**Reformation in England**

The Catholic Church soon faced another great challenge to its authority, this time in England. Unlike Luther, the man who broke England’s ties to the Roman Catholic Church did so for political and personal, not religious, reasons.

When **Henry VIII** became king of England in 1509, he was a devout Catholic. Indeed, in 1521, Henry wrote a stinging attack on Luther’s ideas. In recognition of Henry’s support, the pope gave him the title “Defender of the Faith.” Political needs, however, soon tested his religious loyalty. He needed a male heir. Henry’s father had become king after a long civil war. Henry feared that a similar war would start if he died without a son as his heir. He and his wife, Catherine of Aragon, had one living child—a daughter, Mary—but no woman had ever successfully claimed the English throne.

By 1527, Henry was convinced that the 42-year-old Catherine would have no more children. He wanted to divorce her and take a younger queen. Church law did not allow divorce. However, the pope could **annul**, or set aside, Henry’s marriage if proof could be found that it had never been legal in the first place. In 1527, Henry asked the pope to annul his marriage, but the pope turned him down. The pope did not want to offend Catherine’s powerful nephew, the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V.

Henry took steps to solve his marriage problem himself. In 1529, he called Parliament into session and asked it to pass a set of laws that ended the pope’s power in England. This Parliament is known as the **Reformation Parliament**.

In 1533, Henry secretly married Anne Boleyn (BUL•ihn), who was in her twenties. Shortly after, Parliament legalized Henry’s divorce from Catherine. In 1534, Henry’s break with the pope was completed when Parliament voted to approve the **Act of Supremacy**. This called on people to take an oath recognizing the divorce and accepting Henry, not the pope, as the official head of England’s Church.

The Act of Supremacy met some opposition. **Thomas More**, even though he had strongly criticized the Church, remained a devout Catholic. His faith, he said, would not allow him to accept the terms of the act and he refused to take the oath. In response, Henry had him arrested and imprisoned in the Tower of London. In 1535, More was found guilty of high treason and executed.

Henry did not immediately get the male heir he sought. After Anne Boleyn gave birth to a daughter, Elizabeth, she fell out of Henry’s favor. Eventually, she was charged with treason. Like Thomas More, she was imprisoned in the Tower of London. She was found guilty and beheaded in 1536. Almost at once, Henry took a third wife, Jane Seymour. In 1537, she gave him a son named Edward. Henry’s happiness was tempered by his wife’s death just two weeks later. Henry married three more times. None of these marriages, however, produced children.

After Henry’s death in 1547, each of his three children ruled England in turn. This created religious turmoil. Henry’s son, Edward, became king when he was just nine years old. Too young to rule alone, Edward VI was guided by adult advisers. These men were devout Protestants, and they introduced Protestant reforms to the English Church. Almost constantly in ill health, Edward reigned for just six years. **Mary**, the daughter of Catherine of Aragon, took the throne in 1553. She was a Catholic who returned the English Church to the rule of the pope. Her efforts met with considerable resistance, and she had many Protestants executed. When Mary died in 1558, Elizabeth, Anne Boleyn’s daughter, inherited the throne.

**Elizabeth I** was determined to return her kingdom to Protestantism. In 1559, Parliament followed Elizabeth’s wishes and set up the Church of England, or **Anglican Church**, with Elizabeth as its head. This was to be the only legal church in England.

Elizabeth decided to establish a state church that moderate Catholics and moderate Protestants might both accept. To please Protestants, priests in the Church of England were allowed to marry. They could deliver sermons in English, not Latin. To please Catholics, the Church of England kept some of the trappings of the Catholic service such as rich robes. In addition, church services were revised to be somewhat more acceptable to Catholics. The Anglican Church, though Protestant, remained similar to the Catholic Church in many of its doctrines and ceremonies.

*World History: Patterns of Interaction, Ch. 17, section 3*

**Reformation in Europe (outside of Holy Roman Empire / Germany)**

Martin Luther had launched the Reformation in northern Germany, but reformers were at work in other countries. In Switzerland, another major branch of Protestantism emerged. Based mainly on the teachings of **John Calvin**, a French follower of Luther, it promoted unique ideas about the relationship between people and God.

When Martin Luther posted his 95 Theses in 1517, John Calvin had been only eight years old. But Calvin grew up to have as much influence in the spread of Protestantism as Luther did. He would give order to the faith Luther had begun.

In 1536, Calvin published **Institutes of the Christian Religion**. This book expressed ideas about God, salvation, and human nature. It was a summary of Protestant theology, or religious beliefs. Calvin wrote that men and women are sinful by nature. Taking Luther’s idea that humans cannot earn salvation, Calvin went on to say that God chooses a very few people to save. Calvin called these few the “elect.” He believed that God has known since the beginning of time who will be saved. This doctrine is called **predestination**. The religion based on Calvin’s teachings is called **Calvinism**.

Calvin believed that the ideal government was a **theocracy**, a government controlled by religious leaders. In 1541, Protestants in **Geneva, Switzerland**, asked Calvin to lead their city.

When Calvin arrived there in the 1540s, Geneva was a self-governing city of about 20,000 people. He and his followers ran the city according to strict rules. Everyone attended religion class. No one wore bright clothing or played card games. Authorities would imprison, excommunicate, or banish those who broke such rules. Anyone who preached different doctrines might be burned at the stake. Yet, to many Protestants, Calvin’s Geneva was a model city of highly moral citizens.

In France, Calvin’s followers were called **Huguenots**. Hatred between Catholics and Huguenots frequently led to violence. The most violent clash occurred in Paris on August 24, 1572—the Catholic feast of St. Bartholomew’s Day. At dawn, Catholic mobs began hunting for Protestants and murdering them. The massacres spread to other cities and lasted six months. Scholars believe that as many as 12,000 Huguenots were killed.

Protestants taught that the Bible is the source of all religious truth and that people should read it to discover those truths. As Christians interpreted the Bible for themselves, new Protestant groups formed over differences in belief.

One such group baptized only those persons who were old enough to decide to be Christian. They said that persons who had been baptized as children should be rebaptized as adults. These believers were called **Anabaptists**, from a Greek word meaning “baptize again.” The Anabaptists also taught that church and state should be separate, and they refused to fight in wars. They shared their possessions.

Viewing Anabaptists as radicals who threatened society, both Catholics and Protestants persecuted them. But the Anabaptists survived and became the forerunners of the Mennonites and the Amish. Their teaching influenced the later Quakers and Baptists, groups who split from the Anglican Church.

Many women played prominent roles in the Reformation, especially during the early years. For example, the sister of King Francis I, **Marguerite of Navarre**, protected John Calvin from being executed for his beliefs while he lived in France. Other noblewomen also protected reformers. The wives of some reformers, too, had influence. Katherina Zell, married to Matthew Zell of Strasbourg, once scolded a minister for speaking harshly of another reformer. The minister responded by saying that she had “disturbed the peace.”

She answered his criticism sharply: “I have visited the plague-infested and carried out the dead . . . have visited those in prison and under sentence of death . . . I have done more than any minister in visiting those in misery.”

*World History: Patterns of Interaction, Ch. 17, section 4*

**Catholic or Counter Reformation**

During the 15th c., society was changing. The Renaissance taught people to question and to challenge the norm. The Catholic Church hierarchy failed to change with it and the organisation of the Church appeared to be out of date.

Throughout the middle ages the Catholic Church sunk deeper into a pit of scandal and corruption. By the 1520s, Martin Luther's ideas crystallized opposition to the Church, and Christian Europe was torn apart. In response, the Catholic Church set in motion the counter-reformation.

The challenge from Luther caught the Pope by surprise. The leaders of the Catholic Church were also frightened by how confidently the Princes of Germany resisted **Vatican** pressure. These leaders, supposedly subject to the authority of the Church, now declared themselves independent of Vatican rule. Ultimately the Princes' defiance ensured Luther's survival, and prompted the birth of a movement known as the **Catholic or** **Counter-Reformation**.

While Protestant churches won many followers, millions remained true to Catholicism. Helping Catholics to remain loyal was a movement within the Catholic Church to reform itself. Important leaders in this movement were reformers, such as Ignatius (ihg•NAY•shuhs) of Loyola, who founded new religious orders, and two popes—Paul III and Paul IV— who took actions to reform and renew the Church from within.

**Ignatius of Loyola** grew up in his father’s castle in Loyola, Spain. The great turning point in his life came in 1521 when he was injured in a war. While recovering, he thought about his past sins and about the life of Jesus. His daily devotions, he believed, cleansed his soul. In 1522, Ignatius began writing a book called Spiritual Exercises that laid out a day-by-day plan of meditation, prayer, and study.

For the next 18 years, Ignatius gathered followers. In 1540, the pope created a religious order for his followers called the Society of Jesus. Members were called **Jesuits** (JEHZH•u•ihts). The Jesuits focused on three activities. First, they founded superb schools throughout Europe. Jesuit teachers were well-trained in both classical studies and theology. The Jesuits’ second mission was to convert non-Christians to Catholicism. So, they sent out missionaries around the world. Their third goal was to stop the spread of Protestantism. The zeal of the Jesuits overcame the drift toward Protestantism in Poland and southern Germany.

In 1545, the leaders of the Catholic Church gathered in the Northern Italian city of Trent for an emergency conference. Their aim was to reclaim the moral high ground, and the superiority of the Holy Mother Church, in the wake of the **Protestant** challenge. The stakes were high. They were playing for the survival of the Roman Catholic Church.

From 1545 to 1563, at the **Council of Trent**, Catholic bishops and cardinals agreed on several doctrines:

• The Church’s interpretation of the Bible was final. Any Christian who substituted his or her own interpretation was a

heretic.

• Christians needed faith and good works for salvation. They were not saved by faith alone, as Luther argued.

• The Bible and Church tradition were equally powerful authorities for guiding Christian life.

• Indulgences were valid expressions of faith. But the false selling of indulgences was banned.

The next pope, Paul IV, vigorously carried out the council’s decrees. In 1559, he had officials draw up a list of books considered dangerous to the Catholic faith. This list was known as the **Index of Forbidden Books**. Catholic bishops throughout Europe were ordered to gather up the offensive books (including Protestant Bibles) and burn them in bonfires. In Venice alone, followers burned 10,000 books in one day

A new agency of obedience was created. Taking its cue from a successful **Spanish Inquisition** the Council of Trent formally established the **Roman Inquisition**, to examine and try all evidence of heresy or dissent. No Catholic country was exempt. All crimes in the eyes of the Church would be handed to a local Inquisitor, equipped with all necessary means of persuasion. Guilt was always assumed, interrogation relentless, and torture deployed to squeeze the truth out of a witness.

<http://www.pbs.org/empires/medici/renaissance/counter.html>

<http://www.historylearningsite.co.uk/The-Catholic-Reformation.htm>

*World History: Patterns of Interaction,* Ch. 17, section 4