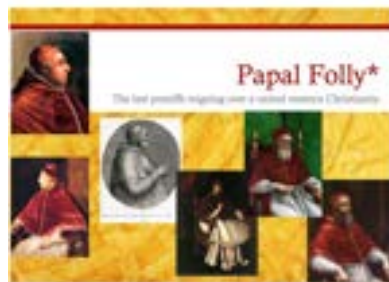


The German Reformation

Theological Spark and Secular Timber



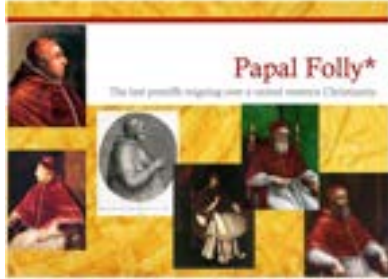
Hard to top last week...



- Martin Luther...
 - Not all that interesting – at least in a soap opera kind of a way
 - Prior to 1517 he was, by all reports, a good Augustinian monk, a scholar, and attentive to his duties as a priest
- After 1522 or so, some of his letters lead to
 - Speculation about dalliances with former nuns – one of who he married
 - He seemed to have a particular fondness for
 - Wine and song
 - Super-sized meals
- So, if your hoping for scandal... *alas*

The Milieu of the Time

Corruption, excess, privilege –
imperial, papal, and south...



Scholastic voice of the Church
speaking to the Humanistic
ears of the world

- A broad movement in Europe for “independence” at all levels from
 - feudal legacies of landed gentry, knights, etc.
 - Monopolies of the merchants and guilds
 - taxation from every quarter
 - war
 - “ultramontane” governance
 - Holy Roman Emperor
 - Catholic Church hierarchy

Spirit of God moving in the World

The Question at Hand

- Tonight’s session
 - Alas... not nearly as tawdry as last week’s exposé on pre-Reformation popes
 - But, what did we learn?
- All the “theological cards” were virtually “on the table”
 - John Wycliffe (England)
 - Jan Hus (Bohemia)
 - Savonarola (Florence)
 - others...
- Abuses and corruption ... all still there
 - Simony, benefices, fees
 - Papal bankruptcy, fees
 - Indulgences
 - Three rules of the King
 - Holy Roman Emperors, investiture, nation states, papal states, city states....
- Calls for Reform

So..... why was Martin Luther able to lead a sustained reform?
And why did it split the Church?

Germany in 1517



Germany as part of Holy Roman Empire

Charles V of Spain in the Emperor
There is intrigue close to home and in
Italy – and wars to finance.

Germany? Peaceful and good economy...

- Rising national identity joining England and France
 - Germany
 - Swiss Republic
- Different humanism in North
 - Italy – the arts as revival of Greek and Roman roots
 - Germany – revival of Christian roots
- New Economy
 - Late emergence from feudalism, but...
 - Banking, mining, and trade

German uniqueness



- **Humanism in** Germany
 - Retrieval of its Christian roots
 - Greek, Hebrew & Latin revival
 - Reading Scripture apart from the Vulgate
 - Reading the Early Church Fathers apart from Aquinas and the scholastics
- Erasmus' influence
 - Simplification of the “layers” of tradition
 - Catholic voice gone viral
- A literate Germany – priests, scholars, princes, and others
- **Economy**
 - banking power
 - raw material control
 - Strong merchant class
 - ...financial independence from imperial and papal aspirations
- **Distance** from Rome and Holy Roman Emperor
 - Rising national **identity**
 - “free cities” of guilds and burghers
 - Apart from latent feudal loyalty and vows

A German World

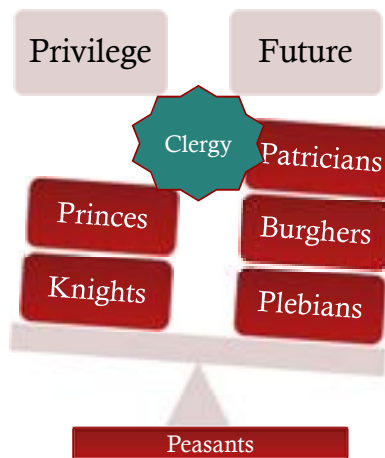
- There was no united monarchy in Germany
 - no national church
 - no investiture controversy
 - BUT, no ability to avoid papal and imperial taxations

NO TAXATION!



WITHOUT REPRESENTATION!

I think we started a Revolution over this idea...



The Princes



- Wanted autonomy from HRE and Rome
 - Wanted freedom from taxes and the wars of others
 - Wanted freedom to tax others
 - Wanted to acquire Church wealth: land – 1/3rd of the land area of Germany
- “Under cover of the Gospel, the princes were only intent on the plunder of the churches.”
 - Philip Melanchthon
 - Protestant Reformer
 - Luther’s “Appeal to the Princes”
 - the princes found religious justification for their political and economic aims
 - Political expediency outweighed religious convictions and theological issues.

Princes in Action

- Frederick the Wise, Elector of Saxony
 - Opposed Tetzler on “rights issue”
 - Protector of Martin Luther
 - Safe passage to Diet of Worms (1521) then sheltered him in Wartburg Castle
 - *German bible*
 - *Cult figure*
- Motivations?
 - Voice for reform for years – papal and imperial
 - Remained Catholic



Princes in Action

- John the Steadfast, Elector of Saxony
 - Continued his brother’s policies of protecting the Reformation
 - Established Lutheranism as state religion of Saxony (1527) - with himself as Bishop
 - Formed the Schmalkaldic League
 - *Landgrave of Hesse*
 - *Lutheranism and defense against HRE*
- Motivations?
 - Freedom from imperial and papal entanglements
 - Remained Catholic



Princes in Action

- John Frederick I, Elector of Saxony
 - Close friend of Luther before his days as Elector (1532)
 - Was the uber-Lutheran
 - Led the Schmalkaldic League into a war, ultimately with the Emperor, where he lost Saxony (1547)
- Motivations?
 - True believer
 - Strong anti-Catholic

All this represents 30 years of protection from HRE and Rome for Martin Luther and the Reform



Princely Protection – Timeline for the Reformation

- Wittenburg Castle and the 95 theses (1517) - indulgences
- Imperial Diet of Augsburg (1518)
 - right to interpret Scripture
 - Papacy as anti-Christ
- *Exsurge Domine* from Leo X(1520) threatens excommunication – done in 1521
- Imperial Diet of Worms (1521) – the non arrest and period of hiding
- Wartburg Castle (1522)
 - Profusion of writings
 - Hallmarks of reformation thought

Five years that changed
Christian Unity



But there is a dark side....

Princely Entanglements

The Dark Side

- The Rebellion of the Knights (1521)
- Wittenberg Christmas riots (1522)
- The Peasants War (1524-25) “*Against the Murderous, Thieving Hordes of Peasants*”
- Radical Reformers – each with a princely protector and conflict
 - Thomas Müntzer, Andreas Karlstadt
 - Zwickau prophets
 - Anabaptist groups like the Hutterites and Mennonites.
- Peace of Augsburg (1555)
 - Ends Imperial battles with the Schmalkaldic League
 - *Cuius regio, eius religio* – “whose realm, his religion”
- 30-Years War (1618-1648)
 - The Princes battle on German soil
 - 25-40% of Germans die
- Peace of Westphalia
 - Augsburg finally accepted
 - End of papal pan-European power
 - Modern nation states



Theology of Luther

- Why Martin Luther was never burned at the stake:
 - The Princes
 - The banking consortiums holding imperial and papal debt
 - HREs, Turks at the borders, rioting peasants, the New World,... and more
- The German Reformation was successful at its onset because at the core it was a secular, rather than religious, movement.
- Yet the theological basis is what marked the first reforms
 - Justification by faith alone
 - Universal priesthood of the baptized
 - *Simul justus et peccator*
 - Baptism – justifying and for infants
 - Eucharist – the Real Presence, but the Mass – not a sacrifice
 - Works follow faith and have no role in salvation
 - Christian anthropology
 - Catholic Marian beliefs

The Tipping Points

- *Unam Sanctum* – all kings subject to the Pope
 - ...not so much
 - all but done by Westphalia
- **Wycliffe and Hus** - more reform to come
 - double Predestination
 - contra Real Presence
- By whose **authority**?
 - Luther can not really object to other German reformers
 - Much less the Swiss
- **Swiss Republic and England** are in the wings
- **Luther's writings** are flooding Europe and the **printing press** is the great equalizer
 - Luther shifted to German
 - German literacy skyrocketed
 - Presses roll in other lands

Where is the Catholic response in all this?
If the Council of Trent is the response to the Reformation – it is still 23 years away

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