and defended his position. He ended his speech by saying:

'[I invite] your most serene Majesty [...to] expose my errors, overthrow me by the writings of the prophets and evangelists. I am more than ready, if the case was proven, to retract my error no matter what it is. I shall be the first to consign my books to the flames.'

Luther's conscience and faith had given him strength to stand by what he believed in. It was Luther's finest moment. Legend has it that Luther said '*Hier steh ich nun. Ich kann nicht anders! Gott hilf mir! Amen.*' He almost certainly never made this statement. It was later added to the many legends surrounding Luther's life.

Luther Is Outlawed

Luther was not the first reformer who attacked the teachings of the Church but he was the first who was able to stand by his convictions and avoid being killed. Why did Luther survive?

A month after the hearing, Emperor Charles announced the verdict. In the Edict of Worms of May 1521 Luther was found guilty of heresy: he would be arrested and sent to Rome. Luther lost all rights as a free citizen, anyone helping him would be punished too. Luther's writings had to be burned. The Church had won – or so they thought.

Luther had been promised safe conduct so he was allowed to leave Worms before the edict was made public. In a forest on the road to Wittenberg, Luther was kidnapped by mysterious horsemen. The man responsible for this act was none other than Frederick the Wise, Elector of Saxony. Frederick had supported Luther from the beginning – for various reasons⁴ – and now felt that Luther would only be safe if he went into hiding. Luther was taken to Wartburg Castle, a remote place in southern Saxony, where he grew a beard and took on a false name.

Luther stayed at Wartburg for nine months, translating Erasmus' Greek version of the Bible into German. In the meantime Frederick the Wise – one of Germany's most powerful princes – had managed to make a deal with Emperor Charles: The Edict of Worms was now invalid in the Electorate of Saxony. Luther was able to return to Wittenberg and to continue the Reformation, safe from the emperor and the pope. Luther was a charismatic man, but he was also lucky to have a powerful supporter such as Frederick the Wise.

¹ Doctor Eck himself had organised the burning of Luther's book after reading the Bull of Excommunication at various churches in Germany.

² An Imperial Diet (*Reichstag*) was the parliament of the Holy Roman Empire. It was a meeting of the most powerful princes, church leaders and representatives of free cities. It was not held every year.

³ They were right not to trust the Church. The Czech reformer Jan Hus had been invited to the Church Council at Konstanz in 1414. He had been promised safe conduct as well. When the Church found Huss guilty of heresy, they had him burnt at the stake after all. The Church believed that promises made to heretics could be broken.

⁴ Frederick had founded the university of Wittenberg, where Luther taught. At first Frederick's motives were probably political – Luther's attacks against Tetzl hurt Albert of Brandenburg, one of Frederick's main rivals. Frederick was also motivated by German nationalism. Although he remained a Catholic and never became a Lutheran himself, Frederick realised that Luther was an extremely important man and wanted to make sure that his subject was given a fair chance.

weapon n.: 'Waffe'; **admit v.**: 'zugeben'; **issue v.**: 'herausgeben'; **pulpit n.**: 'Kanzel'; **heretic n.**: 'Ketzer'; **devout adj.**: having deep religious feelings; **safe conduct n.**: 'Geleitschutz'; **expose v.**: show to everyone; **retract v.**: withdraw; **heresy n.**: 'Ketzererei'; **citizen n.**: 'Bürger'; **remote adj.**: far away from everywhere; **invalid adj.**: 'ungültig'.

Luther Has Lit a Fuse – The Reformation Spreads

Luther was outlawed. So how was it possible that Luther's views continued to spread?

How did Luther react to developments he could not really control?

How did the popes and Emperor Charles react?

Religious and Social Practices

When Luther returned to Wittenberg in 1522, there was no such thing as a Lutheran movement. But there were thousands of people all over Germany to whom Luther was a hero and role model. They wanted to put Luther's views into practise, they refused to wait for Rome to make any changes. Spontaneous forms of reformation began in hundreds of German towns and cities. Often it was rather chaotic – churches were stormed to destroy pictures of saints', priests put on ordinary clothes or even married, monks and nuns left their cloisters.

Luther disliked chaos so he had to take a clear position on how the Reformation should proceed. He said that if the Bible did not forbid an activity, it should be allowed to continue unless there were strong arguments for stopping it.

In 1525 Luther – a former monk – married a former nun – Katherine von Bora. Luther's view of family relationships was conservative – he argued that the father was the head of the family. It was his responsibility to create discipline among wife, children and servants, while it was their duty to obey him.

Assess Luther's views.

Political and Social Issues

In the early years of Luther's career his ideas on social and political issues were much less known than his religious convictions. Some people made the assumption that because Luther had attacked the traditional authority of the pope and the Church, he was also violently opposed to any form of established rule. Therefore, the ruling classes were often afraid of Luther and his ideas, while those people in the lower classes who wanted change looked towards Luther for a potential leader.

1 – The Peasants Revolt

Perhaps the most famous case where Luther's ideas were taken up by other people was the revolt of the German peasants in 1524-25. The discontent among German peasants had been increasing for more than a century. Landlords and the Church had demanded heavier and heavier taxes and duties. Productivity had, however, not increased. To make matters worse, after a farmer's death all his heirs received a share of the land, which meant that the size of the land a farmer could use to produce food had grown smaller and smaller over time.



The Peasants' War (1524-25)

Peasants are plundering a monastery

In 1525 representatives of 50 peasant communities met at Memmingen and produced a paper that became known as the 'Twelve Articles':

1. Every municipality shall have the right to elect and remove a preacher if he behaves improperly. The preacher shall preach the gospel simply, straight and clearly without any human amendment, for, it is written, that we can only come to God by true belief.
2. The preachers shall be paid from the great tithe. A potential surplus shall be used to pay for the poor and the war tax. The small tithe shall be dismissed, for it has been trumped-up by humans, for the Lord, our master, has created the cattle free for mankind.
3. It has been practice so far, that we have been held as villain, which is pitiful, given that Christ redeemed all of us with his precious bloodshed, the shepherd as well as the highest, no one excluded. Therefore, it is devised by the scripture, that we are and that we want to be free.
4. It is unfriendly and not in accordance with the word of God that the simple man does not have the right to catch game, fowls, and fish. For, when God our master created man, he gave him power over all animals, the bird in the air and the fish in the water.
12. It is our decision and final opinion that if one or several of the articles mentioned herein were not in accordance with the word of God, those we shall refrain from if it is explained to us on the basis of the scripture. If several articles were already granted to us and it emerged afterwards that they were ill, they shall be dead and null. Likewise, we want to have reserved that if even more articles are found in the writ that were against God and a grievance to though neighbour.

1. Jede Gemeinde soll das Recht haben, ihren Pfarrer zu wählen und ihn abzusetzen, wenn er sich ungebührlich verhält. Der Pfarrer soll das Evangelium lauter und klar ohne allen menschlichen Zusatz predigen, da in der Schrift steht, dass wir allein durch den wahren Glauben zu Gott kommen können.
2. Von dem grossen Zehnten sollen die Pfarrer besoldet werden. Ein etwaiger Überschuss soll für die Dorfarmut und die Entrichtung der Kriegssteuer verwandt werden. Der kleine Zehnt soll aufgegeben werden, da er von Menschen erdichtet ist, denn Gott der Herr hat das Vieh dem Menschen frei erschaffen.
3. Ist der Brauch bisher gewesen, dass man uns für [Leibeigene] gehalten hat, welches zu Erbarmen ist, angesehen dass uns Christus alle mit seinen kostbarlichen Blutvergiessen erlöst und erkauft hat, den Hirten gleich wie den Höchsten, keinen ausgenommen. Darum erfindet sich mit der Schrift, dass wir frei sind und sein wollen.
4. Ist es unbrüderlich und dem Wort Gottes nicht gemäss, dass der arme Mann nicht Gewalt hat, Wildbret, Geflügel und Fische zu fangen. Denn als Gott der Herr den Menschen erschuf, hat er ihm Gewalt über alle Tiere, den Vogel in der Luft und den Fisch im Wasser gegeben.
12. Ist unser Beschluss und endliche Meinung, wenn einer oder mehr der hier gestellten Artikel dem Worte Gottes nicht gemäss wären ..., von denen wollen wir abstehe, wenn man es uns auf Grund der Schrift erklärt. Wenn man uns schon etliche Artikel jetzt zuliesse und es befände sich hernach, dass sie Unrecht wären, so sollen sie von Stund an tot und ab sein. Desgleichen wollen wir uns aber auch vorbehalten haben, wenn man in der Schrift noch mehr Artikel fände, die wider Gott und eine Beschweris des Nächsten wären.

What are the peasants' demands? How are they connected to Luther's views?

Luther's Position

In the beginning Luther showed some sympathy for the difficult situation many peasants were in. Once the revolt started, however, he attacked the peasants. He later published a pamphlet in which he explained why he could not accept the rebellion of the peasants. It became known as the *Doctrine of Two Kingdoms*:

According to Luther, there is a spiritual kingdom ruled by God only. Worldly governments must never interfere with a person's religious belief. Luther called it the 'liberty of conscience'. If the liberty of conscience is under attack, one has the right to resist.

On the other hand there is an earthly kingdom ruled by civil governments. In the earthly kingdom people interact with other human beings. Here it is the task of the government to ensure peace and it is the duty of people to follow the rules and obey the laws.

Discuss the Doctrine of Two Kingdoms.

[**representative** n: 'Vertreter'; **interfere** v: 'sich einmischen'; **resist** v: 'Widerstand leisten']

fuse n: 'Zündschnur'; **proceed** v: continue; **issue** n: 'Thema'; **assumption** n: 'Annahme'; **peasant** n: 'Bauer'; **discontent** n: unhappiness; **tax** n: 'Steuer'; **duties** n: 'Abgaben'; **heir** n: 'Erbe'; **share** n: 'Anteil';

In the 1520s these difficult circumstances coincided with new religious ideas which said that it was a sin to exploit people (much like the pope had exploited Germans). Luther had said: 'A Christian man is the most free lord of all, and subject to none.' [*Ein Christenmensch ist ein freier Herr über alle Dinge und niemand untertan.*] Many peasants were inspired by Luther and now became convinced that they should stop accepting their fate – it was God's will that they should rebel against the unfairness in their lives.

In 1524 peasants in various places in Southern Germany rose against their masters, attacking castles and monasteries. The struggle had no clear leadership, though. Most places which the peasants conquered were plundered and then simply left. It was therefore relatively easy for the princes to establish control again

after some time. It was done brutally. Regular armies fought against peasants – their leaders were executed. Up to 75,000 peasants may have been killed.

In the beginning Luther had felt some sympathy for the situation of the peasants. When the fighting began, however, he became horrified. He wrote a pamphlet called *Against the Thieving, Murdering Hordes of Peasants* (May 1525), in which he claimed that the peasants had no right to revolt and that the princes should put down the revolt with great brutality.

Luther's position against the peasants lost him a lot of support among the poorer parts of the population. It helped his acceptance by the ruling classes, however, because Luther was clearly not hostile to their authority.

2 – Some Princes Join Luther

The single most important reason why Luther's views were able to start a chain reaction all over Germany was that some German rulers joined Luther's cause.

Why was it attractive for German princes to join Luther?

It was generally accepted that Lutherans and Catholics could not live side by side. It was believed that it would lead to social unrest and chaos. As a consequence, if a prince decided to become a Lutheran, everyone who lived in his territory would have to join the new faith. If they refused to do so, they would have to leave. Luther accepted this development. To him stability and public order were very important.

Why did the popes and Emperor Charles not stop this development? The popes were simply not powerful enough in Germany. Charles could not afford to lose the support of the Lutheran princes because the Holy Roman Empire was threatened by foreign enemies, among them the French and the Turks.

3 – Protestants

The Edict of Worms of 1521 had forbidden the spreading of the Lutheran faith. It was later suspended. At the Imperial Diet of Speyer (1529) the Catholic princes suddenly wanted to forbid the Lutheran faith again. They were successful because they formed the majority. As a consequence the Lutheran princes and cities left the Diet under protest, which is why they became known as 'Protestants'. Today the term 'Protestant' describes an evangelical and reformed religious community.

4 – The German Schism

The Catholics and Lutherans tried to talk to each other but it became clear that Rome was unwilling to make any concessions. Sooner or later the Church of Rome would either be able to destroy the Lutherans or Germany would be split into a Catholic and Lutheran part.



Charles V

Charles' origin was complex, which was quite typical of high nobility at the time. Charles' grandfather was Maximilian I, the Habsburg emperor. His mother was Queen Joanna of Castile ('Joanna the Mad'). Charles was born in the Flemish town of Ghent and grew up in the Netherlands. Referring to his origin, Charles is supposed to have said: 'I speak Spanish to God, Italian to women, French to men and German to my horse.'

When Charles (1500-58) was six, he inherited the Duchy of Burgundy from his father. In 1516 he became King of Castile, gradually expanding his rule in Spain. Thereby he founded the Spanish line of the Habsburg dynasty, while his younger brother Ferdinand continued the Austrian line. In 1519 Charles became Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, following Maximilian's death. At the age of only 19 Charles ruled over a vast empire. Due to Spanish conquests in Central and South America, it has been described as the 'empire on which the sun never sets'. Two years before his death, Charles abdicated and withdrew into a monastery near Madrid.

The Habsburg Jaw

Many members of the Habsburg dynasty suffered from progenism, a genetic disorder in which the lower jaw grows longer than the upper jaw.

[origin n: 'Herkunft'; inherit v: 'erben'; duchy n: 'Herzogtum'; abdicate v: 'abdanken'; jaw n: 'Kiefer'; disorder n: 'illness']

Charles V – a devout Catholic – was absorbed by fighting external enemies of the empire, for which he needed the support of the Lutheran princes. It was not until 1546 that Charles was able to go on the offensive against the Protestants. He believed that military power could solve the problem. It was too late, however. The Catholic forces managed to defeat the Lutheran armies but too many people simply refused to convert to Catholicism again. Tens of thousands of people were unwilling to give up their religious freedom.

In 1555 a solution was found at last. At the Peace of Augsburg a formula was created: '*Cuius regio, eius religio*'.

Discuss this solution.



Luther and the Peasants

In May 1525 Luther published a pamphlet titled *Against the Thieving, Murderous Hordes of Peasants*. In it he attacked the peasants for their uprising:

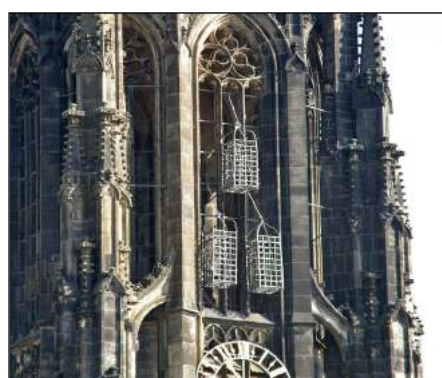
'The peasants have taken upon themselves the burden of three terrible sins against God and man; by this they have merited death in body and soul... they have sworn to be true and faithful, submissive and obedient, to their rulers... now deliberately and violently breaking this oath... they are starting a rebellion, and are violently robbing and plundering monasteries and castles which are not theirs... they have doubly deserved death in body and soul as highwaymen and murderers... they cloak this terrible and horrible sin with the gospel... thus they become the worst blasphemers of God and slanderers of his holy name.'

Luther also told the princes that it was their holy duty to kill the rebels. 'Let everyone who can smite, slay and stab, remembering that nothing can be more devilish than a rebel. It is just as when one must kill a mad dog.' [burden n: 'Last'; merit v: deserve, 'verdienen'; submissive adj: 'unterwürfig'; obedient adj: 'gehorsam'; oath n: 'Eid'; highwaymen n: robber; cloak v: 'verkleiden'; blasphemer n: 'Gotteslästerer'; slanderer n: 'Verleumder'; smite/slay v: kill; stab v: 'erstechen']

coincide v: 'zusammentreffen mit'; exploit v: 'ausbeuten' auf; struggle n: 'Kampf'; conquer v: 'erobern'; pamphlet n: 'Streitschrift, Flugschrift'; hostile adj: 'feindlich (eingestellt)'; suspend v: (Regel etc) 'aufheben'; majority n: 'Mehrheit'; evangelical adj: a Bible-based religion which focuses on sermons and preaching rather than rituals and ceremonies; schism n: 'Spaltung'; defeat v: win against; convert v: 'bekehren'.



An anabaptist woman is about to be drowned (from the Martyrs' Mirror)



King Jan

The steeple of St Lambert's cathedral, Münster
One influential Radical group were the Melchiorites led by Melchior Hoffmann, another spiritualist who preached that the Second Coming was near and that the Church must be destroyed because it was led by the Antichrist. In 1534 they managed to take control of the German city of Münster, which they claimed was the New Jerusalem – the place where the saints would live after the end of the world. They began to convert people to their faith and baptise them again.

Hated by both Catholics and Protestants, the Melchiorites were soon besieged by a Catholic army. Their leader was killed in a fight outside the city gates. His head was cut off and stuck on a pole for everybody to see. His genitals were nailed to the city gates.

Jan of Leiden, the new leader of the Melchiorites, saw himself as a successor of David and crowned himself as King of Münster in 1535. Eventually, Münster was conquered by the Catholics. Jan and two followers were brutally tortured, their tongues ripped out before being killed with a burning dagger. They were put into cages which were pulled up the steeple of the cathedral. Their bodies were removed fifty years later.

[besiege v: 'belagern'; successor n: 'Nachfolger'; steeple n: church tower]

were killed in the battle which followed. Muntzer himself was captured, brutally tortured, forced to apologise and then beheaded. His body was impaled and his head was put on a stake.

Why did Luther persecute the Radicals?

The Legacy of the Radical Reformation

Some Radical groups were destroyed, others managed to survive. Later similar anabaptist groups such as the Mennonites or the Amish were formed. Many members were persecuted and emigrated to America. More than one million anabaptists live in the USA today.

The fate of the Radicals showed that the Reformation had never been very liberal at all – Luther stressed the idea of religious freedom but as soon as other people went further than he did he rejected their right to individual freedom. A historian wrote:

The Protestants, no less than the Catholics, preached tolerance only when it suited them, just as the Radicals were perfectly prepared to use violence when they felt it would be to their advantage. Sadly, it seems, tolerance is almost always preached by the downtrodden rather than the powerful, and out of necessity rather than genuine conviction.'

The Radical Reformation – Tolerance or Persecution?

Why were there more radical forms of the Reformation than Luther's?

Why were the Radicals persecuted?

Radical Reformers

The Radical movement is a rather loose term, describing a collection of small religious communities with names such as Hutterites, Hutterites, Münsterites or Muntzerites. They shared a belief that the Reformation was unfinished business. They argued that Luther or Swiss reformer Zwingli had stopped halfway, that they were too weak to follow the Reformation through to its logical conclusions. They refused to believe that half-measures or compromises were necessary to avoid social and political chaos.

There were two major aspects which distinguished the Radicals from 'ordinary' reformers. Some Radical groups rejected the idea that infants must be baptised – these so-called anabaptists stated that candidates needed to make up their own minds before joining their group. They therefore needed to be of a certain age.

Why was baptism such an important issue?

Another important aspect of some Radical groups was the belief that the 'priesthood of all believers' meant that inequalities between people was sinful – wealth and power needed to be given from the rich to the poor.

Some Radicals rejected the use of violence, others were prepared to use force to achieve their aims.

1 – Zwingli and the Swiss Brethren

In 1523 the Swiss Brethren formed in Zurich. They used Luther's ideas of *sola scriptura* to argue that baptism for small children should be stopped because it was not mentioned in the Bible. Baptism must happen later in life. Zwingli, like Luther, had accepted that the state (princes, city councils, magistrates)

should play a role in the organisation of religious activity because he believed that the Reformed church needed these authorities to survive in the long term.

Zurich acted quickly against the Swiss Brethren. The Brethren were arrested and tortured. The city council, advised by Zwingli, declared in 1525 that the Brethren should be executed 'without mercy'. A 29-year-old brother, for instance, was drowned in the Limmat river. Another escaped to Vienna, where he was burnt at the stake.

2 – Luther and Thomas Muntzer

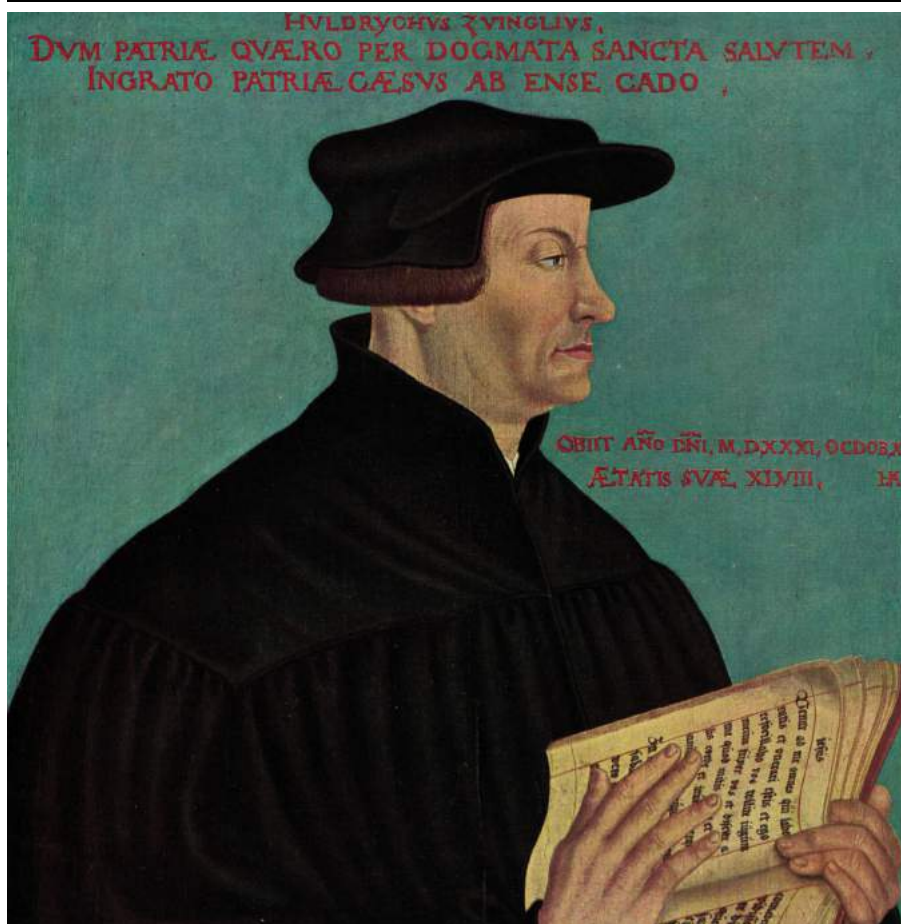
A priest called Thomas Muntzer caused trouble for Luther. In the beginning Muntzer had been a loyal follower of Luther but he became frustrated when – as he saw it – Luther refused to follow the idea of *sola scriptura* properly. He even came to call Luther 'Doctor Liar'. Muntzer became an anabaptist. He also saw no difference between religion, society and politics. He did not believe that worldly and religious affairs needed to be separated. Muntzer believed that according to the New Testament all men were equal – princes had no right to dictate the faith or social arrangements of the population. Furthermore, he argued that the rich should be forced to share their wealth and power with the poor.

Discuss these ideas.

Muntzer also said that God communicated directly through visions and dreams to people who believed in Him. Reformers like Luther believed that God communicated to humanity through the Holy Bible alone. Eventually, Muntzer became convinced that God was telling him that the Second Coming of Christ was at hand and that those who had the right faith should take up arms and fight their enemies. Consequently, Muntzer became a leader of the Peasants' Revolt.

Luther told the princes to destroy Muntzer and the peasant army he led. 5,000 peasants

conclusion v: 'Schlussfolgerung'; **measure** n: 'Massnahme'; **distinguish** v: 'unterscheiden'; **inequality** n: 'Ungleichheit'; **brethren** v: brothers; **city council** n: 'Stadttrat'; **magistrate** n: political leader; **authorities** n: 'Behörden'; **torture** v: 'foltern'; **mercy** n: 'Gnade'; **liar** n: someone who lies; **capture** v: arrest; **impale** v: 'aufspießen'; **legacy** n: 'Erbe, Vermächtnis'; **liberal** adj: 'freiheitlich'; **suit** v: 'passen'; **violence** n: 'Gewalt'; **advantage** n: 'Vorteil'; **downtrodden** n: 'Unterdrückte'; **genuine** adj: real]



Ulrich Zwingli, by Hans Asper (1549)

ULRICH ZWINGLI

Ulrich Zwingli (1484-1531) was born in Wildhaus. He became a priest at the age of 22. Two events helped Zwingli become a reformer. Zwingli was present at the Battle of Marignano (1515), where 6,000 young Swiss mercenaries were slaughtered in the service of the pope. He was convinced that 'selling blood for gold' must stop.

Secondly, Zwingli was deeply impressed by Erasmus' new translation of the New Testament (1516). He was shocked to realise how far the Catholic Church had moved away from the Word of God. Zwingli became an Evangelical: To him, the Bible was the only basis of the Christian faith – it was an instruction book to find the right path to salvation.

Zwingli was the first reformer who dared to question some of Luther's opinions. Most of Luther's followers almost blindly trusted in the great man's belief. By challenging Luther, Zwingli helped that Luther's views did not simply become Protestant dogma.

[**mercenary** n: professional soldier who fights in a foreign army; **slaughter** v: kill brutally; **instruction** n: 'Anweisung'; **dare** v: have the courage to do sth'; **challenge** v: 'herausfordern']

2. The Reformation in Switzerland

The Reformation in Switzerland follows its own course. Started in Zurich by Ulrich Zwingli, the new faith spreads to various cantons within the Swiss Confederacy. Some cantons remain Catholic, however. Two wars are fought over Switzerland's religious future. They bring no solution but lead to the religious division of Switzerland.

Background

Luther was the outstanding figure of the German reformation but he was never particularly popular in Switzerland even though the Swiss Confederacy was ethnically 100 per cent German and politically part of the Holy Roman Empire. For one thing, the remote Swiss cantons were fiercely independent. Also there had been a long-standing tension between the Swiss and the Germans. Most Germans regarded the Swiss as poor, ignorant, uncivilised mountain people who could only survive because they shamelessly hired out mercenaries all over Europe to whoever paid them the highest price. The Swiss on the other hand resented the arrogance of the Germans and guarded their independence jealously. They were definitely not waiting for a preacher and reformer from Germany.

Reformation in Zurich

In 1518 Zwingli moved to Zurich. He had been dismissed from his post as a priest at Glarus because he had attacked the mercenary

system in his sermons. Zurich was essentially a city-state ruled by a council. Many citizens of Zurich were wealthy and independently minded, which meant that they were at least willing to listen first if a preacher like Zwingli began to challenge the teachings of the Catholic Church.

Zwingli concentrated on explaining the Bible, not afraid to point out where he thought the Church was wrong. Instead of being arrested for being a heretic, Zwingli managed to build a following among all parts of the population, including the rich and powerful. He even became a councillor and within a short time a majority of the city council supported Zwingli's views.

*What did Zwingli **not** preach to win the support of the rich and powerful?*

After some time the Reformation in Zurich was put into practice. Two principles lay behind every change:

- The Bible was at the centre of everything
- The Bible was interpreted by the city council

So altars, images and paintings were removed from churches. Priests were encouraged to marry. The worship of saints was stopped. Monasteries were shut down and their income given to charity. Everything was a little more radical than in the Lutheran Reformation. Even singing in church was forbidden. The city council was now the final judge in all religious matters.

In 1525 the break with the Catholic Church happened officially when Zurich abolished the Catholic mass and replaced it with a simple service which took place only four times a year.

Why did the pope accept the break with Zurich?

The Reformation in Zurich took place in an orderly fashion. Zwingli – like Luther – was a reformer who did not want to leave the Reformation to ordinary people. He wanted the city council to lead the Reformation and put it into practice step by careful step.

Why did Zwingli not want the population to lead the Reformation?

outstanding adj: 'herausragend'; **fierce** adj: aggressive; **tension** n: '(An-) Spannung; **ignorant** adj: stupid; **resent** v: dislike; **dismiss** v: 'entlassen'; **sermon**: 'Predigt'; **wealthy** adj: rich; **minded** adj: have the tendency to think in a certain way; **councillor** n: member of a council, 'Stadtrat'; **charity** n: 'wohltätige Organisationen'; **abolish** v: stop

Reformed or Catholic?

Like Luther, Zwingli believed that his teachings were essential to save people from eternal damnation. If people kept interpreting the Bible wrongly, they would go to hell. Zwingli was convinced that the news of the Reformation needed to be spread all across Switzerland. Preachers influenced by Zwingli became active in all Swiss cantons. By 1529 the Reformation had been successful in Basel, Berne, Schaffhausen and St Gallen. However, there were regions which resisted the new faith. In Luzern, for example, pictures of Zwingli were burnt in public. Five cantons in central Switzerland (*Fünf Orte*) remained Catholic: Luzern, Zug, Uri, Schwyz and Unterwalden.

What were the reasons why central Switzerland rejected the Reformation?

The Five Cantons refused to let reformers enter their territory. This was unacceptable to Zwingli because he was convinced that their souls could never be saved now. Eventually he even pushed for a military solution. Zwingli persuaded Zurich and Berne to form an army and to attack the five cantons. The First War of Kappel began – one of the very few wars in history without an actual battle! Berne and Zurich did not really want to start a civil war. The Catholic cantons on the other hand made it clear that they would resist to the very end. For a month the two armies faced each other, making sure they stayed in their own territories. Eventually they called off the war and tried to look for a peaceful solution. Peace did not last, however, and two years later the Catholic and Reformed armies faced each other again. This time a battle was indeed fought – the Second War of Kappel. The Catholic forces defeated the Reformed troops and Zwingli was killed¹.

The Religious Division of Switzerland

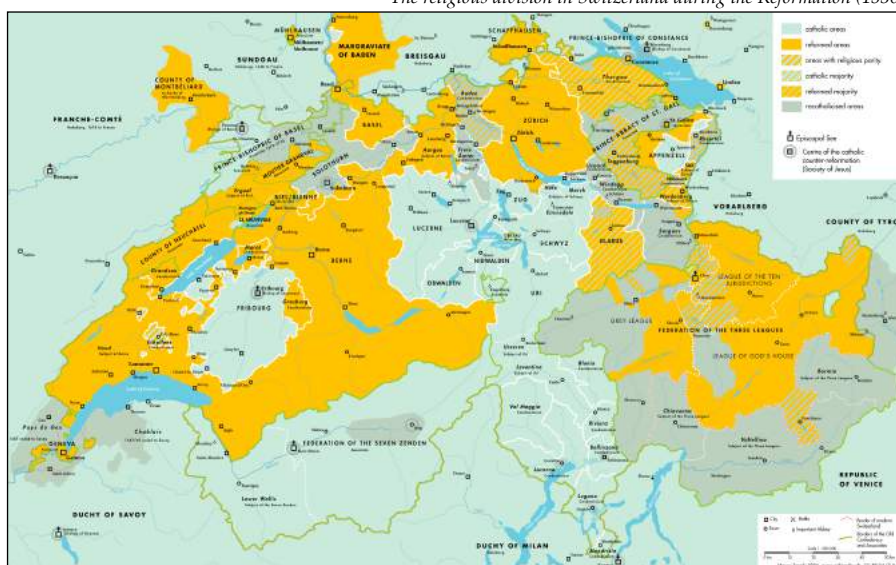
Neither the Catholic nor the Reformed side was strong enough to defeat their opponent. The Reformation was stopped but the Catholics were only able to re-introduce the Catholic faith in a few regions. So Switzerland was divided by religion. The canton of Appenzell, for instance, split in 1597, forming a Catholic (AI) and a Reformed part (AR).

The religious division of Switzerland had mainly negative consequences. One part of the confederacy was convinced that the other part was destined for eternal damnation. The division also meant that the confederacy was unable to present a united front to the outside world – it was virtually unable to act in international matters.

¹ According to Heinrich Bullinger, Zwingli's successor and son-in-law, it was Captain Fickinger of Unterwalden, who killed the wounded reformer. Zwingli's body was then mutilated, quartered by the public hangman, mixed with pig entrails, burnt to ashes and mixed with dung by Catholic soldiers.



The religious division in Switzerland during the Reformation (1536)



The religious division in Switzerland in the 17th and 18th century



In the 16th century there were two St Gallen. There was the imperial city, which was connected to the Swiss Confederacy in many ways but was no full member. There was also the monastery and its territory. The prince abbot of the monastery ruled the region between Rorschach and Wil as well as the Toggenburg.

The Reformation became popular quickly in the city of St Gallen. Its leading figure was Joachim von Watt, called 'Vadianus' (Many humanist scholars during the Renaissance took on Latin names.) Vadian (1484-1551) came from a wealthy merchant family. He was a humanist scholar who had studied in Vienna, among other places. In 1519 Vadian returned to his home town where – influenced by his friend Zwingli – he began to support and spread the views of the Reformation.

When Vadian was elected as mayor of St Gallen in 1526, he turned St Gallen into a reformed city. In 1527 the prince abbot was driven off and the monastery was abolished. When the Reformed troops lost the Second War of Kappel a few years later, the prince abbot was able to return and take control of the territory again. In the decades which followed, most of the population in the territory of the prince abbot of St Gallen was converted back to the Catholic faith. The city of St Gallen, however, remained reformed.

[scholar n: 'Gelehrter'; mayor n: 'Bürgermeister']

Reformation in St Gallen



Portrait of Young John Calvin, unknown artist (16th C)

JOHN CALVIN (1509-1564)

When Calvin was active as a reformer, Luther had already established the Reformation in many parts of Germany. Calvin was a representative of the second generation of reformers who profited from Luther's revolution.

Jean Chauvin was a French humanist. When he broke with the Catholic Church, he had to leave France and travelled through Europe, like many humanists at that time. In 1541 John Calvin was asked to come to Geneva and establish the Reformation in the city.

Calvin was a highly intelligent but largely humourless theologian. It seems that few people found him an attractive personality. He was deeply convinced that he was serving God's will and that everyone who challenged or disagreed with him were the agents of the devil.

[representative n: 'Vertreter']

3. The Next Generation – Calvinism

In Geneva Frenchman John Calvin manages to establish a radical form of the Reformation. Calvin's religious conviction states that every activity which is not explicitly approved of in the Bible is forbidden. Calvinism therefore intervenes in the daily lives of citizens. Most importantly, Calvin declares that it is the people's duty to resist if their faith is threatened, which will have a great impact on the history of western Europe.

Reformation in Geneva

Calvin's Reformation was bible-based like Luther's but his interpretation was more radical than the German's. While Luther generally accepted activities which were not mentioned in the Bible as being negative, Calvin only accepted activities which were specifically mentioned as being positive. As a consequence, Calvin believed that the Church needed to supervise the daily lives of the population to make sure that they would not make serious mistakes and wander off the path to salvation.

The Calvinist Church in Geneva – supported by the city council – persecuted activities such as (heavy) drinking, dancing, public singing, playing cards or wearing colourful clothes and precious jewellery. Generally speaking, activities people conducted for sheer pleasure were forbidden. Drinking pubs were closed down and turned into rooms for Bible studies. People started to wear sober clothes and went to church regularly. If one broke the rules and promised not to do it again, one was usually reprimanded rather than punished. Calvin generally wanted to reform people. There were, however, instances of brutal punishment.

There was another particular activity Calvin tried to fight against – sex outside marriage. He was not particularly successful, though. Prostitutes who had been banished from the city simply returned after some time. In one particularly embarrassing episode Calvin's own stepson and his daughter-in-law were banished from Geneva for committing adultery.

Serious crimes carried the death penalty. During Calvin's time in Geneva the number of executions rose to more than ten per year.

Despite Calvin's strict regime, despite the fact that their lives were supervised, a majority of Geneva's population supported Calvin's ideas.

Predestination

The concept of predestination was an important aspect of Calvin's teachings. Calvin taught that every Christian's life was pre-terminated by the almighty and omniscient God. But not just their lives – according to Calvin, God predetermined every person's salvation or damnation before their births.

Why did the concept of predestination meet with resistance outside Geneva?

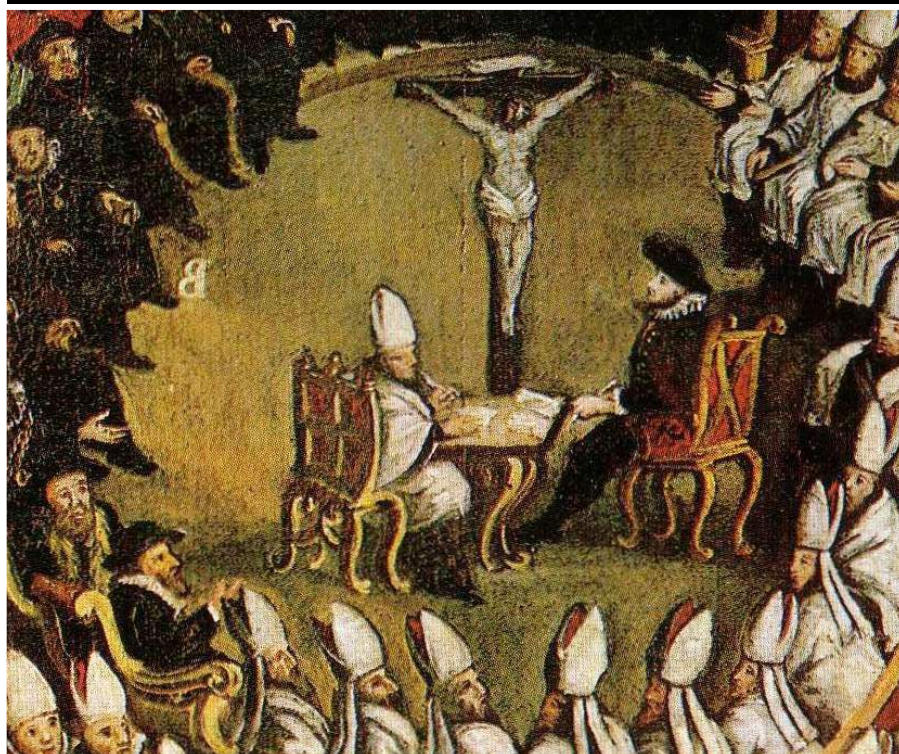
How did Calvin's supporters put it into practice?

The Duty to Resist

Calvin's time at Geneva might have become a mere footnote of history if not for one important aspect. Luther had arranged himself with the princes, who generally ordered the entire population within their territory to become Lutherans. Calvin, however, taught that his followers not only had the right but the duty to resist if their faith was threatened or even under attack.

The duty to resist was very attractive to Reformed groups who were persecuted by the authorities, even though Calvin had not mentioned armed resistance. As a result Calvinism spread throughout Europe and became an important force in France, the Netherlands, Scotland and England. A Calvinist group called the Puritans emigrated to the American colonies in the 17th century, helping to spread Calvinism to the new world.

explicitly adv: clearly; **approve of sth** v: find sth positive; **supervise** v: keep watch over, observe; **conduct** v: 'ausüben, durchführen'; **sheer** adj: pure; **sober** adj: 'nüchtern'; **reprimand** v: 'tadeln'; **banish** v: 'verbannen'; **adultery** n: 'Ehebruch'; **predetermine** v: 'vorherbestimmen'; **omniscient** adj: knowing everything; **mere** adj: only; **entire** adj: 'whole'; **armed** adj: 'bewaffnet'



The Council of Trent

CHURCH COUNCILS

A council of the Catholic Church is a meeting of bishops, cardinals and other high-ranking members of the Church to discuss and decide on important religious matters. It is headed by the pope.

It was not until 1535 that Pope Paul III announced a council to discuss the Reformation in Europe. It took another decade before the first meetings were actually held in Trent, a town in northern Italy. There were three phases of meetings because the council was interrupted by political tensions and a typhus epidemic.

Since the Reformation only the Catholic Church has conducted councils. Protestant Churches do not accept the decisions of a Catholic council.

There have been only two councils since the Council of Trent in the 16th century. The First Vatican Council was held in 1869/70, the Second Vatican Council lasted from 1962 to 1965.

4. The Catholic Church Reacts – Counter-Reformation

With some delay the Catholic Church reacts to the challenge offered by the Protestants. In what is called the 'Counter-Reformation', Rome conducts some necessary reforms. At the same time, however, the Catholic Church rejects most of the central views of the Reformation and begins to try and win back people to Catholicism. The religious division of western Europe is confirmed.

The Council of Trent (1545-1563)

After decades of debate, the Council of Trent passed a number of decisions:

1. Only the Church has the right to interpret the Bible and fix dogmas.
2. To find salvation, people need faith. But good works can contribute to it.
3. There are seven sacraments.
4. The existence of purgatory is confirmed.
5. Bishops must be present in their dioceses. If they are absent without permission, they must not collect any income from them.
6. Every bishop must establish a seminary for educating young priests.
7. Priests are obliged to live a pious life and carefully obey their duties.
8. Celibacy is confirmed.
9. Indulgences are confirmed but they must not be abused.
10. The worship of saints and relics is confirmed.

Discuss these reforms.

The Jesuits

Despite the success of the Reformation in some regions, the Catholic Church continued the struggle for the true faith. After all, what had been true for more than one thousand years could not suddenly be totally wrong. Rome's willingness to fight for every single soul became highly visible through a relatively new religious order – the Jesuits.

Ignatius of Loyola (1491-1556) had founded the Jesuit Order (*Societas Jesu*) in Spain in 1534. The Jesuits played an important role during the counter-Reformation because of their active policy to spread the Catholic faith and to convert those people who had been attracted by the Reformation.

The Jesuits lived in open houses rather than in remote monasteries. They wore no uniforms because they wanted to live with the population and impress them with the fervour and sincerity of their faith.

The Jesuit order possessed a military hierarchy – it was led by the Superior General. Absolute obedience was expected from any member of the Society of Jesus. Ignatius of Loyola once said:

'I will believe that the white that I see is black if the Catholic Church says that it is black.'

Discuss this attitude.

The Reformers had criticised the fact that many priests were poorly educated. The Jesuits realised that this criticism was true and established seminaries for priests. Later they also founded ordinary schools, colleges and universities in many countries of the world. Educational work has always been a central part of the Jesuit Order.

The Jesuits were also active spreading the Catholic faith across the globe. Jesuit missionaries went to Asia and America. The first Jesuit reached Goa (India) in 1541, for instance.

During the 'Sonderbundskrieg' – the last war fought on Swiss soil – Catholic cantons fought against Protestant cantons. Jesuits working in the Catholic cantons such as Lucerne had played an important role in the events leading up to the war. Thus, the Jesuits were forbidden to work in Switzerland after the Protestants had won the war. The ban was not lifted until 1973.

The Jesuit Order is still active today.

delay n: 'Verzögerung, Verspätung'; **confirm v:** 'bestätigen'; **contribute v:** add to sth; 'beitragen'; **be obliged adj:** to have a duty; **pious adj:** 'fromm'; **celibacy n:** having no sexual relations; **convert v:** make join another faith; 'bekehren'; **fervour n:** 'Inbrunst'; **sincerity v:** honesty; 'Ehrlichkeit'; **obedience n:** 'Gehorsam'; **ban n:** 'Verbot'



The Battle of White Mountain (1620)

DEFENESTRATION

Defenestration is the act of throwing someone out of a window. The first notable incident of such a kind happened in Prague in 1618.

A few Protestant Bohemian noblemen managed to enter the castle at Prague and confronted the Catholic envoys of the Habsburg emperor. Eventually the Bohemians threw two envoys and one secretary out of a window. They fell 30 metres but survived because they landed on a large pile of horse manure in a dry moat below the window.

The Catholic Church later claimed that the three men had been saved by angels. The emperor made the secretary a nobleman and gave him the title 'von Hohenfall'.

[notable adj: 'bemerkenswert, beachtlich'; Bohemia n: 'Böhmen'; nobleman: aristocrat; manure n: excrement of animals; moat n: '(Burg-) Graben']

5. The Thirty Years' War (1618-48)

The struggle for the right faith and the freedom of religion becomes mixed with the politics of power. In 1618 the tensions erupt into a bloody war which is mainly fought on German soil. After millions of casualties the war ends after thirty years of brutal fighting and terrible hardship because no side is strong enough to win. The peace talks bring a positive result, however. The concept of religious tolerance is generally accepted and the age of religious wars in Europe is over at last.

The Thirty Years' War (1618-48)

– Catholics vs Protestants

The Peace of Augsburg (1555) did not last. The struggle of the two Confessions for the right faith became connected with unscrupulous politics. This explosive mixture blew up in 1618. When two Habsburg envoys were thrown out of a window at Prague, the fuse was lit. Basically, the war was fought mainly over power and independence rather than religion. The Catholic emperor tried to defend his authority and his leading role in the Holy Roman Empire, the Protestant princes fought for their independence. In the course of the war the Lutheran Swedes and Danes also joined the fighting. Eventually, even France entered the war. Catholic France actually joined the Protestant Union against the Catholic League led by the Austrian emperor! France and Austria had been bitter rivals for a long time, both countries trying to become the most important power in Europe, no matter that both populations were Catholic.

The Thirty Years' War (1618-48)

– Germany Becomes a Battlefield

Most of the fighting happened in Germany. German historian Golo Mann described the war as a 'long orgy of self-destruction'. The main problem were not the actual battles but the fact that the large mercenary armies had to live off the land for more than twenty years. Groups of soldiers roamed through Germany, stealing, plundering, burning and killing.

Famines and epidemics made the situation even worse for the population. It is believed that several million people died from the consequences of the war. The Thirty Years' War was certainly one of the greatest catastrophes in Central European history.

The Peace of Westphalia (1648)

After twenty years of fighting, all opponents finally realised that no party would ever be able to win. It was time to end the war and start peace talks. In 1641 it was agreed to hold

the talks in Westphalia but it was not until three years later that the negotiations finally started. I took another four years to find a solution. But it was worth waiting for it: the Peace of Westphalia (1648) laid the foundation for religious tolerance in Europe. The age of religious wars in Europe was over at last.

Under the Treaty of Westphalia the independence of the Swiss Confederacy from the Holy Roman Empire was officially recognized. The Swiss Cantons also declared their neutrality.



casualty n: person who is injured or killed; hardship n: 'Elend, Not'; envoy n: 'Gesandter'; roam v: wander aimlessly; famine n: periods of great hunger; negotiations n: 'Verhandlungen'; treaty n: '(Staats-) Vertrag'