

# **The Historical Context of the Protestant Reformation**

Religion and Society: Winter 2010

## **I. Cultural Shifts in 15<sup>th</sup> & 16<sup>th</sup> Century Europe**

## **II. Religious Wars of the 16<sup>th</sup> & 17<sup>th</sup> Centuries**

## **III. Consequences for Colonial America**

# **Cultural Shifts in 15<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> 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