BIO OF MAINSTREAM REFORMERS

(Taken from various on-line resources)

Martin Luther, German: 10 November 1483 – 18 February 1546) was a German professor of theology, priest, author, composer, Augustinian monk,[3] and a seminal figure in the Reformation. Luther was ordained to the priesthood in 1507. He came to reject several teachings and practices of the Roman Catholic Church; in particular, he disputed the view on indulgences. Luther proposed an academic discussion of the practice and efficacy of indulgences in his *Ninety-five Theses* of 1517. His refusal to renounce all of his writings at the demand of Pope Leo X in 1520 and the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V at the Diet of Worms in 1521 resulted in his excommunication by the pope and condemnation as an outlaw by the Holy Roman Emperor.

Luther taught that salvation and, consequently, eternal life are not earned by good deeds but are received only as the free gift of God's grace through the believer's faith in Jesus Christ as redeemer from sin. His theology challenged the authority and office of the pope by teaching that the Bible is the only source of divinely revealed knowledge,[4] and opposed sacerdotalism by considering all baptized Christians to be a holy priesthood.[5] Those who identify with these, and all of Luther's wider teachings, are called Lutherans, though Luther insisted on *Christian* or *Evangelical* (German: *evangelisch*) as the only acceptable names for individuals who professed Christ.

His translation of the Bible into the German vernacular (instead of Latin) made it more accessible to the laity, an event that had a tremendous impact on both the church and German culture. It fostered the development of a standard version of the German language, added several principles to the art of translation,[6] and influenced the writing of an English translation, the Tyndale Bible.[7] His hymns influenced the development of singing in Protestant churches.[8] His marriage to Katharina von Bora, a former nun, set a model for the practice of clerical marriage, allowing Protestant clergy to marry.[9]

In two of his later works, Luther expressed antagonistic, violent views towards Jews and called for the burnings of their synagogues and their deaths.[10] His rhetoric was not directed at Jews alone but also towards Roman Catholics, Anabaptists, and nontrinitarian Christians.[11] Luther died in 1546 with Pope Leo X's excommunication still in effect.

Zwingli, the Reformer

Born in Switzerland in 1484, **Ulrich Zwingli** took the path of many young men of his era and social class. He received a good education and became a Catholic priest. Little did anyone know that Zwingli would eventually become one of the most outspoken Protestant reformers of his age.

Not long into his priesthood, Zwingli became critical of the Catholic Church. He noticed some abuses, and his interpretations of the Bible led him to believe that Catholicism was wrong in some of its doctrines and practices. Zwingli, who was a very popular and charismatic preacher, soon convinced many people that he was right.

Eventually, he attained an influential position in the major Swiss city of Zurich, and from there continued to preach reform. He also became heavily involved in Swiss politics. In January of 1523, Zwingli presented his *Sixty-seven Articles* to Zurich's city council. In them, he argued for a new system, a reform of Christianity, and essentially, a break with the Catholic Church.

Calvin, the Reformer

Zwingli's younger contemporary, **John Calvin**, built on his elder's teachings. Born in France in 1509, Calvin studied theology and law, but was forced to flee France in about 1534 after becoming involved with a group of university students who were circulating Protestant ideas. He settled in Strasbourg, where he joined a group of reformers who helped him formulate and solidify his ideas. Later, he moved to Basel where, in 1536, he published the first edition of his masterpiece, *The Institutes of the Christian Religion*, a book he continued to edit and expand throughout the rest of his life.

In *The Institutes* and his other writings, Calvin developed his famous doctrine of **predestination**. This doctrine stated that 'God, by His sovereign will, determined that some people were destined for Heaven and others for hell,' and there was nothing anyone could do about it. God simply decided who was a member of the saved elect and who was a part of the lost reprobates, and that was that.

KING HENRY VIII

Henry VIII (28 June 1491 – 28 January 1547) was King of England from 1509 until his death in 1547. Henry is best known for his six marriages, and, in particular, his efforts to have his first marriage (to Catherine of Aragon) annulled. His disagreement with Pope Clement VII on the question of such an annulment led Henry to initiate the English Reformation, separating the Church of England from papal authority. He appointed himself Supreme Head of the Church of England and dissolved convents and monasteries, for which he was excommunicated. Henry is also known as "the father of the Royal Navy," as he invested heavily in the navy, increasing its size from a few to more than 50 ships, and established the Navy Board.[1]

Domestically, Henry is known for his radical changes to the English Constitution, ushering in the theory of the divine right of kings. He also greatly expanded royal power during his reign. He frequently used charges of treason and heresy to quell dissent, and those accused were often executed without a formal trial by means of bills of attainder. He achieved many of his political aims through the work of his chief ministers, some of whom were banished or executed when they fell out of his favour. Thomas Wolsey, Thomas More, Thomas Cromwell, Richard Rich, and Thomas Cranmer all figured prominently in his administration.

John & Charles Wesley. Charles (born Dec. 18, 1707, Epworth, Lincolnshire, Eng.—died March 29, 1788, London), English clergyman, poet, and hymn writer, who, with his elder brother John, started the Methodist movement in the Church of England.