The Historical Context of the Protestant Reformation
Religion and Society: Winter 2010

I. Cultural Shifts in 15\textsuperscript{th} & 16\textsuperscript{th} Century Europe

II. Religious Wars of the 16\textsuperscript{th} & 17\textsuperscript{th} Centuries

III. Consequences for Colonial America
Cultural Shifts in 15\textsuperscript{th}-16\textsuperscript{th} century Europe

A. Geographic:

- European Exploration of Americas
- European Exploration of African Coast, Indian Ocean
- Trading posts, settlements
- Beginnings of colonialism

B. Economic:

- Trade and Mercantilism: Increase of money economy
- Early capitalism
C. Scientific

The old Geocentric (Ptolemaic) Model
- Earth the center of universe
- Concentric “spheres” (Earth, Moon, Venus, Mars, Sun... stars)
- Planets = “wanderers”

Copernicus’ Heliocentric Model
- Developed ca. 1516
- Published 1543 upon his death
- Sun is the center of the universe

Galileo
- Observations of moons of Jupiter (1610)
- Telescope
- Initial condemnation (1616)
- Condemnation and house arrest (1633)
D. Religious

Martin Luther (95 Theses, 1517)
  • Northern German principalities
  • Scandinavia

John Calvin (Geneva, 1541-1564)
  • Switzerland
  • France (Huguenots)
  • Scotland
  • Netherlands

Henry VIII (Act of Supremacy, 1534)

Summary of the Cultural Shifts
De-centering...
  • ... of the political & legal structure
  • ... of the Catholic church
  • ... of the map of the Earth
  • ... of the Earth in the universe
  • ... of the nature of knowledge
II. Religious Wars and Conflicts

1546-1555: Emperor Charles V’s campaign against Lutheranism in Germany

1553-1558: Mary I of England persecutes Protestants

1566-1609: Conflict between Spain and Dutch Protestants in the Lowlands

1572: St. Bartholomew’s Day Massacre of Huguenots in France

1588: Spanish Armada

1598: Henri IV of France: Edict of Nantes

1610: Henri IV assassinated

1618-1648: Thirty Years War

1645-1660: English Civil War and Interregnum

1685: Louis XIV of France repeals Edict of Nantes

1688: “Glorious Revolution” in England
Consequences for Colonial America

- Colonies as religious refuges
- Religious diversity
- Ideal of toleration
- Reality of intolerance