

# ***“Church History: Heroes, Heretics & Holy Wars”***

## ***Sunday School Notes***

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### **CLASS 12- The Radical Reformation and the Counter-Reformation**

The city was **Munster in NW Germany**. A man named Jan Matthijs believed that it was the New Jerusalem, and that true believers would flock there for the battle of Armageddon. In 1534, the radicals had come to power in the city council elections:

- Adult baptism was forced on everyone, you were expelled if you resisted.
- Doors were not allowed to be locked to show that property was held by everyone.
- Polygamy was allowed and encouraged.

A group of joint Catholic/Lutheran forces put the city under siege. Matthijs ran out on Easter Sunday believing that God would allow him to single-handedly defeat them. He was wrong & killed. Jan van Leiden took over, he was qualified because he had run naked through the streets shouting prophecies. He anointed himself the new King David, took 16 wives, and instituted strict discipline-putting people to death for complaining, including one of his wives that he personally beheaded. Finally the Catholics & Lutherans broke through and killed everyone.

If this was the fruits of the Reformation, who wanted to be involved in that? Can you see why this was called the Radical Reformation, and why Luther/Zwingli wanted to put distance between them?

**Thomas Muntzer - 1490-1525** - Initially served with Luther, but thought Luther was too passive and hadn't let the spiritual/ theological changes transform society enough. He believed God spoke to the "inner heart" which was a superior speaking than to the dead "outer word" of the Bible. He led the German Peasants' War of 1524-25, which ended with Muntzer leading a group of peasants against a true army to be completely slaughtered. Muntzer was caught, tortured and beheaded. Gave the Anabaptists a very bad name all over Europe.

Most Anabaptists just wanted to quietly withdraw from society, but obviously there was the militant fringe. The Anabaptists wanted to go much further than the other Reformers, they wanted a church that looked like the New Testament. They didn't want to be tied to the state, they didn't want a powerful institution; they saw the Reformers as just moving from allegiance to Rome to allegiance to local groups or personalities. They wanted a brotherhood of believers, not a bureaucracy. Big emphasis on separation of church and state. They weren't as into doctrine as they were lifestyle, which often tended to result in legalistic tendencies. Luther called them the "new monks," which was not a compliment.

Anabaptist means "baptize again." Anabaptists not only didn't believe in baptizing babies, they wouldn't baptize you when you first came to faith in Christ. You had to be a tried and true, tested strong Christian before you were baptized.

**Conrad Grebel - 1498-1526** - had been one of Zwingli's helpers in Zurich, but he eventually became convinced that infant baptism was wrong and so he baptized the first adult in Zurich in 1525. Formed what became known as the "Swiss Brethren." Baptism was very bound up in citizenship, so not only was this heresy, but civil disobedience. The Zurich city council started

exiling the Anabaptists, so Grebel landed in St. Gall, where he baptized over 500 people and had huge success. Other Anabaptists back in Zurich were drowned, which was a mockery.

Distinctives of the Anabaptists:

**The Schleithem Confession, 1527**

- 1) Believer's Baptism over Infant Baptism
- 2) Ban/Shun on anyone who sins after being warned twice
- 3) Lord's Supper is for believers only
- 4) Separation from evil and wickedness of the world
- 5) Clergy needed to have high moral qualifications even if they don't need any theological training
- 6) Pacifism
- 7) No taking of oaths

**Michael Sattler – 1490-1527** – the main leader of the group that drew that up. Eventually captured, tortured and burned at the stake; wife was drowned.

Final name is **Menno Simons – 1496-1561** – Catholic priest in 1520s and 30s, but eventually left to form what would be called the Mennonites. His brother had been killed in Munster, so he rejected the violence, but wanted the separatist, utopian community. In 1540, he wrote *Foundation Book*.

Where Calvinists have TULIP, Anabaptists have BASIN:

- B- rotherhood of all Believers
- A- dult Baptism
- S- eparation of Church & State
- I- n the World but not of it
- N- onviolent Resistance

The true ancestors of Anabaptists are not Baptists, but Mennonites and Amish, though they've changed much. Most Anabaptists then were pacifists, yet they were very disruptive. Protestant preachers would have their sermons interrupted by Anabaptists, who also caused riots. But Anabaptists was a "catch-all" phrase that grabbed a lot of different people/regions/movements. Not only Catholics but also Protestants misunderstood and turned on the Anabaptists.

**The Counter-Reformation** is what is referred to as Catholicism's changes and reaction to the Reformation, but there was already reform happening within the Catholic church before the Protestants "forced a response."

Cardinal Jimenez in Spain in the 15<sup>th</sup> century was pushing things that made the Reformation not as attractive there because abuses were already being dealt with:

- to have clergy better education for clergy
- commitment and follow-through with celibacy
- financial accountability

The Catholic church also had priests ready to debate the Reformers: Murner, Latomus, Eck (who debated Luther).

**The Society of Jesus or “Jesuits” were started by Ignatius Loyola in 1540.** Ignatius was a Spanish soldier who had been hit in the leg by a cannonball. They were monks committed to all the common monk vows (poverty, chastity, obedience), and they performed Ignatius’ *Spiritual Exercises* once a year, a month-long very rigorous meditation and discipline. They pledged themselves in undyingly loyal to the Catholic church and the Pope, and became the Pope’s tools to both spread the Catholic faith in the Americas and the Far East, as well as targeting Protestant areas to be won back. While the Protestants worked out their theology, the Jesuits spread the faith in missions.

In Southern Germany, Poland & Hungary, the Jesuits started schools and promised Protestant parents that they would not try to win their children to the Catholic faith, but that was a lie. A wildly successful lie, as they won most children’s hearts back to the church and were able to claim those areas. They founded some of the finest universities in Europe

We talked about **Francis Xavier** when we talked about monks- he was a Jesuit who died trying to bring the Catholic faith to China, after having brought it to Japan, India, Malaysia & Vietnam.

**The Council of Trent – Pope Paul III called a council in Northern Italian city of Trent in 1545.**

It met on & off in 3 blocks for the next 18 years. 3 Popes succeeded Paul III before it was finished.

- Bishops and priests had to reside in the areas where they served. (Huge abuse of absenteeism)
- Priests actually had to preach regularly, and bishops had to make sure it happened.
- Each diocese had to provide clergy training institutes
- Indulgences were abolished
- The Vulgate, the Latin version of the Scriptures was declared authoritative
- Tradition of the church is equal to Scripture
- Affirmed 7 sacraments: Eucharist/Mass, Baptism, Confirmation, Reconciliation, Marriage, Holy Orders (ordination), Last Rites
- The Mass is a true sacrifice; reaffirmed consubstantiation
- Justification is faith plus good works; people can’t know that they’re justified

*Essentially, they cleaned up the external abuses, but kept all the bad theology and control.*

Protestants who read the canons and decrees of the Council of Trent will find themselves consigned to eternal perdition 268 times!

The Council of Trent stood as the church law until 1963 when the Second Vatican Council began.

Paul IV was kind of like a ruthless Rudy Guliano, when he cleaned up NYC. He totally cleaned up Rome, sometimes with ruthless tactics, in the span of 4 years:

- Organized crime flourished in Rome; Paul had the police round them up and they were never heard from again.
- He sent out a notice that on a particular date that all the brothels would be turned into convents, and all the prostitutes would become nuns. Those who refused would be sent into the street.
- Every monk had to report to his monastic house by a certain date; when 200 of them did not report, he gave them the option of being imprisoned or sent to row galley ships.

### **St. Bartholomew’s Day Massacre**

France in the early 16<sup>th</sup> century had very little tolerance for Protestantism, but Protestants kept being sent there to start churches and get the Reformation started there. We already saw that in the early 1520s when Calvin was a young man, the King purged Paris of Protestants for a time.

Calvinism had come to France in 1555 and the French Protestant Church had started with 72 congregations. Soon there were 2,000 churches and 400,000 Protestants. French Protestants were called Huguenots.

By 1572, the queen's name was Catherine de Medici, and while she was planning the wedding for her daughter to a man from a Protestant family, she was also plotting the assassination of the top Huguenot leader; which was more a political move than it was a religious one. The assassination attempt failed, so Catherine broadened it to include all the Protestant leaders in Paris.

St. Bartholomew's Day was August 24, 1572, they formed mobs to hunt down the Huguenots and kill them, even their children. In the weeks that followed, the mobs spread out to the provinces killing even more. Probably 30,000 to 40,000 total killed, though some estimated as many as 100,000. Apparently there were enough Huguenots left to wage civil war for the next few years. Eventually a formerly Protestant King, Henry, issued the Edict of Nantes in 1598, which protected Protestants and calmed things down.

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