"Discuss the political and social consequences of the Protestant Reformation in the first half of the sixteenth century." (2001, Question #4)

The Protestant Reformation was a result of the many abuses of the Catholic Church. Reformers such as Martin Luther (Holy Roman Empire), John Calvin (France), and Henry VIII (England) spoke out against the Catholic Church, criticizing indulgences, church doctrine, and the church’s practices. These reformation changed the societal and political structure of Europe. Specifically, social roles changed and revolts and conflicts between the Protestants and the Catholics broke out.

I. Martin Luther
A. His role in the German Reformation
   1. After traveling to Germany and receiving his doctorate in theology, Luther disapproved of the medieval theology’s view on the perfect righteousness that god required for salvation.
   2. Luther believed that this necessary “righteousness of god” was not possible for any human being, since the only true righteous person was Jesus Christ.
   3. “Justification by Faith Alone”
      a. Luther proclaimed that “justification by faith alone” should be the only way to salvation
      b. He explained that someone who is a true believer in Jesus Christ doesn’t need to confess their sins through a priest, they should be able to speak directly to god
   4. Luther’s belief in indulgences
      a. If someone who has sinned was unable to complete their penances (praying, fasting, almsgiving, retreating, and pilgrimages), indulgences were made to make-up for their works of satisfaction
      b. Indulgences were originally made to cover the people who were involved in the crusades, but were eventually given out randomly for small payments (which was considered to be a good work of almsgiving).
      c. These indulgences were not only used to cover one’s own punishments, but also their dead relatives alleged to be suffering in purgatory.
      d. Luther posted his nine theses regarding indulgences on the door of the Castle church in Wittenburg, stating that through indulgences, people wouldn’t be truly sorry because their salvation could be easily received.

5. Luther also believed that doctrine of the church should only be determined by the bible, and not through a human being such as the pope.
6. Luther was accused of heresy and was excommunicated January 3, 1521
7. The 3 Pamphlets (Luther’s Basic Teachings)
i. *Address to the Christian Nobility*—Luther says that the church is materialistic and you can change it by taxing, taking their land, and getting money from the church.

ii. *The Babylonian Captivity*—Luther explains that bible determines doctrine and Baptism and Eucharist are the only processes that should be used for salvation

iii. *Freedom of the Christian*—"justification be faith alone" is summarized

B. Political Consequences

1. Peasant Revolt
   a. Since the spread of the Lutheranism ideas of individualism and equality occurred so rapidly, peasants were quick to think that Luther would back them up in a revolt against the higher classes.
   b. However, Luther was a secular "outlaw" at the time and he took the side of the princes because if he took the side of the peasants he would be endangering himself since he has the trust of the powerful princes

2. The Spread of Lutheranism
   a. This conflict between Catholicism and Lutheranism did not help the centralization of the Holy Roman Empire because of the lack of uniformity of religion
   b. Diet of Augsburg
      i. After the diet of Augsburg, the Lutheran princes and nobles formed a Schmalkaldic League, which was an alliance directed against the Catholic church
      ii. This tension between the Lutherans and the Catholics led to a religious civil war
   c. Peace of Augsburg
      i. As a result of the civil war, the Peace of Augsburg was established, which stated that local princes had the right to choose the religion in that region (cuius regio, eius religio), either Lutheranism or Roman Catholicism was accepted, however neither Calvinism nor Anabaptists was recognized.
      ii. Lutheranism became the predominant religion in the Holy Roman Empire and eventually spread to Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Estonia and Latvia.

II. John Calvin
   A. His role in the Genevan Reformation
1. After Lutheranism, Calvinism became the new protestant force that inspired political resistance in France, the Netherlands, and Scotland.

2. John Calvin studied law and theology and was influenced by Luther's ideas. He became a protestant and since France was still very Catholic, he was forced into exile, and settled in Geneva where he became the leader of Geneva's Reformation.

3. John Calvin's beliefs
   b. He agreed with Luther in saying that doctrine should come from the bible.
   c. He also believed, like Calvin, that there was only two sacraments, baptism and holy communion.
   d. Unlike Luther, however, Calvin believed in predestination, which was the path that God has chosen for each person in life and whether they will be saved or not. The selected few, which would be saved, were called the elect.
   e. Calvin ended the celibacy of the of the clergy and monasticism.
   f. During Calvin's worship, the members took part in prayers, the singing of psalms, scripture readings, and a sermon.
   g. Calvinism required that you attend church, you couldn't gamble, dance, drink alcohol, swear, or theatergoing.

B. Political Consequences
   1. Theocracy of Geneva
      a. Calvin created a strict theocracy, and the violators of its code of behavior were punished severely, and the ones who went against the religion were killed.
      b. These actions both helped Geneva because people found refuge there, but some people left in order to escape Calvinist rule.

   2. The Spread of Calvinism
      a. Calvinism was dominant in the areas of Geneva, Zurich, Bern, and Basel. However, it eventually spread to France, where it quickly gained the support of the nobles because Calvinism supported regional rule.
      b. John Knox, a disciple of John Calvin, spread Calvinism to Scotland, the Scottish Calvinist was known as Presbyterian. Presbyterianism became the dominant religion in Scotland.
      c. Calvinism also spread to England and the English Calvinist was known as the puritans. These puritans attempted to “purify” the remaining elements of the Catholic Church.
d. In the Netherlands, Calvinism had a big impact on
the Dutch and in Austria, however did not spread to
well in Germany

e. Many nobles converted to Calvinism because they
were interested in the political opportunity of having
regional rule, which Calvinism supported

3. A German Sociologist, Max Weber, stated that Calvinism
promoted capitalism because it promoted capitalistic virtues
such as sobriety, thrift, and hard work

III. King Henry VIII
A. His Role in the Reformation in England
1. The Reformation in England led to the creation of the Church of
   England, the Anglican church
2. Conflict with the papacy
   a. Since King Henry VIII wanted a male heir, and his
current wife, Catherine of Aragon, only produced
one and only child, which was a girl, he wanted a
separation between them
   b. However, when he went to the church, the pope
would not grant him his separation because he was
under the control of the Holy Roman Emperor,
Charles V, which was Catherine's nephew. Henry
argued that the marriage was also illegal because
the canon law states that you cannot wed your
brother's widow
   c. Henry then hired Thomas Cranmer, who granted
his separation, and Henry wed Anne Boleyn

3. Act of Supremacy
   a. The Act of Supremacy was passed by Parliament
and stated that the king was to be head of the
English church instead of the pope, however the
Catholic doctrine and practice had not changed
   b. Parliament also accepted the six articles, which
defined the doctrine of the English church and did
not include Protestant beliefs

4. The Elimination of Monasteries
   a. An act of Parliament that was passed in 1536
disposed of the monasteries because they
supported the papacy
   b. The king then sold the land of the monasteries in
order to receive money.

B. Political Consequences
1. When Thomas More, Henry's former lord, and John Fisher, a
bishop of Rochester, did not support the Act of Supremacy, they
were executed.
2. As a result a revolt broke out known as the Pilgrimage of Grace
that took place in northern England, which was quickly stopped
by Henry
3. Many Englishmen however, supported the king because they
were against the great wealth that the Catholic church received
and resented the fact that the church was never taxed or fined
4. Also, the king was well liked by those of the people who bought the monastery's land from him

IV. Social Consequences

A. Education
1. Lay people were required to have education because of "salvation by faith alone" and because they needed to be able to interpret scriptures
2. Education caused more people to convert to protestant because they studied ancient doctrine
3. Luther created the Literacy of the Masses in order for the people to make doctrine

B. Social Roles
1. Women were considered more important because they attributed to society
   a. Educated children
   b. Dealt with household responsibilities
   c. Women weren't considered the husband's "property" anymore and were able to divorce
   d. Women taught the children the bible, so they were more educated
2. Laity and clergy
   a. Laity were expected to study the bible on their own
   b. Laity and the clergy had less distinction between each other
   c. Clergy were taxed and were tried in civil courts
3. Secular Rulers
   a. The church had less authority than the king
   b. Henry VIII became head of the church and head of the state
4. Peasants
   a. Because of protestant ideas, peasants demanded social and political rights of equality
   b. Peasants desired change even though little changed for them

Through the criticisms and beliefs of the religious reformers Martin Luther, John Calvin, and Henry VIII, new protestant religions formed in the Holy Roman Empire (Lutheranism), France (Calvinism), and in England (Anglican). As these protestant religions spread throughout Europe, there were political and social consequences. Some of these included altered social roles and education and revolts and conflicts between the Protestants and the Catholic Church. These various religions that existed then take part in the various religions that exist in society today.
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