

The Reformation

Context, Characters

Controversies, Consequences

Class 8: Joining God in Hard Places:

France and the Netherlands

Class 8 Goals

- Explore the spread of Protestantism to France
- Examine the impact of persecution on Christian Life and Witness
- Look at the Reformation in the Netherlands

Opening Question

- Do some theological perspectives help people to more easily join God in hard places?
- What type of belief is necessary to stand up in the face of persecution or martyrdom?

Election and Martyrdom

- “If God sometimes allows the blood of his faithful to be spilled, he nevertheless carefully collects their precious tears.” — John Calvin to the church in Paris.
- The Reformed church in France was persecuted by both the crown and by common people.
- “Huguenots took refuge in their conviction of election as a chosen people whom God protects as well as chastises.” — Carter Lindberg

The French Church

- Concordat of Bologna (1516)
 - Negotiated between Francis I and Pope Leo X
 - Gave the French king the right to appoint archbishops, bishops and other clerics.
 - Allowed him to collect tithes from the clergy
 - All clergy swore loyalty to the king.
- Would other monarchs have broken from Rome with that deal?
- French nobles saw their power tied to the crown
- German nobles saw their power tied to a weak crown.

Toleration under Francis I

- French kings were crowned by the church and swore oaths to drive out heretics.
- Attacks on the Church were perceived as attacks on the King
- (Unless an alliance with German Princes was needed)



Toleration Under Henry II?

- Henry II (1547-59)
 - Lacked humanist sympathies or need for German allies
 - Started a severe persecution – for eating meat during lent, attending unauthorized services, heresy
 - Established a special political court to root out heresy.



Calvinist Influence in France

- Shared language with reformers
- Shared ideas about the Eucharist
- Influence of Calvin's writings directed at France – massive smuggling of devotional and propaganda materials.
- Geneva sent over 120 missionary/pastors into France
- Converts were called Huguenots or *Réformés*
- First National Synod met in 1559 – called for absolute equality of ministers and congregations.

Social Appeal of Protestantism

- Prominent Occupations
 - Skilled Artisans
 - Independent shopkeepers
 - Middle-class businessmen
 - Bankers
- Importance of music
 - Psalms translated into French became battle cries and comforted martyrs
 - 27,000 copies of Huguenot psalms printed in Geneva
- Role of the Nobility
 - Provided influence, representation at court, and military strength

Colloquy of Poissy

- 1559-1561 Four kings in quick succession brought turmoil and revived persecution of Huguenots.
- Catherine de' Medici (niece of Pope Clement VII) wife of Henry II – ruled as regent for her son Charles IX
- Called the Colloque of Poissy (1561) – to reconcile Protestants and Catholics – significant Catholic protest
 - Theodore Beza – a learned scholar and Calvin's heir apparent presented the Protestant view, but denigrated the mass
 - Catholic leaders responded the heretics were to be punished not accommodated
 - Only Trent could resolve the theological issues
- 1562 – First Edict of Toleration – Huguenots allowed at court and services allowed in private homes and outside towns.

Theodore Beza



Religious War

- Catherine soon feared losing the support of powerful Catholics
- March 1562 – Duke of Guise slaughtered over 50 protestants worshipping in a barn.
- Soon a full scale war broke out
 - Protestants fighting back cost them their image as martyrs
 - Appealing for an English alliance cast them as traitors
 - Hateful sermons preached on both sides as the war continued for over thirty years
- St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre 1572
 - During a wedding between Marguerite of Valois and Henry Navarre orders were sent to slaughter all the Huguenots – 6,000 killed in Paris, 20,000 nationwide



Understanding the Conflict

- “Heresy was no mere intellectual deviation; it was the pollution of the whole community, indeed nation. The Catholics of Paris ‘were ridding the community of a pollution and pouring out their wrath on a faction of people arrogant enough to defy the deeply felt religious convictions of the majority.’” Lindberg – Kingdon
- The Massacre is still an important event in Protestants self-understanding in France.
- Most Catholic leaders praised it as a necessary slaughter

Henry IV

- Inherits the throne in 1589 after the assassination of Henry III
- Was a Huguenot and not accepted as king
- Fought a five year war against Catholic nobles and Spanish powers.
- In March 1594 — he entered Paris triumphantly saying “Paris is worth a Mass?”
- He Converted to Catholicism and ruled as an absolute monarch
- Issued the Edict of Nantes in 1598 extending limited toleration to Protestants — right to worship in some areas, civil rights, and political rights
- Edict of Nantes revoked by Louis XIV in 1685

Henry IV



Belgic Confession

- Considering a Source:
- What do you notice about their understanding of the church?
- What do you make of the argument that everyone must join the church?
- Do they adequately differentiate between true and false churches?
- Do you agree with their argument about the necessity of strict church discipline? Should this still be required if everyone is compelled to join the church?

Reformation in the Netherlands

- Hapsburg Context
 - Netherlands were part of the Hapsburg Empire – Charles V was dedicated to eliminating Protestantism from his territories
- They had the highest percentage of religious martyrs in Europe.
 - Monks in an Augustinian monastery converted to Lutheranism – the monastery was leveled, 3 monks executed.
 - Charles V gave secular courts the power of inquisition.
 - 100 killed in Flanders, 384 in Holland
 - Resistance of local magistrates and trading ties to Germany weakened Charles V's repression.
 - Psalms in Dutch were central to their faith.

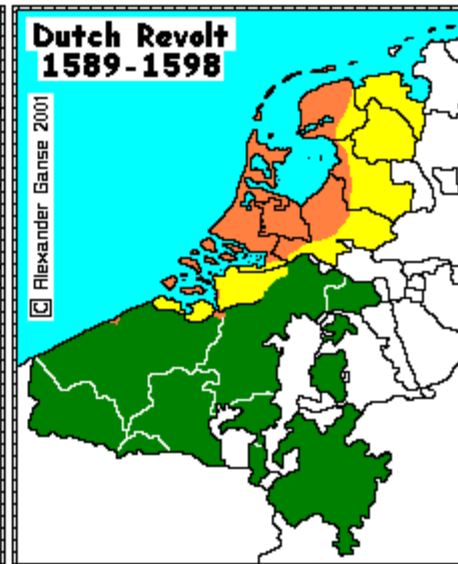
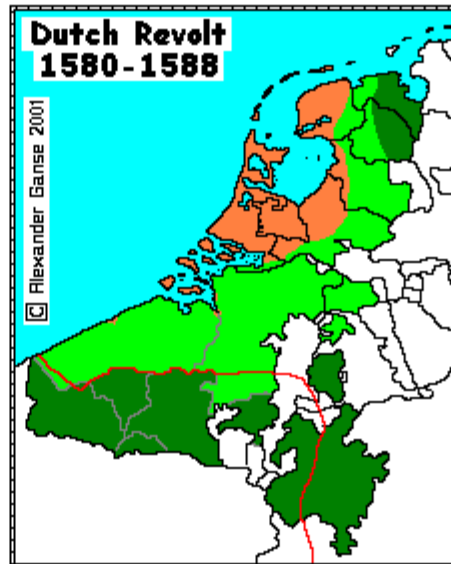
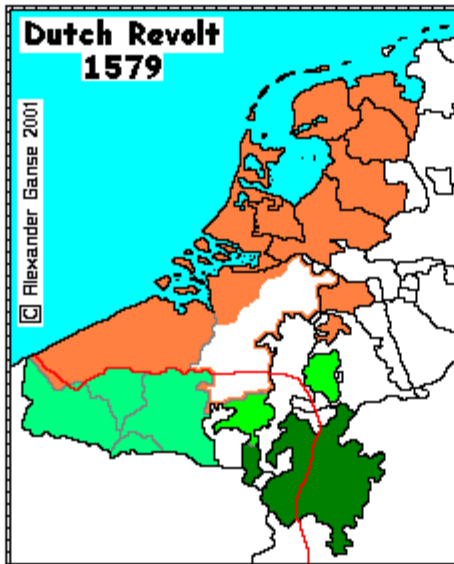
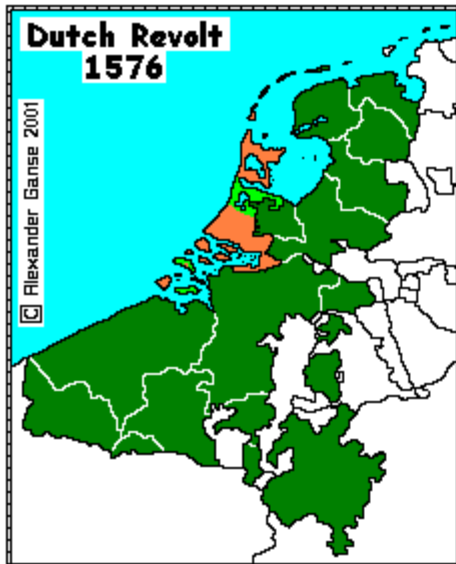
Repression of Protestants

- Persecution forced the Church underground
- Met after mass for Bible study at taverns
- Soon Anabaptists gained influence
 - Some embraced radicalism of Münster
 - Others chose nonviolence
- By 1540s possession, printing, or listening to preaching from banned books was punishable by death
- Calvinism made inroads especially in Amsterdam and Antwerp
- Guy de Brès, “Reformer of the Netherlands,” helped write the Belgic Confession.

The Dutch Rebellion

- Belgic Confession led to alliance with nobles to fight for independence from Spain.
- Also said church discipline was to be a key mark of the “true church” – preaching and exemplary morality, highlights of the church.
- William of Nassau and Orange led resistance
- Philip sent in the duke of Alva to crush resistance: hundreds arrested, thousands executed
- Soon Dutch patriotism and Calvinism merged
- William renounced the leadership of Philip claiming the people have a moral right to remove sovereigns derelict in their duty.
- William assassinated in 1584 – the war continued off and on until 1648 when Dutch independence was recognized.

Map of the Dutch Revolt



- held by Spain
- held by the Rebels
- Spanish conquest

- held by Spain
- Union of Utrecht
- Spanish conquest
- Union of Arras

- held by Spain
- Union of Utrecht
- Spanish conquest

- held by Spain
- Union of Utrecht
- Liberated by the Dutch

Legacies

- If suffering is the seed of the church, what happens to the church under prosperity?
- Is church discipline necessary to keep people in line?
 - Deny the sacrament to sinners
- William of Orange insisted on tolerance
 - Lutherans, Mennonites, other dissidents, and Catholics had freedom of religion
 - Many attended church but did not become members “libertines”
 - Libertines claimed religious freedom from church discipline
- Since Church and State could not agree: the foundation was laid for much greater religious liberty and tolerance.

Next Week

- The Reformation in England and Scotland