



**Session 1: Pre-Reformation Developments**

- A. Historical Developments – fall of Constantinople (1454), Guttenburg’s printing press (1455), Scholasticism, Universities - the Renaissance, political upheavals – rise of nationalism v. Christendom - exploration – Columbus (1492); Science – Copernicus and heliocentric theory (1512)
- B. Secular Developments – Humanism/Man-centered – “man is the measure of all things” – Biblical and Classical Learning – *ad fontes*, the formulation of thought and achievement with man at the center rather than God. Renaissance - The term means “rebirth” referring to the ancient pagan idea of the perfectibility and autonomy of man.
- Southern – learning was applied mostly in the Arts and Sciences – DaVinci, Michelangelo
  - Northern - learning was applied mostly in Literature and the Classics
- C. Reformation of the Christian church - this was needed due to the doctrinal and moral corruption of the Christian church – Papal & clerical corruption, unbiblical dogmas, works salvation, biblical illiteracy.
- Moral Corruption of the Renaissance Papacy - Moral laxity of the papacy and clergy; Lack of spiritual leadership; Abuse of power and immorality by the popes
  - Unbiblical Doctrinal Positions of the Medieval RCC - Corruption of the doctrine of the church & salvation - Works-based righteousness & Seven sacraments: Baptism, Confirmation, Penance, Holy Eucharist, Holy Orders, Matrimony, Unction
  - Sale of Indulgences & Works of Supererogation (Treasury of Merit)
  - Lack of Access to the Scriptures by Laymen – Latin was the official language of the Bible and the Vulgate was the only acceptable translation. Common language translations were banned but almost nobody except the clergy could read and understand it (although some of the clergy were illiterate!)
- D. Efforts at reforming the Church before Luther - Spiritual Reformers
- Conciliar Movement – RCC movement to obtain a more representative government in RCC – also concerned with moral decay in the church.
  - Savonarola – early RCC reformer who decried the moral abuses of the clergy.
  - Waldenses – emphasized spiritual development of the individual and study of the Bible
  - Johannes Reuchlin – d. 1522 – Biblical Hebrew grammar for OT scholars
  - Desiderius Erasmus – d. 1536 - Greek NT for NT scholars – wrote on need for reform in RCC early Bible translations, Erasmus Greek NT (1516)
- E. Two Early Evangelical Reformers
- John Wycliffe d. 1384 – (Lollards) England – transl. Bible into English from the Latin Vulgate, the First Translation of the Bible into the English Language! – AKA: “The Morningstar of the Reformation” – died a natural death but his body was exhumed in 1418 and burned and his ashes were scattered in the river – protested the immorality of the clergy and the doctrines surrounding the Mass and Eucharist -

- John Huss d. 1415 – (Hussites), Prague (modern Czech Republic) – Built upon the work of Wycliffe and wrote and preached against doctrines of the church – was promised safe passage to Council of Constance in 1415 and was immediately arrested – Pope said it was OK to lie to a heretic – was tried at the Inquisition and refused to recant – was burned at the stake for his views.

Conclusions:

1. The church was doctrinally and morally corrupt – it was begging for reform.
2. Historical circumstances were providentially brought together to create a climate that nurtured spiritual and secular challenges to the established church.
3. The worldview of most was enlarged due to recent literary, scientific and geographic discoveries.
4. The printing press forever changed the ability of the church to control the common person's access to information and enabled scholars to study the Bible in the original languages. This would soon bring RCC additions to and omissions from Scripture into light for the first time in over 1,000 years. This also allowed the printing of the Bible and Christian literature into the common tongue and enabled the fledgling Reformation to grow.
5. Wycliffe and Huss in particular set the pattern for recovering Evangelical faith and practice and foreshadowed Luther and the other reformers.