

Here I Stand
The Reformation in Germany and Switzerland
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Slide 1

1. Today, we will continue looking at the development of the idea that individuals have the right to determine their own religious beliefs.
2. Last week, we looked at the medieval Roman Catholic Church and some early and largely unsuccessful efforts to reform the excesses of that Church and give individuals the right to control their beliefs.
3. We ended in 1492, when King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella issued the Alhambra Decree, ordering that anyone not accepting the views of orthodox Christianity would be killed.
4. At that time, **“western Christianity . . . must rank as one of the most intolerant religions in world history.”** MacCulloch, *The Reformation* at 676.
5. Today, we will look at the period of the Protestant Reformation in Germany and Switzerland, ending in about 1555.
6. Last week, we saw how ruthless were medieval Popes in punishing people with beliefs they found heretical.
7. Unfortunately, we will see that Martin Luther, John Calvin, heroes of the Reformation, were little better.
8. That unpleasant fact is important as we try to understand the development of religious freedom.
9. We will see that that Reformation did not generally result in religious freedom for individuals, but instead moved the source of control from the Pope to secular authorities, who punished heretics with ruthless enthusiasm.

Slide 2

1. By 1500, the Renaissance was well underway in Italy and the Church was taking advantage of the extraordinary artistic talent coming out of Florence.
2. In 1499, a 24-year old Michelangelo completed his famous Pietà, commissioned by a French cardinal.

Slide 3

1. In 1506, the Church began rebuilding St. Peter's Basilica into the magnificent structure it is today.
2. To help pay for such masterpieces, the Church had become a huge commercial enterprise.
3. In 1476, Pope Sixtus IV had created a new market for indulgences by **“permit[ing] the living to buy and apply indulgences to deceased loved ones assumed to be suffering in purgatory for unrepented sins.”** Ozment, *The Age of Reform: 1250-1550* at 217.
4. By the time Leo X became Pope in 1513, **“it is estimated that there were some two thousand marketable Church jobs, which were literally sold over the counter at the Vatican; even a cardinal's hat might go to the highest bidder.”** Bokenkotter, *A Concise History of the Catholic Church* at 198.

Slide 4

1. Desiderius Erasmus, shown in this Rotterdam statue, became a Roman Catholic priest in about 1492 and eventually became one of the most famous “Humanist” writers of the Renaissance.
2. Born in Holland, he studied in Italy between 1506 and 1509 and became familiar with what he considered excesses of the Church.
3. In 1511, while staying with a young Thomas More in England, Erasmus wrote a satirical book called *The Praise of Folly* that was very critical of the Popes, whom he said had lost any claim to being heirs of the Apostles because of **“their riches, honors, dispensations, licenses, indulgences [and] tithes.”** Durant, *Heroes of History* at 258.
4. He mocked the **“Church teaching that sins were washed away by a scrap of paper, a gift of money, a pilgrimage, a relic, or a wax image.”** Moynhan, *The Faith* at 349.
5. The popularity of his works laid the ground work for the popular uprisings that soon followed. McGrath, *Historical Theology* at 117.
6. But Erasmus **“stopped short of questioning the majesty of Rome”** because he worried about the anarchy that might result if the authority of the Church were destroyed. *Id.*
7. As we will see, the fear of anarchy underlay the response to some of the uprisings Erasmus' writings helped spawn.

Slide 5

1. To gain a better understanding of theology, Erasmus became an expert in Greek.
2. In 1516, he published a new Latin version *New Testament* based on early Greek manuscripts.
3. His rendering of a single verse in the *Gospel of Matthew* provided a basis for the rejection of the entire practice of indulgences that he opposed.

Slide 6

1. Since the fourth century, the Roman Catholic Church had relied entirely on the so-called “Vulgate” translation of the *New Testament* in Latin, created by Jerome.
2. As Jerome had translated *Matthew* 4:17, Jesus required people to “do penance” because the kingdom of heaven was at hand.
3. That translation provided the basis for the requirement of the Catholic Church that persons seeking forgiveness perform some act of penance, which in turn provided the basis for selling indulgences.
4. Erasmus’ translation used the original Greek word, *metanoete*, which means to “have a change of mind” and is now usually translated “repent.”
5. This single word change provided the conceptual foundation for Martin Luther’s rejection of indulgences only a year later.

Slide 7

1. In 1517, a Dominican friar named Tetzel was sent to Germany to sell indulgences to move souls of the dead out of purgatory.
2. The official purpose was to raise money to rebuild St. Peter’s Church in Rome.
3. However, it was also a scheme to get money to a German archbishop so he could pay the large debt he had incurred in buying the leadership of three dioceses.
4. Tetzel’s message to the people of Germany was direct and simple, embodied in a jingle: **“As soon as the money in the coffer rings, the soul from purgatory’s fire springs.”** Durant, *Heroes of History* at 268.

Slide 8

1. Tetzel sold indulgences in a town near Wittenberg.

2. In one of these chance (or divinely inspired) events that change history, some of the people took their certificates to Martin Luther, a monk who was professor of theology at the University of Wittenberg.
3. They wanted him to certify that their purchases would be effective in getting their loved ones out of purgatory, as they had been promised by Tetzel.
4. From his study of the letters of Paul, and especially Paul's letter to the Romans, Luther had become convinced that salvation comes exclusively from faith in Jesus, who earned salvation for everyone by dying on the cross.
5. Based on these beliefs, Luther refused to certify that the certificates were effective.

Slide 9

1. Offended by the blatant commercialism of Tetzel's sales of what he considered useless indulgences, Luther then wrote his famous ninety-five theses.
2. The first two theses focused on the Vulgate's mistranslation of *Matthew* 4:17 revealed a year earlier by Erasmus: **"1. When our Lord and Master Jesus Christ said, ``Repent'' (Mt 4:17), he willed the entire life of believers to be one of repentance. 2. This word cannot be understood as referring to the sacrament of penance, that is, confession and satisfaction, as administered by the clergy."**
3. Referring to Tetzel's jingle, thesis 27 stated: **"They preach only human doctrines who say that as soon as the money clinks into the money chest, the soul flies out of purgatory."**
4. Thesis 82 asked rhetorically: **"Why does not the pope empty purgatory for the sake of holy love and the dire need of the souls that are there if he redeems an infinite number of souls for the sake of miserable money with which to build a church? The former reason would be most just; the latter is most trivial."**

Slide 10

1. Although the theses were directed against the abuses inherent in what Luther considered the useless sale of indulgences, they were not antagonist toward the Pope.
2. Instead, thesis 50 suggests that the Pope was unaware of the abuses Luther was writing about: **"Christians should be taught that if the Pope knew the exactions of the preachers of indulgences, he would rather have the basilica of St. Peter reduced to ashes than built upon the skin, flesh, and bones of his sheep."**
3. Their tone suggested that Luther expected to precipitate a dialogue with the Church over the practice of selling indulgences and the effect of Erasmus' new translation of *Matthew* 4:17.

4. There is a tradition that Luther tacked the theses, in Latin, to the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg, but modern scholars are not convinced that he really did that.
5. Instead, Luther used the printing press, invented in Germany in 1440, to circulate these propositions, in German, to the German people.
6. His views gained widespread support, with many Germans agreeing that indulgences were wrong and the process of selling them corrupt.
7. **“Tetzel was threatened by angry mobs, and kept off the streets.”** Moynahan, *The Faith* at 350.
8. In 1518, a German cardinal demanded that Luther retract his heresies, but he refused.

Slide 11

1. In 1519, Luther formally debated Johann Eck, a leading Catholic theologian, in Leipzig, Germany.
2. By this time, the issues had gone from the sale of indulgences to the overall authority of the Popes who had authorized them.
3. During the debate, Luther admitted that he no longer believed in the divine origin of the Pope’s authority or in the infallibility of the church councils.
4. Eck then pushed Luther to give his opinions about John Huss, who had been burned at the stake as a heretic in 1415 as a result of the Church Council of Constance.
5. Luther replied: **“I am sure on this, that many of Hus’ beliefs were completely evangelical and Christian.”** MacCulloch, *The Reformation* at 127.
6. Luther’s claim that the Council of Constance had erred in condemning Huss signaled a **“break with the entire medieval system of authority.”** Walker, *A History of the Christian Church* at 428.
7. **“For Luther ‘Scripture alone’ was the supreme authority in religion.”** Bokenkotter, *A Concise History of the Catholic Church* at 217.

Slide 12

1. Luther then published an open letter recommending that Germany set up its own national church, under the leadership of the local archbishop.
2. He wanted the new German church to make peace with the church in Bohemia founded by the followers of John Huss.

3. Compared with the respectful tone of his theses, this letter used extremely harsh language about the Pope: **“The Pope is the true Antichrist. [T]hou, O, Pope, art not the most holy of men, but the most sinful. Oh that God from heaven would soon destroy thy throne, and sink it in the abyss of hell!”** Durant, *Heroes of History* at 274.

Slide 13

1. In June 1520, a papal bull largely written by Johann Eck condemned Luther for heresy, **“giving him 60 days to turn from his heretical course.”** Shelley, *Church History in Plain Language* at 242.
2. Luther promptly **“burned that bull at the gates of Wittenberg, along with the works by Eck and volumes of canon law, which were the foundation of papal administration in the Church.”** MacCulloch, *The Reformation* at 128.
3. On December 11, 1520, **“Luther proclaimed that no one could be saved unless he renounced rule by the papacy.”** Durant, *Heroes of History* at 275.
4. In the words of Will Durant: **“The monk had excommunicated the Pope.”** *Id.*
5. Pope Leo X returned the favor on January 21, 1521, excommunicating Luther for heresy.

Slide 14

1. Despite his excommunication, Luther continued preaching, creating a huge problem for the Pope.
2. One of the Pope’s assistants reported: **“All Germany is up in arms against Rome. Papal bulls of excommunication are laughed at [and] Martin is pictured with a halo above his head.”** Durant, *Heroes of History* at 276.
3. With his own authority being challenged and ignored, Pope Leo sought the help of Charles V, the 19-year old Holy Roman Emperor **“who was under oath to defend the church and remove heresy from the empire.”** Shelley, *Church History in Plain Language* at 242

Slide 15

1. Charles convened a council of German princes, called a “Diet,” in the City of Worms and Luther was guaranteed safe passage to the city, where thousands of people greeted him as a hero.
2. The charges against him were presented by Johann Eck, the same person who had debated with Luther earlier in Leipzig.

3. On April 17, 1521, Eck put all of Luther's writings in front of him and asked him if he would reject all the heresies they contained.
4. Luther first requested a day to consider his answer.
5. The next day, Luther said that he would recant anything in his writings that Eck could show was contrary to Scripture.
6. Eck rejected this answer, saying: **"Martin, your plea to be heard from Scripture is the one always made by heretics."** Durant, *Heroes of History* at 277.
7. When pressed for a direct answer, Luther responded: **"Unless I am convicted by the testimony of Sacred Scripture or by evident reason [since] I do not accept the authority of Popes and councils, for they have contradicted each other, my conscience is captive to the Word of God. I cannot and I will not recant anything, for to go against my conscience is neither right nor safe. God help me. Amen."** *Id.*
8. The most famous words of Luther's response – **"Here I stand; I can do no other"** – are not in the official records of the proceedings.
9. Instead, they first appear in the earliest printed version of his response, again showing Luther's ability to make use of the printing press to spread his message.

Slide 16

1. Two days later, Charles V announced that the Diet had found that Luther was a "notorious heretic" and that he must stop preaching.
2. **"Luther departed with a three-week safe-conduct from the emperor, a brief period of grace in which to reconsider before he came under the imperial ban and subject to capital punishment."** Ozment, *The Age of Reform: 1250-1550* at 245.
3. Luther did not recant and on May 8, 1521, Charles V signed a warrant to arrest Luther for treason, punishable by death.
4. Ignoring this warrant, which also made him subject to punishment, Frederick the Wise, one of the electors at the Diet of Worms, took Luther to his remote capital in Wartburg, which is now a tourist attraction.
5. Frederick gave Luther a room in the castle, where he spent a year translating the Bible into the German language.

Slide 17

1. To get a better sense of the language actually used by the people, Luther went into the town disguised as Junker George, a minor nobleman, and talked to the people in the markets.
2. His translation helped standardize the German language in much the way that the writings of Shakespeare helped standardize English.
3. Luther was not above putting his own views into his translation.
4. Most famously, Luther translated *Romans* 3:28 to say: "**[T]hus, we hold, then, that man is justified without the works of the law to do, alone through faith.**"
5. The word "alone" does not appear in the original Greek, but Luther defended his translation by maintaining that the adverb "alone" was required to express what he thought was Paul's intended meaning.

Slide 18

1. Luther was never arrested because Charles V was too busy fighting the empire's foreign battles.
2. As one author states: "**The emperor's total preoccupation with its enemies made Luther's survival possible; it was the major political factor in the Reformation's success.**" Ozment, *The Age of Reform: 1250-1550* at 246.
3. So, Luther returned to Wittenberg and set out the principles that today are the essential beliefs of the Lutheran Church.
4. The most important belief of the Lutherans, then and now, is the belief that salvation comes entirely from faith in Jesus and cannot be earned by good works.
5. For Luther, "**[o]ur 'good works' and observations of the Law are not the cause of our justification but only the result.**" Armstrong, *A History of God* at 277.
6. He also proceeded to change the structure of the Church, abolishing bishops as without Biblical authority.
7. With his encouragement, German priests began to marry and conduct their services in German.

Slide 19

1. "**In the years following the Diet of Worms, [Luther's ideas] spread rapidly in almost all territories of Germany, above all in the towns and cities.**" Walker, *A History of the Christian Church* at 435.

- 2 Luther's views were popular among the princes who controlled Germany before its eventual unification as a nation.
3. They particularly liked his claim that they were free from control by the Pope and his bishops, freeing them from tribute obligations.
4. But Luther was not about to leave religious beliefs or political power with the people.
5. Although he had earlier argued for "two kingdoms," in which secular authorities would have no control over religious matters, to gain the support of German princes Luther **"allowed them to control the church in their territories, thereby strengthening their power and wealth."** Shelley, *Church History in Plain Language* at 245.
6. He **"agreed that matters which had in the past been the concern of the Church – administering its landed wealth and providing for the payment of its clergy – should now become the business of the secular prince."** MacCulloch, *The Reformation* at 164.
7. Within a few years, Luther had managed to wrest control of religious thought from the Pope and place it in the hands of German princes.
8. The results of this deal became apparent soon after Luther returned to Wittenberg and married a former nun.

Slide 20

1. In 1521, **"a pamphlet by Johannes Eberlin demanded universal male suffrage [and] the subordination of every ruler and official to popular elected councils."** Durant, *Heroes of History* at 279.
2. In Germany, feudal peasants used Luther's attack on the authority of the Catholic Church to launch an attack on all civil authority, expecting that Luther would support them.
3. One of the leaders of this so-called "Peasants' Revolt" was Thomas Münzer, a priest.
4. He won the allegiance of the masses **"by proclaiming that all men were created equal and should remain so."** Barzun, *From Dawn to Decadence* at 15.

Slide 21

1. **“By the end of 1524 there were some 30,000 peasants in arms in southern Germany, refusing to pay taxes, church tithes, or feudal dues, and sworn to emancipation or death.”** Durant, *Heroes of History* at 280.
2. When they asked for Luther’s support of their revolt, he refused, telling them that **“a worldly kingdom cannot stand unless there is some inequality of persons, so that some are free, some imprisoned, some lords, some subjects.”** *Id.* at 281.
3. Since Luther had put the German princes in charge of his churches, for him **“all political revolution was rebellion against God.”** Walker, *A History of the Christian Church* at 437.
4. As a result, Luther became what one author calls **“an apologist for official savagery.”** MacCulloch, *The Reformation* at 160.
5. Luther told the German princes that **“[t]hese times are so extraordinary that a prince can win heaven more easily by bloodshed than by prayer.”** Moynahan, *The Faith* at 365.
6. He urged the princes to **“stab, smite and slay, secretly or openly, remembering that nothing can be more poisonous, hurtful or devilish than a rebel.”** MacCulloch, *The Reformation* at 160.

Slide 22

1. Smite and slay they did – by the time the Peasant’s Revolt had been put down, more than 130,000 peasants had been killed.
2. One executioner claimed to have killed 1,200 peasants himself.
3. Thomas Münzer was tortured and then beheaded after he led thousands of peasants into what turned out to be a massacre.
4. Luther, who saw Münzer as a rival, published a pamphlet calling Münzer’s **“execution in 1525 a fitting divine judgment upon both his theology and his revolt.”** Ozment, *The Age of Reform: 1250-1550* at 342.

Slide 23

1. Erasmus, the great Humanist, was appalled by the violence unleashed in the name of reform.
2. When monks said that he had laid the egg that Luther hatched, he replied that he had laid a hen egg and Luther had hatched a game cock.

Slide 24

1. **“The peasants never forgave Luther. They felt that the new religion had sanctified their cause, had aroused them to hope and action, and had deserted them in the hour of decision.”** Ozment, *The Age of Reform: 1250-1550* at 342.
2. But Luther was unrepentant, saying: **“I smote the peasants; all their blood is on my head; the Lord God ordered it.”** Barzun, *From Dawn to Decadence: 1500 to the Present* at 19.
3. **“Many of [the peasants] returned to Catholicism or turned to more radical forms of the Reformation.”** Shelley, *Church History in Plain Language* at 243.

Slide 25

1. Those “more radical forms” arose in Switzerland under Ulrich Zwingli, a reformer less well known than Luther but probably just as important.
2. In 1518, Zwingli became priest of the Great Minster Church in Zurich, a large church claimed to have been founded by Charlemagne.
3. While a student, he had studied the works of Erasmus and became convinced of the excesses of the Catholic Church.
4. Soon after arriving in Zurich, he began to articulate and preach the absolute authority of the Scriptures and rejected many of the teachings of the Church that could not find support in the Scriptures.
5. Like Luther, Zwingli rejected the authority of the Pope, the power of indulgences and fasting during Lent.
6. He thought that the Catholic Mass was unnecessarily formal and stilted and began preaching in ordinary clothes, facing the congregation.
7. Zwingli took the figure of Jesus off the crucifix because he believed that it was inappropriate to represent Jesus in any manner and concluded that organ music was not justified by the Bible.
8. Before Luther, Zwingli advocated the abolishment of the requirement that priests are celibate and he had married.

Slide 26

1. At Zwingli’s instance, in 1523, the city council of Zurich adopted the beliefs and practices of Zwingli, officially rejecting Roman Catholicism and starting the so-called “Reform tradition.”

2. The city council and not the Pope was now in charge of the beliefs of the residents of Zurich.
3. **“In June and July 1524, by order of the council, gangs of workers forcibly removed pictures, statues, and relics from the seven city churches and walled up the organ in the Great Minster.”** Walker, *A History of the Christian Church* at 444.

Slide 27

1. In 1525, a group of Zurich parishioners claimed that Zwingli had not gone far enough in establishing a church based entirely on the Bible.
2. They were specifically opposed to the idea of infant baptism, which Zwingli supported, noting that John the Baptist had baptized only adults.
3. They were even more opposed to the government control of religion that Zwingli had established and demanded the right to practice their own beliefs, advocating **“the complete separation of church and state.”** Walker, *A History of the Christian Church* at 449.
4. Their opponents called them “Anabaptists” or rebaptizers, a name that has stuck despite its inaccuracy — they advocated only the baptism of adults who were able to make their own decision about their beliefs and refused to baptize their infants.
5. The Anabaptists also rejected military service on the ground that it is always sinful to take a human life, rejecting the Augustinian view of the “just war.”
6. Some of them proposed the communal owning of property and some proposed **“a community of wives.”** Durant, *Heroes of History* at 287.

Slide 28

1. Zwingli and his church rejected the baptism of adults and could not stand this challenge to their authority.
2. Zwingli **“accepted that the city council could impose the death sentence on the unorthodox.”** Moynahan, *The Faith* at 373.
3. So, on March 7, 1526, the Zurich city council ordered the drowning of Anabaptists and eventually drowned four leaders in Zurich’s Lammat River.
4. The drownings were accompanied by sarcastic statements relating to Anabaptists’ desire to be dunked in the water.
5. These executions effectively ending the Anabaptist movement in Zurich.

6. As one author has written: **“To us the Anabaptists seem to have made a simple demand: a person’s right to his own beliefs. But in the sixteenth century the heretics seemed to be destroying the very fabric of society. That is why the voice of conscience was so often silenced by martyrdom.”** Shelley, *Church History in Plain Language* at 251.

7. This idea, that religious freedom is a threat to civil order, will be seen over and over again.

Slide 29

1. Because of their persecution in Switzerland, Anabaptists fled to Germany, **“where Luther seemed to have prepared for them by breaking the dams of custom and discipline, making ‘every man a priest,’ and proclaiming the freedom of the Christian man.”** Shelley, *Church History in Plain Language* at 251.

2. But the Emperor Charles V soon made rebaptism a crime, punishable by death, and the Anabaptists were again persecuted.

3. **“During the Reformation years, between four and five thousand Anabaptists were executed by fire, water, and sword.”** *Id.*

4. Despite the persecution, the Anabaptists survived and their spiritual descendants today are the Hutterites, Mennonites and Amish.

Slide 30

1. By 1528 about half the cities of the Swiss Confederacy had followed Zwingli in rejecting the authority of the Pope.

2. In 1529, five German princes and 14 German cities who supported the reforms of Luther issued a document called a “Protestation” that indicated the reform beliefs that they all shared, a document that eventually led to the followers of Luther and others being labeled as “Protestants.” MacCulloch, *The Reformation* at 171.

3. By this time, Luther knew of the reforms being accomplished by Zwingli in Zurich and was willing to consider a united reform movement.

4. Their fundamental difference was over the belief that the bread and wine literally become the body and blood of Christ during the Eucharist.

5. Luther accepted that belief.

6. Following his own teachings that the Bible is the only source of legitimate beliefs, Luther simply pointed to the words of Jesus: **"This is my body, which is for you."** *1 Corinthians* 11:24.
7. Luther had no problem believing that a divine Jesus could be in many places at once and could literally come in among the Communion elements, as he said he would.
8. Zwingli rejected the idea, accepted by both the Luther and the Catholic Church, that the body and blood of Jesus are literally present during Communion, teaching instead that the **"bread and wine represent or symbolize Christ's presence."** Placher, *A History of Christian Theology* at 189.

Slide 31

1. To see if they could resolve their differences, Luther and Zwingli met at a castle in Marburg, Germany, in the so-called "Marburg Colloquy."
2. They reached agreement on 14 issues, but could not agree on the actual presence of Jesus in the Eucharist.
3. Zwingli argued that Jesus could not be present during the Eucharist because He was in heaven, awaiting his eventual return to earth.
4. Zwingli argued that the words **"This is my body"** should be interpreted as **"This signifies my body."** Moynahan, *The Faith* at 374.

Slide 32

1. Luther would have none of that kind of interpretation, under which **"'God' could mean 'cuckoo,' 'created' could mean 'ate,' and 'heavens and earth' could mean 'hedgehog,' so that the opening verse of the book of Genesis could be interpreted to mean, 'The cuckoo ate the hedgehog.'"** Placher, *A History of Christian Theology* at 190.
2. Because of their differences over the Eucharist, Luther and Zwingli were unable to form an alliance and the breakaway churches in Germany and those in Switzerland went down different paths.
3. As one author writes: **"The bitterness revealed at Marburg . . . confirmed that Protestants were not the united force of Catholic nightmare. They split, and split easily; it was possible to deal with them separately."** Moynahan, *The Faith* at 376.

Slide 33

1. Lacking an agreement with German Lutherans, Zwingli had to battle his enemies alone.
2. Zwingli himself was killed in 1531 in a battle with Catholics from the cantons in Switzerland that continued to be loyal to Rome – his body was cut into four pieces and burned.
3. Days later, **“people were claiming to have parts of his heart and selling them as relics.”** Moynahan, *The Faith* at 376.

Slide 34

1. John Calvin was a young French lawyer, who became convinced of the correctness of the views of Luther and Zwingli.
2. In March 1536, when he was 27 years old, he published *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, which one author has called **“the clearest, most logical, and most readable exposition of the Protestant doctrine that the Reformation Age produced.”** Shelley, *Church History in Plain Language* at 198-99.
3. In July 1536, Calvin was invited by the city council in Geneva to run the church there.
4. He left in 1538 after a power struggle, but returned in 1541 and created in Geneva **“a theocratic regime in which the Reformed church claimed authority over civic life and personal behavior as well as faith.”** Moynahan, *The Faith* at 386.
5. He established church officers based on Biblical teachings, limited to ministers, teachers, elders and deacons.
6. The minister and twelve elders constituted the “consistory,” which met weekly to deal with individual moral lapses, such as drunkenness and lewdness and anything that rang of Roman Catholicism.
7. Anyone desiring to be citizen had to accept a confession of faith consistent with his anti-Catholic views. Shelley, *Church History in Plain Language* at 259.
8. **“It was an offense to possess a rosary, to go on a pilgrimage, to observe a papal fast, or to attend mass.”** Moynahan, *The Faith* at 386.
9. Calvin also extended the requirement of strict morality to commercial practices, outlawing sharp practices.
10. But he rejected bans on charging of interest because they were not based on Biblical teachings, giving rise to the growth of Swiss banks.

11. Karen Armstrong writes that the emphasis of John Calvin on strict morality “**had a profound effect on the emerging Western ethos.**” Armstrong, *A History of God* at 279.

Slide 35

1. Calvin taught that from the beginning of time, God has chosen *both* those people who will be saved and those who will be damned.
2. This doctrine is called “double predestination” and goes beyond the express teachings of Augustine, who taught only that God had chosen those who would be saved.
3. Although Calvin did not claim to know whom God had chosen, “**he believed that three tests constituted a good yardstick by which to judge who might be saved: participation in the two sacraments, Baptism and the Lord’s Supper; an upright moral life; and a public profession of the faith.**” Shelley, *Church History in Plain Language* at 261.

Slide 36

1. Like Zwingli, Calvin used the city council to control beliefs that differed from his own.
2. In 1551, the council banished Jerome Bolsec for claiming that Calvin’s claim of predestination was in error.
3. Calvinist punishment did not stop with banishment.
4. As one author has noted, “[t]he execution of opponents passed seamlessly from **Catholicism to Calvinism.**” Moynahan, *The Faith* at 394.
5. As Jacques Barzun, the great historian, noted: “**Once literal biblicism had taken hold, all imaginable acts of cruelty, moral, social, and political, found their warrant somewhere in scripture.**” Barzun, *From Dawn to Decadence: 1500 to the Present* at 19.
6. In 1547, the city council beheaded Jacques Gruet for suggesting that people should not be punished unless they threatened harm to the city, which Calvin considered an affront to him as the servant of God.

Slide 37

1. Michael Servetus was a Spanish physician who was the first European to describe the function of pulmonary circulation.
2. A devout Christian, who had read the Bible in both Greek and Hebrew, he rejected the Trinity, which he said had not come from the Scripture, but was instead an invention of Greek philosophers.
3. He said the doctrine of the Trinity had “**alienated the minds of men from the knowledge of the true Christ and presented us with a tripartite God.**” Armstrong, *A History of God* at 280.

Slide 38

1. Based on charges supported by John Calvin, in 1553 Servetus was convicted in Geneva of blasphemy.
2. Although Calvin suggested that Servetus be beheaded as a matter of grace, he was sentenced to a slow burn.
3. His execution took two hours.
4. Depending on which story you believe, this was because the executioners either used green wood or his books as the fuel.
5. As one author has noted: **“Such revulsion did not inhibit Calvinists. They believed that they were carrying out God’s purpose, and the discipline and austerity of Geneva attracted religious wanderers from across Europe.”** Moynahan, *The Faith* at 396.
6. **“Calvinists held their leader in an awe so profound that they burned those who crossed him.”** *Id.* at 394.
7. Looked at today, the actions of Calvin seem misguided and even illogical, especially in view of his views on predestination.
8. If a person is not acting as one would expect from someone chosen by God to be saved, it must be God’s will.
9. But, as one author notes, at the time of the burning of Servetus, the realization that **“[t]o kill a man is not to defend a doctrine, but simply to kill a man”** was still 100 years in the future. Ozment, *The Age of Reform: 1250-1550* at 371.

Slide 39

1. Martin Luther also saw a reason to kill people who did not act as he expected, especially as he got older.
2. As time passed, Luther had what one author describes as **“a furious disappointment that despite the signs that the Last Days were approaching, Jews were refusing to fulfill their appointed destiny in the end-time by converting to Christianity.”** MacCulloch, *The Reformation* at 690.
3. In 1543, three years before his death, Luther published a book called *“On the Jews and their Lies,”* in which he **“recommends that in retaliation for Jewish obstinacy, synagogues should be burned, Jewish literature confiscated, Jewish teaching forbidden and vengeance taken for the killing of Christ.”** *Id.*
4. In his book *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich*, William Shirer writes: **“It is difficult to understand the behavior of most German Protestants in the first Nazi years unless one is aware of two things: their history and the influence of Martin Luther. The great founder of Protestantism was both a passionate anti-Semite and a ferocious believer in absolute obedience to political authority. He wanted Germany**

rid of the Jews. Luther's advice was literally followed four centuries later by Hitler, Goering and Himmler.”

Slide 40

1. By the 1550s, Lutherans dominated much of Germany and had spread into Prussia, Denmark, Norway and Sweden, believing that Jesus is literally present during Communion.
2. Reformed Christianity, founded on the teachings of Zwingli and Calvin and believing that Jesus is not literally present during Communion, had spread throughout Switzerland and into some parts of Germany and Scotland.
3. In all of these areas, conflicts existed between Roman Catholics and followers of the new beliefs, leading to repeated fighting.
4. In 1530, Emperor Charles V had thought that he could eliminate the Protestants and restore order to his empire that was violently divided between the Church and the followers of Luther.
5. By 1555, weary of the effort, he gave up and agreed to the so-called “Peace of Augsburg.”
6. He gave the princes the right **“to choose their own religion and to make it obligatory among their subjects.”** Durant, *Heroes of History* at 292.
7. **“[T]he signatory princes agreed that each of them should have the right to banish from his territory any person not accepting the prince’s faith.”** Durant, *Rousseau and Revolution* at 176.

Slide 41

1. This map shows the regional division of religion in the Holy Roman Empire in 1560, after the Peace of Augsburg.
2. People not agreeing with their prince’s choice and wanting to practice a different religion had to leave.
3. Historian Will Durant summarizes the resulting situation: **“There was no pretense of religious toleration; the right of private judgment, which the Reformation had upheld in the ecstasy of revolt, was now abandoned, if only because it had led to such a diversity of warring creeds as threatened the mind of Europe.”** Durant, *Heroes of History* at 292.
4. On the European Continent, the Reformation had moved control of beliefs from the Pope to the secular authorities and made the punishment for rejecting state-mandated orthodoxy exile rather than burning.
5. The system did not guarantee complete uniformity of beliefs within an area because the princes did not always have the power to enforce their faith monopolies.

6. The occasional religious toleration was therefore “**a grudging recognition of something which ideally would have remained forbidden.**” *Id.*

7. True religious freedom was still in the future, the subject of the second set of presentations.

Slide 42

1. In two weeks, we will move west to England, focusing on the establishment of the Church of England by King Henry VIII, which, like the Reformation in Germany and Switzerland, put the power to control religious beliefs in the hands of the secular authorities.

2. We will examine groups that traveled to the New World to practice their beliefs.

3. We will then look at the eventual development of the idea of religious freedom for individuals.

4. We will end with the enactment of the First Amendment and its guarantee of the right of individuals to be free to exercise their religious beliefs.

5. Exactly what that means will be the subject of the last presentation, which will include looking at the so-called “Religious Freedom Restoration Act” and its requirement that religious freedom be balanced with other interests of society.

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