

# How Our Divisions Were Begun

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In the life of every man there are some "non-years": years he would like to forget because they were seared by tragedy or bitter strife . . . or by folly.

And there are two years in the history of Christianity which any Christian worth his salt would like to forget, atomize, annihilate; not because of any positive significance they may have had, but because they marked stages in the major disintegration of the Christian family. The first was 1054, the year in which the split began between the Christian West and the Christian East. The second was 1517, when Western Christendom itself split on the subject of reformation.

Today, as the result of the cleavage of 1054, there are well over one hundred million Eastern Rite Christians separated from Western Christianity. Today, as a result of the cleavage of 1517, Western Christians are themselves divided, some five hundred million united with the Bishop of Rome, and some two hundred-fifty million associated with Protestant bodies.

Each group cries out, in the words of Lukas Vischer: "It is impossible for us to abandon the truth." But the fact still stands: brother sits apart from brother; the "seamless robe" of Christ's flock is grievously fragmented.

Christian reunion cannot be achieved without the cooperation and participation of Eastern Christianity. This goes without saying. Nevertheless, the majority of Christians in America, belonging as they do to Western Christian traditions, have a more immediate interest in healing the rupture caused by the Reformation. Let us therefore focus our attention on 1517 and its sequel.

The Reformations—both Protestant and Catholic—had a highly spiritual aim: the correction of certain conditions that had begun to hamper seriously the practice of Christian life. That Christians, individually or in groups should from time to time fall into unworthy habits is not surprising. Jesus' parable of the wheat and the tares foretold as much. Christians are human beings, after all, despite the nobility of their calling. But they cannot allow themselves to persist in this failure. Self-examination, renewal, and reform," Paul Simon reminds us, "must always find a place within the Church."

Western Christianity needed renewal in the early sixteenth century, and needed it badly. Critics from many lands and many backgrounds singled out a number of particular abuses as targets. In general these abuses were symptomatic of a trend to externalism in religious practice. But the more radical problem was an organizational one. Unless the official organs of the Church were revamped, at least in part, and redirected, there was little hope for effective amendment.

The organizational problems were themselves largely the outcome of a growing secularism. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries the medieval ideal of internationalism was "out" and the ideal of nationalism was "in." These were days characterized by almost constant wars or rumors of war, between nation and nation or league and league. All too frequently the popes became party to these political and military struggles.

The papacy had lost much public esteem through the Great Western Schism of 1378-1417. It forfeited still more through the worldly attitudes of some of the popes of the decades that followed. But the lay monarchs themselves were often blame-worthy for contributing to this decline, demanding undeserved favors from the papacy and dickered over the price. They were already on the way to becoming lay popes in their own domains.

## Purple, Green Replace Black

Ottawa—(RNS)—More than 100 Roman Catholic parishes in 13 dioceses and archdioceses of Canada have replaced black vestments with violet, white and green robes in an experiment involving funeral services.

The test is being conducted in selected parishes of the dioceses of Montreal, Quebec, Antigonish, N.S., Moncton, N.B., Sherbrooke, Rimouski, Nicolet and St. Anne de la Pocatiere, all in Quebec; Toronto and London, Ont.; St. Boniface, Man.; Regina, Sask.; and Victoria, B.C.

New prayers and readings are used before and after the Canon of the Mass. Parishes are also offering new-type services for the "wake" held in homes or funeral parlors, and at the grave.

Texts which stress a fear-filled concept of death have been avoided in the experiments. The experimental English rite for home or funeral parlor is taken from the book, Bible Devotions for a Christian Wake. There is a wide choice of suggested readings from the Bible.

Mourners are encouraged to receive Holy Communion at the Requiem Mass.

In addition to devotional externalism, organizational problems, increasing worldliness and rising nationalism, there were many other factors that further complicated the situation in 1517. The deterioration of the universities and of theology, the breakdown of feudalism, social unrest among clergy as well as laity, the rise of a critical humanism, strong vestiges of Wycliffism and Hussitism; phenomena like these simply added to the growing pile of inflammable material in Germany.

### Warning Voices

For a century, churchmen had been raising their voices to complain about conditions and call for remedies. The Council of Constance in 1418 begged for a "reformation of God's Church in its head and members."

In 1463, Pope Pius II expressed his grief at the bad image which unworthy prelates were giving to the Church; and he frankly declared "The luxury and extravagance of our Curia is excessive." In 1497, the "prophet of Florence," Girolamo Savonarola, denounced once again the worldliness of many of his fellow clergy. Erasmus of Rotterdam, the beautiful ideal of Germanic humanism, flayed superficial religion in his Praise of Folly (1510). St. Thomas More approved of Erasmus' critique, and added some reproaches of his own. Sharp as was the critique, it was not expected to reform the Church. Had not the Church, in the earlier reform launched by Gregory VII, succeeded in climbing out of as deep a ditch?

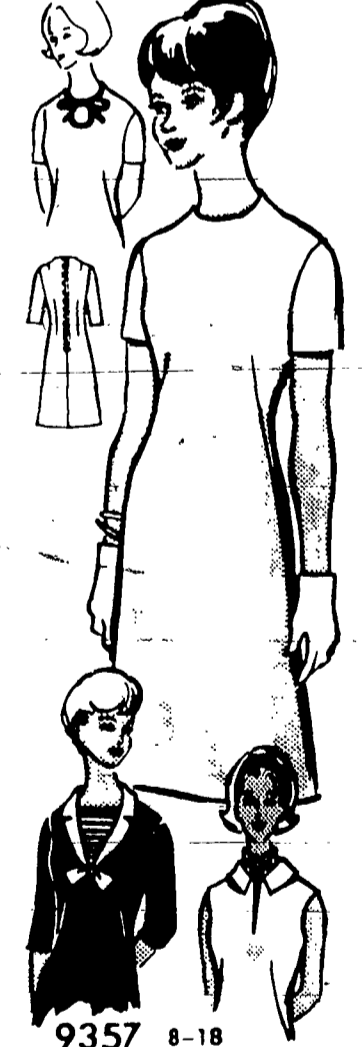
The great tragedy was that the cry of these men was ignored, whether through incomprehension, of self-interest, or a terrible lethargy. True, the Fifth Lateran Council (1512-1517) decreed some valuable reform measures. But the reforms were not enforced.

### The Storm Breaks

It was then, in this vacuum of inertia, that Martin Luther spoke out. A German Augustinian monk and professor of Sacred Scripture at the University of Wittenberg, Luther, on All Hallows' Eve, 1517, published his famous ninety-five theses. In these brief statements of points for debate he struck out at several current abuses in devotional practice, in terms that appealed particularly to his German readership. Printing with movable type had only lately been invented. Thanks to this new communication art, he was able to circulate his propositions throughout the land. The response was electric. Luther was hailed by his countrymen as the spokesman of urgent reform.

What was unique about Martin Luther's reformist platform was that unlike other reformists thus far he founded his criti-

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He had arrived at the conviction that man is not justified by "good works," but by a total, trusting faith in the mercy of God.

If this were the case, then it was not simply the abuses of indulgences and other controversial practices that had to be abolished but the practices themselves. And when this suggested that the popes had been exceeding the limits of their sacramental authority, Luther sought to redefine their powers:

Catholic theologians straightaway protested. Even those who strongly desired reforms could not accept a program founded on ideas which implied a strong divergence from traditional doctrine. Luther, who had the advantage of a deeper knowledge of the Bible than his antagonists, and possessed, as events proved, a genius for popular writing, struck back at them, one and all, each pamphlet increasing his popularity. He had originally thought that his new concepts would be accepted as the groundwork for a reform of the Church from within. As late as 1519 he said that withdrawal from the Church would harm rather than help the cause.

But in the theological debates which followed he found himself assuming positions farther and farther removed from the doctrinal traditions. In 1521 he was repudiated by a formal papal condemnation. By that time he had already reached the conclusion that the papacy was the Apocalyptic enemy of true Christianity. And he never departed from that view.

The sequel is well known. The Catholic hierarchy eventually set about moving the great wheels of internal reform.

In the Council of Trent (1545-1563), the episcopate not only clarified Catholic doctrine on the controverted points, but legislated a thorough, if belated internal reorganization and reform, which marshalled Latin Catholicism into a firmly united front. There is no doubt about it, the Church had been shaken to the roots by Luther's resistance, and Luther himself had

## Billy Graham Visits Cardinal

Boston—(RNS)—Cardinal Cushing of Boston and evangelist Billy Graham held a one-hour press conference in Boston. Cardinal Cushing congratulated the evangelist on his 1964 Boston Crusade. Mr. Graham thanked the cardinal for endorsing the crusade in a public statement. While in the Boston area, the evangelist addressed some 5,000 Roman Catholic students, including some priests and nuns, at Boston College, a Jesuit institution.

Cardinal Cushing and Billy Graham are seen in a photograph.

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acted as the catalyst of Catholic renovation.

Meanwhile, Europe had split into a Catholic Body and an Evangelical Body. Under governmental auspices the Lutheran views spread widely throughout central Europe and Scandinavia. As Luther was conservative, so, in general, were those who followed him. John Calvin carried the Protestant Reform a step farther. Under his organizing talent, doctrine and polity moved in a more

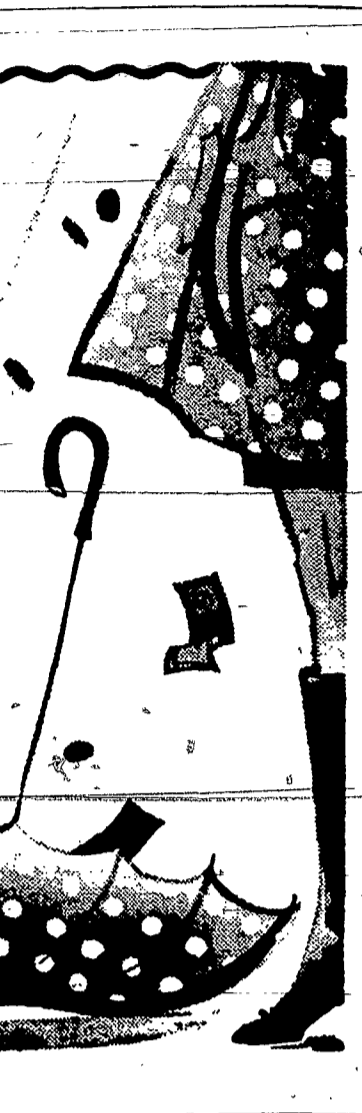
radical direction. His influence was subsequently the wider one, and his imprint on American Protestantism has been paramount. On the other hand, Anglicanism leaned back in the other direction. It combined Reformation principles with an episcopal polity. While Protestantism suffered many divisions from Luther's time onward, Protestants themselves have adhered to Luther's three key ideas: Faith Alone; Scripture Alone; Glory to God Alone.

Onto the Battlefield  
Could Martin Luther's key ideas have been reconciled in 1517 with the traditional doctrines? Many scholars are now engaged in examining this question. But nobody denies that Luther's later positions were irreconcilable with Catholic doctrines. The basic point of division was therefore: shall reform be accomplished within or without the doctrinal and organizational framework of the Roman (Continued on next page)

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Catholic Church? It was over this that both sides waged a relentless war during the generations that followed.

One can sympathize with the convictions of both armies. But one can only regret that the often waged their Christian debate in most unChristian terms. Non-association led to ignorance of one another's views; ignorance encouraged caricatures of each other's beliefs; caricatures prompted false judgments and hatreds. For as the old proverb says: "Man hates on that of which he is ignorant."

But Christians on either side had not forgotten that Christ had prayed "that all be one." After the mid-seventeenth century, when the attempt at military solutions had failed, a given way to an armed co-existence, a few conciliators' wider views tried to find paths to Christian reunion. Protestant churchmen took the initiative

'Mass of the Future' At Liturgy

Washington—(RNS)—"Mass of the Future" will be featured demonstration at 1 annual meeting of the Liturgical conference this summer, according to John B. Mannon, executive secretary of the conference.

The organization of Roman Catholic priests, religious and layly has selected as its "Experiments in Community" for its 1967 Liturgical Week, Kansas City, Mo., Aug. 21-

The "Mass of the Future" demonstration will attempt to give the celebration of the Mass a charist contemporary meaning, said Mannon. It will incorporate words and symbols expressing today's "broadening" human concerns, the changing character of human work, panding leisure, and an increased sensitivity to problems.

'Misunderstood' Said Overcoming

New York—(RNS)—Luther and Roman Catholic representatives continued their theological

From Dishes To National Honors

Washington—(RNS)—A Marcus Kilch of Youngstown, Ohio, head of Women in Community Service and former president of the National Council of Catholic Women, has been named Church Woman of the Year by Religious Heritage America, here.

The selection of Mrs. Kilch was announced by Dr. Norri Vincent Peale, chairman of RHA awards committee. Mrs. Kilch will receive the honor of a famed soprano Marian Anderson, last year's winner, at a dinner here June 29.

The RHA previously named Dr. Eugene J. Blum, general secretary of the World Council of Churches and former stated clerk of United Presbyterian Church of the U.S.A., as its given Chairman of the Year. Max M. Fisher, a Detroit industrialist and philanthropist chairman of the United Jewish Appeal, was named Layman of the Year.

"I was never asked to do anything for the Church except dishes after a building drive," said Mrs. Kilch as she commented on her early religious activities. When asked her to become program chairman for the parish's Guild about 10 years ago was the event that has led to numerous involvements.

Today, she is chairman of the Lay Section of the Catholic Welfare Conference, chairman of the Youngs' Diocesan Radio and Television Guild, secretary of the Citizens for Educational Freedom, and chairman of the Community Education Program Mental Health.

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