

Compare and contrast the attitudes of Martin Luther and John Calvin toward political authority and social order.

Similarities:

--In general

- 1) Both Calvin and Luther were Protestant reformers who wanted to curb the abuses of the Catholic Church and return to a more spiritual Christianity.

--Political Authority

- 1) Both denied the political (and religious) power of the pope.
- 2) Both sought regional ecclesiastical autonomy.

--Social Order

- 1) Both believed in the power of lay people to read and interpret the scriptures.
 - a. Luther: equal in God's eyes (in the kingdom of God)
 - b. Calvin: the elect

Differences:

--Political Authority

Luther:

- 1) Luther believed in the political and religious autonomy of the state (*cuius regio, eius religio*).
- 2) Luther did not want to alter the current political structure (he needed the support of the German princes)

Calvin:

- 1) Calvin believed that the church and state should be one. In Geneva, there was cooperation between magistrates and the clergy in matters of internal discipline (the Consistory consisted of both syndics, elders, and pastors)

--Social Order

Luther:

- 1) Luther was a social conservative and did not want to restructure society (Peasants' Revolt).
- 2) People were equal in the eyes of the Lord only.

Calvin:

- 1) Calvin wanted to restructure society according to his moral code.
- 2) Calvin was socially more egalitarian. The concept of the elect and the combination of church and state forced everyone to live by the same moral rules.