STUDY PAK 15

THE CATHOLIC COUNTER REFORMATION

"In the revolutionary turmoil excited by Luther, it is easy to forget that the Protestant success was never more than partial. Loud though, blew his trumpet, the paper walls of Rome…refused to fall. However badly shaken, the papacy proved surprisingly resistant. Indeed it is one of the ironies of the age that when the dust settled, the pope was found in more undisputed control of the reduced territory left to him than his predecessors had exercised over the whole Latin Church."

~~G. R. Elton, *Reformation Europe*, p. 186~~

I. CATHOLIC REFORM

In the middle of the 16th century, it appeared that Protestantism would completely overcome Roman Catholicism. However, the strength of Catholicism was revived during the period known as the Counter Reformation.

A. The Reforming Popes

Counter Reformation popes made multiple changes in attempt to gain strength for the Catholic Church. Pope Paul III (1534-1549) downplayed indulgences because he recognized it was _____. He also upgraded the papal administration and staff, worked against some forms of corruption in the clergy, and launched missionary efforts in Protestant territory

Pope Paul IV (1559-1559) effectively used the Inquisition and the _____ _____ to prevent the spread of Protestantism into new territories. The severity of the Inquisition was surely persuasive and the ban on books halted the flow of opposing counsel.

Other popes placed great emphasis on reforming the financial practices of the Roman Catholic Church. Much has been written about trying to reform the morality of the priests. Immorality within the clergy had become open and common. Reforming morality, though, only came to mean that the immoral practices of the priests, cardinals, and even the pope now must be hidden. There was not a real moral reformation, but rather, a reformation of appearance.

B. The Reforming Orders

Several new orders of priests and nuns were formed which emphasized _____ _____ and public service. A vow of poverty meant having no possessions. Today, when Roman Catholic priests in America take a vow of poverty, they may still drive luxury cars, live in beautiful homes, and enjoy many comforts and conveniences. Because of their vow of poverty, however, none of this is personally owned by them. During the period of the Counter Reformation, may priests and nuns became genuinely concerned about the reputation of the church and people rejecting the church over the open corruption. Through their vows of poverty they would commit to live in truly limited circumstances. They would also take vows of public service and performed those services. Some were, no doubt, sincere.

C. The Jesuits

Ignatius Loyola (1491-1556) formed the Society of Jesus. This was organized as a semi-military force, trained in both ministry and military arts. The members of the society, called Jesuits, operated outside the normal Catholic chain of command. Initially, they answered to the pope, alone, but soon some were suggesting that they should answer to no one.

The Jesuits had three stated tasks: They were to educate the young, bring the masses back to Catholicism by studying ways to communicate with people, promote religious enthusiasm among Catholics.

The Jesuits started schools and universities everywhere. The state purpose of these schools was to train students to be loyal to Catholicism. One of the Jesuits said if they could have a child until he was seven, they would have the rest of his life.

Serving as missionaries, many Jesuits traveled to Protestant, Buddhist, and Moslem countries. They were often thought to be connected to political intrigues in Protestant countries. There is a book written about the Jesuits entitled, *The*

Pope's Spies. This book goes into detailed specifics about Jesuit plots and assassinations in Europe during the 17th century. The book, itself, was not written by someone who was opposed to Catholicism. The author, rather, was a loyal Catholic. Taking the perspective that the Jesuits sometimes got out of hand, the author detailed how common it was for assassins and those leading rebellions to have been trained in Jesuit schools. Because of their reputation, the Jesuits were outlawed in certain countries. There were even Catholic countries which outlawed the Jesuits.

II. ASSASSINATIONS

Roman Catholicism advanced its cause by assassinating many _____ _____ For example, Henry IV, a Protestant leader in France, struggled to bring about religious liberty. Through negotiations with the Catholic leaders, he converted to Catholicism and became the King of France. As King, however, he then issued a decree granting religious liberty to all non-Catholics. This agreement was called the Edict of Nantes. Though the method Henry IV employed may be unsettling, the Edict of Nantes surely benefited the spread of the Gospel. With this freedom, people were able to openly preach the Gospel in France. Henry IV, however, was assassinated by a loyal Catholic who had been to Jesuit school.

William the Silent of Holland is known for being the first to bring religious liberty to Holland. He, also, was assassinated by a loyal Catholic who had been trained in a Jesuit school.

Admiral D' Coligny of France, Queen Elizabeth of England, and King James of Scotland and England (the Gunpowder Plot) survived assassination attempts. The Papacy and particularly the Jesuits were often considered to be directly behind these attempts.

The Gunpowder Plot involving King James was an elaborate arrangement. The assassins developed a plan to be carried out on a particular day when the king was scheduled to address the Parliament. In the basement of the Parliament building, barrels of gunpowder

were brought in with the intention of blowing up both the king and parliament. Then, acting on the ensuing confusion, the assassins planned to reestablish a Catholic government in England. The plot was discovered relatively close to the last minute, and prevented. One of the assassins, Guy Fawkes, was assigned to maneuver the gun power, though he was more of a stooge for the main instigators. He was caught and put to death. The English celebrated his execution with _____. The Gunpowder Plot, without question, was organized by people trained at a Jesuit university, receiving direction from Jesuit leaders. Eventually, a number of people in connection with this plot were linked to the Jesuits and also put to death.

Guy Fawkes Day continues to be a national holiday in England, though most seem to have forgotten the purpose for the holiday. Imagine how different the history of England would have been if Catholicism had regained control. While so many people in England, today, celebrate it by getting drunk and cursing the Lord, it was originally an English holiday to thank God for having spared them from the influence and control of Catholicism.

III. THE COUNCIL OF TRENT

The Council of Trent was the nineteenth recognized council of the Catholic Church. It was divided into three sessions which spanned an 18-year period. This council was devoted to stemming the growing tide of Protestantism. Through much discussion and debate, the council eventually arrived at conclusions that would become church policy.

The council clarified Catholic doctrine about salvation and the sacraments. It confirmed that _____.
This doctrine was recently reconfirmed in 2006 by the Pope. He confirmed official Catholic doctrine to be that only Catholics could go to heaven, and quoted the Council of Trent in that confirmation. Many Catholics no longer think that way. Today's society has become largely ecumenical and Catholics have become involved in a wide variety of activities with non-Catholics. Regardless, the Pope has verified that Catholic doctrine has

not changed; reiterating that the Catholics believe salvation can be found only in the Catholic Church.

The Catholic canon, which is the list of accepted Scripture, was also confirmed at the Council of Trent. This list included _____ which has been rejected by the Protestants. However, some significant Catholic doctrines can be found only within the Apocrypha. As a result, the Protestants recognized _____books in the Bible while the Catholic Church recognized _____ Those additional 14 books make a dramatic difference.

Protestantism and all non-Catholic Christianity was officially condemned by the Council of Trent. The Roman Catholic Church was endorsed by the Council as the sole interpreter of Scripture. _____ was made _____ _____. The concept of indulgences _____. he Council engaged in much debate before these determinations were concluded. For example, there was a tremendous debate over indulgences. There were Catholic leaders who wanted to eliminate the entire concept because they realized how much disrepute it brought them with the people. In the end, though, this concept was upheld as was the concept of purgatory.

Now, as a result of the Council of Trent, the die is cast. Roman Catholic theology still remains unchanged. Those theological issues which created the Reformation have not been addressed. Catholicism has not moved closer to evangelical Christianity. Today, many evangelicals are urging fellowship with the Catholic Church on the grounds that the Catholic Church has changed. However, as recently maintained by the Pope, that is not true. Though some individual Catholics may have moved in the direction of evangelicalism, the Catholic Church has not.

Once the Council of Trent had clearly defined Catholic doctrine, their next step was to determine how to go about defending these doctrines when they were under such attack all over the world.

IV. INQUISITION AND INDEX

The Inquisition was a Roman Catholic inspired program to deal with heresy. This program demonstrated no understanding or tolerance toward Scriptural doctrine. Heretics were often put to death. The process was to investigate those accused of heresy by way of councils specially formed for inquisition. These tribunals had the right to arrest suspected heretics, convict them without trial, and punish them. Many of these tribunals were led by Jesuits.

Reformation leaders in Italy and Spain were killed and Roman Catholicism maintained control of these countries. Within fifty years, 350,000 people were executed in connection with Inquisition tribunals.

The Index was a list of forbidden books. There were criminal penalties, including capital punishment, for reading books listed in the Index. Technically the Index still exists in some countries, though not in America. Technically, the Inquisition still exists, as well. Today, however, neither the Index nor the Inquisition punishes people by execution.

V. SAINT BARTHOLOMEW'S DAY MASSACRE

A detailed look at the Saint Bartholomew's Day massacre would offer a clear understanding of this period of time. Here, though, is only a brief account of that event.

On August 24, 1572, the bloodiest massacre of Protestants took place. French Protestants called Huguenots were making great progress in France. Catherine de Medici, Queen Regent of France, led the king to approve a massacre of Protestants. Early on a Sunday morning, French troops and armed civilians began a 23-day slaughter of French Protestants. Entirely without warning, it became suddenly legal to kill evangelical Christians. Not only did the army hunt and kill the Christians, but also civilians were free to kill Christians and, of course, take possession of their property. Offering no opportunity for preparation of a defense, the army and the population were turned loose

on Christians. Admiral D' Coligny, who had earlier survived a Jesuit assassination attempt, was killed during the St. Bartholomew Day Massacre. He was a prominent military leader and among the first killed, ensuring there would be no one to lead any segments of the military in the Christian's defense.

For 23-days, there was not a moment in which these Christians were free or safe. It is difficult to imagine what that was like. Any who were known to be evangelical Christians had to immediately flee their homes and search for a safe place to hide. They scattered to the mountains and the forest, trying to find places where there were physical barriers and physical places to hide. They could not trust their neighbors for help. Any neighbor who agreed to hide them would be at risk of being killed, as well. Each of their Christian family members or friends was facing the same situation. Men, women and children were mercilessly slaughtered. Fifty thousand were killed in Paris alone.

After the massacre Pope Gregory XIII ordered _____, and a special hymn was sung in honor _____. Though some have attempted to deny this, it cannot be denied. A gold medal was issued to honor "the Slaughter of the Huguenots" and given to anyone who took part in the killing. This medal could be worn around the neck and contained the words, "To the slaughter of the Huguenots." France would remain under Roman Catholic control.

There is a myth within evangelical history which claims that wherever the church is persecuted, it flourishes. That is not true. There have been times, and are times, when it is true. Though the church under persecution has grown and spread, that is not what always happens. During the St. Bartholomew Day Massacre, there were so many of the evangelical leaders killed that evangelicalism has never again been strong in France. Virtually all of the evangelical leadership were killed, all the churches burned, and all the Bibles destroyed. Still, today, Gospel preaching churches are almost unheard of in France. Persecution did not always lead to a flourishing church. Unfortunately, persecution sometimes was a very effective strategy by those who wanted to stop the preaching of the Gospel.

VI. THE INFLUENCE OF THE REFORMATION

Despite the Counter Reformation of Catholicism, the Reformation held a lasting influence. The Reformation limited Roman Catholic power, which never recovered control of Europe. For a period of time, Roman Catholic power had been the most prominent force in Europe. Eight-five times, Pope Innocent III had publically threatened Interdict (condemning an entire nation to Hell) if its king would not obey the Pope's will. This threat generated uproar among the citizens and would effectively turn the people against their king. Consequently, eighty-five times European kings gave in to the Pope's demands. In one situation, a small region of France was protecting independent Gospel preachers. The Pope ordered they all be killed. The king did not want to, but Pope Innocent III threatened to put him under Interdict. The king gave in and sent his armies after the independent preachers. During that period of time, Roman Catholicism was not just a power in Europe; it was the political power in Europe. The Reformation was a turning point. Because of this, even today, in the Catholic countries of Europe, there are limits on how much power the Catholic Church has. The Reformation broke Catholic control of Europe in a way which has never been regained.

The Reformation brought about _____ _____. These Bibles became popular in many European countries and impacted many people's lives.

The Protestant Bible brought about _____ _____. Prior to the printing and distribution of these Bibles, uniform rules for grammar and precise word definitions did not really exist. One Italian book, for example, might be written with different principles of grammar and different definitions of words than another Italian book written at the same time. The only way such rules could be established was to have a common literary work which everyone read. That is what happened in the languages of English, Italian, French, Spanish, German, and the Scandinavian languages. For a large part of Europe there was a Bible

which everyone was seeing or reading, even in Catholic countries, and this widespread exposure began to set the standards for grammar and definition. The English language was actually standardized through two avenues, Shakespeare, which was widely read, and the King James Bible. The French language, though France remained Catholic, was standardized through the Olivetan Bible. The German language was standardized by Luther's Bible. People would joke that the mistakes which Luther made in grammar became the grammar rules of the next generation. Once the language was standardized, nations began to bond together.

Before the start of the Reformation, Germany was 30 separate states. The people did not think of themselves as one nation. Their union is called Germany today because that is what it became. Italy, Holland, France, and Belgium were also simply a collection of states prior to the standardization of their language. One common language is what drew the people together.

Nation states, _____
_____. They were now bound together, they had a common language, and they were not afraid of the pope. This was true, even of the Catholic countries. With the introduction of Protestantism, though a pope could threaten Interdict, the nation could counter it with the threat of becoming Protestant. The Pope could lose an entire country. In the late 1400's there was no nation of Germany, no nation of France, and no nation of Italy. By the late 1500's those nations were starting to form and by the 1600's they had each become distinct nations. The whole scope of things in Europe changed and that would not have happened without the Reformation. It was the Reformation which took Catholicism from being the sole power to being one of many powers.

Some evangelical Christians say the Reformation was better _____
_____. There is some truth to that. There is evidence that the Reformers never understood the church, Bible prophecy, or separation of church and state. Yet, for all their mistakes, the Reformers told people that they do not get to Heaven

by their works; they get to Heaven by putting their faith and trust in Jesus Christ. There is no doubt that many people found Christ through the preaching of Luther (for all his faults), through the preaching of Zwingli (for all of his faults), through the preaching of t he English Reformers, and the people who founded the Church of England (and all of their faults, though there were many). There were many people who found Christ as their Savior and that is tremendous. Christians will meet many in Heaven saved through the Reformation. Also, eventually, independent churches were able to come out in the open and flourish because the Reformation broke the power of the Catholic Church. That is tremendous. That is the background and the heritage of our religious liberty today.