

# 'Shaking and Settling'

- Continuing reformation and reaction in the 16<sup>th</sup> century

## FORCES FOR REFORM

### Huguenots

The story of Protestantism in France is both stormy and bloody; the earliest reformers were executed for heresy in the crusades that were sent against them. By 1560 the French Protestants had organised themselves and had become known as 'Huguenots'; a French form of the German name for the citizens of Geneva, which illustrates their Calvinistic character. This led to some years in which they achieved a degree of toleration as a result of merchants and landowners often supporting them.

The first Huguenot services were held in secret in houses, barns, woods and fields, often requiring an oath of silence about identity. Ministers were rare; those that there were travelled about the countryside in disguise under assumed names. In time Calvin's longing that France would become Protestant would lead to his school in Geneva pouring many young pastors into the nation to meet the crying need. By 1561 Huguenots had begun to come out increasingly into the open; by that date there were some 2,150 known Huguenot congregations in France as a whole.

At this time there was a power struggle for the throne of France, which sadly the Huguenots allowed themselves to become involved in. The deeper they became involved the more dangerous their situation became. The burning question for them was, 'Should they take up arms?' The advice from Theodore Beza in Geneva was clear:

'No, it is truly the lot of the church of God to endure blows rather than to strike them, but may I remind you that the church is an anvil that has worn out many hammers.'

But the pressure grew and in March 1562 a 'flash point' was reached in an incident which involved Catholic troops and Huguenots at worship. Who started the conflict is uncertain, but it ignited what became known as the 'Wars of Religion'. In the subsequent fighting thousands were to die. The conflict culminated in the notorious 'St Bartholomew's Day massacre' in 1572, when Huguenot gentry, in Paris for a wedding, were treacherously attacked. It was only in 1589 that a measure of peace emerged with the 'Edict of Nantes'. This gave the French Protestants political rights. The Wars of Religion came at a time when the Huguenots were beginning to win favour in the public eye. The fact they allied themselves to politics and took up arms, which turned public opinion against them saying, 'What religion is this?'

In 1685 the Edict of Nantes was revoked; Huguenots lost their legal standing, they had to meet in secret and many fled to England. The small numbers that remained went on to form the nucleus of beleaguered Protestantism in France today.

### Farel the evangelist

In 1489 Guillaume Farel was born in France; he studied in Paris and in 1520 began to aid the growing reform movement. However, in 1523 intolerance and persecution led to his expulsion to Switzerland.



By 1526 Farel had become the leader of a travelling band of evangelists preaching throughout French-speaking Switzerland. Wherever possible they engaged in public disputation with local Catholic priests and bishops; the zeal and superior knowledge of Scripture and reformation ideas usually led to the fiery evangelists clearly winning the arguments. They moved from town to village seeing one after another turn to reformation. Often the preachers were met kindly, but just as frequently they were attacked, beaten, stoned or imprisoned. Women would scream abuse during their sermons, men would bang drums outside the church and dogs would be set upon them.

As reform spread through French-speaking Switzerland, members of Farel's company were frequently urged to stay on and pastor the newly reformed village or town once the local priest had been discredited; this left him with ever depleted numbers in his group. In 1528 Berne turned towards the Reformation as a result of Farel debating reform doctrine there; this event focused his desire to see the strategically significant city of Geneva won for the Protestant cause.

In 1532 Farel began evangelism in Geneva. He was given the freedom to preach by the city council, but he soon met hostile reaction from armed priests; tension in the city increased. Farel won the public debates, but still there was still great hostility. Catholic forces attacked the city, which led Farel and his companions to stand defending the battlements with the townsfolk in the fighting. The city council decided to resolve the debate for or against reform once and for all by hearing each side clearly put its case; the result was a decision in favour of reform.

Although in 1535 Geneva had officially declared herself Protestant, the social and spiritual life of the city needed strong pastoral care. Farel was an evangelist and recognised his limitations as a person to build what was required to consolidate Geneva in reform. However, he was certain that he knew just the person with the gift to do it. As we shall see, on a fateful night in 1536 John Calvin, who was simply passing through Switzerland on his way to Strasbourg, stayed one night in Geneva when Farel burst in upon him in a manner that was to change the whole direction of his life.

From this time on Guillaume Farel was to be closely associated with John Calvin, though increasingly his base became Neuchatel. In 1558 he married a young girl, much to Calvin's disapproval. Over the years he continued to do evangelistic work in France, especially Metz, where he died in 1565.

## **Calvin the scholar**

It was in 1509, in the cathedral town of Noyon in Picardy, France, that John Calvin was born. His father had a position of considerable standing by being in the employment of the bishop. Calvin was quiet and sensitive; he had a brilliant intellect and a very strong will. He studied law and theology in Paris and Orleans and by the age of 23 was being acclaimed as a scholar of the highest ability.

It was in Paris that Calvin came into contact with Luther's writings, which were to have a decisive effect upon him. By 1533 he had had a deep conversion experience, in his own words, 'God subdued and brought my heart to docility.' Calvin soon became one of the leaders of the Protestant movement in Paris. Matters came to a head in 1535 when he helped prepare an address which launched an attack on the church and called for reform



upon the lines of Luther's teaching. This was read publicly. As a result there was uproar in the Sorbonne, he was accused of heresy and was forced to flee for safety.

In Basle in March 1536, at the age of 26, Calvin published the first slim edition of what was to become his famous *Institutes of Christian Religion*. The initial seven chapters were to be reworked and expanded into a number of subsequent editions over the ensuing years, to become the foundation of Reformed theology.

It was in the same year that Calvin, having made a brief visit to Paris for family reasons, was travelling to the city of Strasbourg where he planned to live quiet life as a Reformation scholar. Because of war his journey was diverted through Switzerland, and led to a one-night stay in Geneva. It was here in his inn that Farel burst in upon him, imploring him to stay in the city and establish the church. He initially refused, but Farel declared that he would pray for God to curse all his subsequent endeavours should he refuse – he reluctantly agreed! From that time forward the life of John Calvin and the course of the Reformation in much of Europe was changed.

## **Church in Geneva**

The city counsellors of Geneva disliked John Calvin at first; they referred to him as 'that Frenchman'. However, events soon made them revise their opinions. His daily expositions of the epistle to the Romans slowly impressed them, but this was just the beginning. During the same year a disputation in Lausanne saw some 400 Catholic monks and clergy gather to refute 'Ten Theses' put forward by Farel and others. In the event only four Catholics spoke. One asserted that the reformers never read the Christian Fathers, because if they did they would see that their teachings did not support their cause. At this challenge Calvin stepped forward, unknown by most present, and proceeded to quote from every Church Father of note, in context and in full, from memory; he built up a powerful evangelical defence with absolute certainty. It is said that a hush fell on the gathering as they realised that here was someone with great learning to defend the Reformation.

Calvin was a medieval man; he saw the church and the city of Geneva as one and the same. Building on this model he brought both instruction and organisation to what had been a profligate community, in a dramatic way. He gave daily expositions of Scripture, and there was the weekly celebration of the Lord's Supper. There was public worship and prayer, and the careful instruction of children. He certainly did regulate personal and community life by the use of municipal law; this was of course the medieval way – he saw himself as simply reforming it.

Because of the ecclesiastical discipline they introduced, Calvin and Farel made enemies. In 1538 they were ordered by the Geneva council to institute changes. Calvin objected to the way the matter was handled and refused. The event led to their expulsion from Geneva. John Calvin went to Strasbourg. The following years are thought to have been some of Calvin's happiest; he faced poverty, but enjoyed life, he also married an Anabaptist widow, Idelette de Bure. He became pastor of a Huguenot refugee congregation. It was, however, in 1541 that the city council of Geneva, faced with mounting problems in the church, urged Calvin to return. He was reluctant, but he did.

Geneva had a reputation for immorality across Europe. Calvin wanted to make it a 'holy city', conformed to the will of God. He exerted moral influence upon the city leaders not only to make some of the laws more humane, but also to influence every area of life. He



sought to make Geneva a Christian commonwealth. Calvin saw the church not only as an institution for the worship of God but also as an agency to make people fit to worship him; seeking to establish this end became his life's work. He established an academy to which students from many nations came, to become 'sound in learning and godly in discipline', to return to become ministers in often struggling congregations across Europe.

John Calvin was a private and complex person who both impacted and imposed his ideas upon the lives of many. There was harshness and intolerance that raises very serious questions about the concept and expression of church which he proclaimed. These are revealed in incidents like the case of the Spaniard, Michael Servetus, who had been sentenced to death by the Inquisition for denying the doctrine of the Godhead. Calvin believed he had come to Geneva deliberately to cause trouble and so denounced him. With the approval of both Catholics and other Swiss Protestant cities Calvin authorised his burning at the stake in 1553. The fact that he has been described as 'a heretic wandering Europe just waiting for someone to burn him' does not justify the loveless intolerance shown.

Calvin's wife died in 1549 leaving him a sad and lonely man. He took little care of himself and suffered stomach ulcers to the end of his life. Nevertheless, he worked tirelessly for the Reformation until his death on 27 May 1564. His influence upon generations of Christians within the Reformed tradition of the church, and beyond, is indisputable. Whatever one may conclude about John Calvin's teachings, his unmarked grave in Geneva is a tribute to his desire to eschew human honour and only be a voice in preaching the gospel.

## **Knox and Scotland**

Scotland in the 16th century was a proudly independent nation. However, the church was in dire need of reform because of its self-interested control by the nobility; there was widespread lawlessness, political strife and clerical unrighteousness. There had been at least some Lollard influence and the writings of Luther had had some effect, but early moves towards reform had met a violent response.

The outstanding influence for reform in Scotland was John Knox. He was born in 1514 of peasant stock, educated in Edinburgh and became a priest in 1536. He was influenced towards reform thinking by individuals like George Wishart who was martyred in 1546. Knox was closely connected with the early reform efforts; as a result he was made a galley slave for the French for 19 months. On his release in 1549 Knox came to England during the reign of Edward VI where he was an influence until the reign of Mary Tudor. He found his way to Geneva and become an ardent disciple of John Calvin. By 1555 Knox was back in Scotland giving impetus to the reform movement that was now well underway. There was considerable political strife; with Protestants having English support and the Catholics getting support from France.

By 1561 Protestantism was established in Scotland along Calvinistic lines. When Mary Queen of Scots returned from Catholic France in the same year the battle lines drawn; the conflicts between her and John Knox are legendary. When Mary was finally arrested and taken to England her infant son James was brought up under the shadow and influence of the great reformer. John Knox was clearly a man of conviction and courage who undoubtedly shaped much of the future church expression in Scotland. His attacks on idolatry are most remembered. His writings did much to sow seeds for the Covenant



movement in later generations. His ecumenical attitude towards Protestants in England tempered the Scottish nationalism of his day. It was said of John Knox, 'While others sawed off the branches of the papacy, he laid an axe to the trunk of the tree.'

## Arminius and Dort

Jacobus Arminius [1560–1609] was a Dutch theologian who pastored a Reformed church in Amsterdam from 1588. During this time he came to question the teachings of John Calvin. After many disputes he went to teach theology at the university of Leyden. His ideas led to divisions in the student body, among the Reformed pastors and in the political arena.

After the death of Arminius his followers issued a 'Remonstrance' in 1610, which clearly stated their departure from Calvinism:

- Salvation applies to all who believe on Christ and persevere in obedience and faith;
- The death of Christ was for everyone;
- The Holy Spirit helps people to faith and good works;
- The saving grace of God is not irresistible;
- It is possible for Christians to fall from saving grace.

Between 1618 and 1619 a synod was held at Dort, which was to be one of the most famous gatherings in the history of the Reformed churches. It made a point-by-point refutation of Arminianism and affirmed Calvin's teaching as orthodox:

- **T**otal depravity of human nature;
- **U**nconditional election;
- **L**imited atonement;
- **I**rresistible grace;
- **P**erseverance of the saints.

## POLITICS AND STRUGGLE

### Stirrings and influences

As we shall see, the Reformation in England takes on a unique character, being motivated initially by political concerns rather than theological issues. However, the ground for reform had begun to be prepared by important factors:

- **Lollards:** the influence of the Lollard movement, standing in the spiritual tradition of John Wycliffe, with its anti-papal, anti-clerical emphasis, and its focus on preaching and the biblical text did much to stir spiritual life and religious dissent in particular parts of England prior to the Reformation.
- **Humanism:** the impact of humanism was a serious force in stirring in individuals the desire for reform particularly through the study of Erasmus' edition of the New Testament Greek text. Study groups like the one led by Thomas Binley in the Whitehorse Tavern in Cambridge, with participants such as Hugh Latimer, which used to read the Scriptures and discuss 'German' theology, had significant influence.



- **Scripture:** the Lollards and humanism both focused attention on the reading and study of Scripture. The belief that ordinary people would only really know the truth if they had the Scriptures in their mother tongue was the inspiration that drove William Tyndale in his pioneer work of translating the Scriptures from the original languages into English. Tyndale left England for the Continent because of hostility; he faced shipwreck and loss of manuscripts, he lived in hiding to escape secret agents, his printer suffered police raids and finally he was betrayed by friends. His English translation was published in 1526 and was to have an important impact on the reform movement. He was arrested near Brussels in 1535 and faced execution the following year by strangling and burning. His dying prayer was:

‘Lord, open the King of England’s eyes!’

## Henry and schism

It was ‘the King’s matter’ that began the events of Reformation proper in England. The ‘matter’ involved Henry VIII’s marriage to Catherine of Aragon. Henry had come unexpectedly to the throne in 1502, on the death of his older brother, Arthur. It had been expedient to marry his brother’s widow because of the political and financial benefits secured by the union with this Spanish queen. Marriage to a deceased brother’s wife was contrary to canon law and had only been possible only after much pressure for a special papal dispensation. The consequence, however, was that Catherine had been unable to bare him a living son. Henry believed it was essential to have a son if the nation was to have peace after his death and prevent it falling back into an equivalent of the Wars of the Roses once again. Believing God had cursed his marriage to Catherine, Henry decided he must find himself a wife who could produce sons. The papacy, having granted the original special dispensation, could find no way of now agreeing to a divorce. Wolsey searched for a solution and failed.

In 1529 Thomas Cranmer, a teacher at Cambridge University, suggested ‘the King’s matter’ should be debated in the European universities. He was given the task of initiating the debate that was said to find in Henry’s favour. Nevertheless, Rome would still not agree to a divorce and so a break with Rome became inevitable:

- In 1532 certain payments were withheld and Cranmer was made Archbishop of Canterbury;
- In 1534 Henry announced himself, ‘Supreme head on earth of the church in England’.

The break was complete; heads rolled, Europe shuddered, but Henry was unmoved. Within two years of the break with Rome doctrinal statements began to appear. Initially, they were moving, under Cranmer’s direction, nearer to a Reformation position. However, in 1539 Henry issued his infamous ‘Six Articles’; these were orthodox Catholic theology, but without the pope, and were referred to by pro-Reformation critics as, ‘That bloody whip of six strings’. It all shows how mixed, limited and politically motivated the first steps towards reform really were:

- By 1540 the monasteries were being depleted of their wealth and power;
- Between 1536 and 1539 editions of the Bible in English were being placed in all the churches for people to read.



On 28 January 1547 Henry died. He was physically gross and syphilitic, he had been the husband of six wives, and he had fundamentally affected the English church; but real reform still waited. At his side was trusted Cranmer; a person who moved reform patiently forward as opportunity allowed, who often pleaded for the lives of Henry's victims, but whose main work still lay ahead of him.

## **Edward and progress**

Edward VI was the son of Henry's third wife, Jane Seymour. He was only nine years old when he came to reign; he was always frail, but was intelligent and clearly had a mind of his own. He was deeply religious and strongly Protestant in his faith. Edward was to die before his 16th birthday, but the six and a half years of his reign were to carry the nation well down the path to Protestant reform:

- The six articles of Henry were repealed;
- All images in churches removed;
- The laity became more involved in worship;
- There was a welcome to continental reformers wanting refuge from persecution;
- The marriage of priests was legalised;
- The Book of Common Prayer, the work of Cranmer, was issued in 1549.

While there was progress towards reform we must not imagine that the English nation was widely committed to Reformation. Support depended on many factors; thus it was mainly in London and the south east where most support for the changes was to be found.

## **Mary and reaction**

At the time of Edward's death in 1553 England was in great economic distress:

- The church had been plundered;
- The monasteries had destroyed;
- The universities were declining;
- The politicians and courtiers were scheming rather than governing;
- The population, most indifferent to reformation, expressed social disquiet.

It was into this scene Mary Tudor, the daughter of Catherine of Aragon, came. People hoped that she would bring peace into the troubled times, but she was only to make a bad situation worse, and it was for this reason that at the end of her reign people were calling her 'Bloody Mary'. She was a tragic figure who saw it as her destiny to bring England back to the Catholic fold. She was 37 at her accession to the throne, she was unwell, and she was to reign for a little over five years. It was a period in which the sadness of her personal life was to yield its final bitter fruit.

Mary turned England towards Rome as swiftly as she could; but did not have it all her own way. Many Protestants, prominent in Edward's reign, saw the writing on the wall and fled to the relative safety of the Continent. Of those who stayed, many – such as Cranmer, Latimer, Ridley and Coverdale – were imprisoned. By 1554 Mary had married Philip II of Spain, she had Cardinal Pole returned as papal legate, and England had been received back 'into the unity of our Holy Mother the Church'.



Reformers in prison faced intolerable conditions of filth and hunger. A number bravely produced 'confessional statements' which declared the truths they firmly held. However, the beheadings and the burnings soon began. About 300 died in all; about one third were clergy, and about one fifth were women. These numbers were small by continental standards, but they had a significant impact. They were more than all the Lollards executed in the previous 125 years, and more than all the Catholics who were to die in Elizabeth's long reign. The most famous victims of Mary's purge were:

- **Ridley and Latimer:** both men; Ridley the scholar and Latimer, an old man and considered by some to be the greatest of all English preachers, were burnt together in Broad Street, Oxford on 16 October 1555. Cranmer witnessed their deaths from his prison tower. Ridley endured unspeakable agonies because his wood was damp. Latimer encouraged him with his timeless words, 'Be of good comfort Master Ridley ... we shall this day light such a candle by God's grace in England, as I trust shall never be put out.'
- **Cranmer:** being an archbishop, Thomas Cranmer was under papal jurisdiction. He was degraded as a heretic. In prison he was subjected to long periods of mental torture. There were promises of leniency if he recanted; finally he broke and signed. But Mary and Archbishop Pole had no plans to commute his sentence, their plan was to discredit Reformation leadership. The scene was set. On 21 March 1556, Cranmer was expected to read his recantation before going to the stake. He prayed publicly, and then as he spoke he recanted from his recantation. He said that he stood by all his books and writings and he called the pope 'anti-Christ'. Uproar broke out. Before he could be properly restrained he virtually ran to the brazier where the fire for his burning was held, he thrust in his hand holding the recantation that he had signed, and watched as both the paper and his hand burnt to ashes. With this, this venerable, peace-loving, old man was burnt at the stake.

Mary's crusade continued on, unrelenting until her death on 17 November 1558. She was wretched and unhappy; cursed by the people, spurned by the new pope, neglected by her husband, dying of cancer and childless. She even interpreted her terminal illness as pregnancy. She crumbled tragically among the ruins that she herself had created.

## **Elizabeth and settlement**

With Elizabeth, the daughter of Henry VIII's second wife Anne Boleyn, ascending the throne in England came a new era for both the church and the nation. As she was the fruit of her father's divorce, and therefore the living symbol of his break with Rome, it was more or less inevitable that she would be committed to a Protestant shape to the church. In 1559 her advisors steamrolled a new 'Settlement of Religion' through Parliament. The 'Elizabethan Settlement' produces something of a hybrid that is referred to as a 'broad church':

- It had no links with Rome;
- It restored the 1552 English Prayer Book;
- It allowed clergy to marry;
- It named the Queen 'Supreme Governor of the Church';
- It retained the orders of bishop, priest and deacon.



While all the senior clergy were committed Protestants, and many were enthusiastic Calvinists, there was, nevertheless, many who were unhappy with the established state of affairs which Elizabeth refused all attempts to change:

- Many felt that it still allowed practices, which were considered remnants of Catholicism; they wanted a fully reformed church and with these people we see the beginnings of the 'Puritan' tradition within the English church.
- Many felt that it had betrayed Catholicism and increasingly refused to attend the official church; these were the 'recusants' who brought in Catholic priests from the Continent even though the law said to do so was treason – more than 300 clergy and lay people were to be executed as a result.

These contrasting strands have run deep within the English church to the present day.

### **Brownists and Separatists**

There were increasing numbers of those with Puritan attitudes who felt they could no longer remain within the official, national church; they felt it was incapable of real reform.

In 1573 Robert Browne, a schoolteacher, began to preach in Cambridgeshire churches without the bishop's permission, which he declared was biblically unlawful. By 1580 he had been forbidden to preach. Around the same time he had met Robert Harrison in Norwich and together they organised separatist churches locally, with Browne as the pastor and Harrison as the teacher of the church. This marks the beginning of the Independent and Congregationalist church movement in England, members of which became known as 'Brownists'. Their communities faced persecuted by the authorities, Browne was imprisoned on several occasions. By 1582 they settled in the Netherlands, which became an important centre for English dissenters. Robert Browne eventually quarrelled with Harrison and was ex-communicated by the church and returned to England. He renounced his separation and became an Anglican minister for the next 43 years! Leadership of the separatist churches then passed to others:

- One group, in Leiden, pastored by John Robinson, who eventually encouraged them to set sail to New England; they are now remembered as the 'Pilgrim Fathers' in the *Mayflower*,
- One group, in Amsterdam, pastored by both John Smyth and Thomas Helys, became Anabaptist; they were to be the founders of the English Baptists, as we shall see.

## **RESPONSE AND PASSION**

### **Protestant and Catholic**

The events of the Reformation created not only a new religious landscape, but also, because of the link between church and state, huge political changes as well. Emperor Charles V hoped that he would be able to rebuild the unity of the empire. During the decades between 1525 and 1555 he explored every option to this end; the results began to define the new political and ecclesiastical shape of Europe – a process that, however, was not completed until the middle of the 17th century and the conclusion of the Thirty Years War in 1648:



- **Diet of Speyer 1526:** Charles V wanted military support against the Turks and the suppression of Lutheranism as demanded at the Diet of Worms. Lutheran princes, supported by some Catholic princes who wanted greater political freedom, agreed to give military support at the price of religious freedom in their domains; this was agreed.
- **Diet of Speyer 1529:** Charles V felt strong enough to rescind the original decision and ordered German princes to endorse the decision of the Diet of Worms. Most complied, but several, joined by 14 free cities, drew up a protest, the signatories of which came to be known as 'Protestants'; the first use of the name that was to become the inclusive way of referring to all who left the Catholic church as a result of the Reformation.
- **Peace of Augsburg 1555:** Charles V reached agreement with the Protestant princes of Germany, guaranteeing them equal security with Catholic princes. The result was that the political unity of Germany and the medieval unity of Christendom were permanently broken. It was a fragile peace from which both Calvinists and Anabaptists were excluded.

### Council of Trent

Trent was a town lying in a valley in the heart of the Alps; it was the scene for what was to become an all-important Roman Catholic council in the light of the successes of the Protestant Reformation. It opened on 13 December 1545 and was to last 18 years before it concluded; due to many interruptions. Emperor Charles V saw it as one more possible means of reuniting Europe; the papacy's single aim, however, was to halt the advance of the Protestants. No council of the Roman Church achieved so much; its chief decisions were:

- It defined points of dogma which had never been precisely defined in the past;
- It demanded reforms in all the areas of pastoral care including the founding of seminaries;
- It published texts on broad doctrinal issues, as well as others which were clear anti-Protestant statements;
- It condemned the use of the liturgy in the vernacular.

### Society of Jesus

Ignatius Loyola was born in 1491, in the Basque region of Spain. His father died when he was four and by 14 he was pursuing a military career. In 1521 a cannonball hit him and one leg was seriously damaged, ending his life as a soldier. While recuperating he read an account of the life of Jesus that inspired him to an ascetic life as a 'soldier of Christ'. The next year was spent in a monastery, and led to mystical spiritual experiences and the early development of his 'Spiritual Exercises'. After a pilgrimage to Palestine he entered university in Paris where he studied until 1535.

While in Paris, Ignatius gathered around him six dedicated colleagues. Together they vowed a life of poverty, chastity, a career of service in Palestine, or wherever they might be of service to the pope. This direct allegiance to the pope was to become one of their distinguishing features. In 1540 they were officially recognised as an order within the church; they were to be known as the 'Society of Jesus', or simply as the 'Jesuits'.



Early in 1548 Ignatius Loyola was unanimously chosen as the 'general' of the society. He provided the organisation for the group in his 'Constitutions' with its paramilitary structure built on obedience, discipline and efficiency. Ignatius refused to turn the Jesuits into a contemplative order as he was convinced their task was to minister to society. His ability to turn the old monastic ideas to the demands of a new era were an important key to their success. They were to do great work among the poor and in mission. They have been described as the most important missionary group in the history of the Catholic church, who were 'to lay their bones in almost every country of the known world and on the shores of every sea'. They also were to play a vital role in Catholic education. Jesuits made an important contribution at the Council of Trent, spearheading the intellectual attack on the Reformation. By the time of Loyola's death in 1556 they were a thousand strong. Without a doubt they were a major force in the Catholic renewal following the events of the Reformation.

### **Francis Xavier**

One of the six initial companions of Ignatius, Francis Xavier [1506–52] has been described as one of the greatest missionaries in the whole history of the church. He was sent to evangelise the East Indies and arrived in Goa in 1542. He spent three years preaching and serving the sick; he baptised thousands of the pearl-fishers in south-west India. He then extended his missionary activity to Japan where he arrived in 1549. He studied the language and within two years had established a Christian community of 2,000. He was driven out by Buddhist monks and the community suffered great persecution. He made a short trip to China, but returned to Goa. He died on the island of Sancian while again trying to gain permission to enter China, which was being refused. Some of his evangelistic methods have been criticised, but the accounts of his work did much to arouse interest in overseas mission throughout Europe. Some estimates put the number of conversions attributed to him at 700,000.

### **YOUR REFORMATION!**

It is important to remember that when Protestants or Catholics talk to members of the Orthodox Church about the Reformation, they are likely to be met by the response, "Your Reformation!" It is a reminder that this is a Western Church phenomenon, never an Eastern Church one. It will also be one of the many arguments used to affirm the Orthodox Church's belief that they are in fact the closer representation of the original Church than those with a history of splits and schisms.

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