Protestant reformation: a mentor to christian civilization

Religion, Christianity

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PROTESTANT REFORMATION: A MENTOR TO CHRISTIAN CIVILIZATION When we talk about Protestant Reformation, what usually comes to our mind is a movement that brought about negative effects not just in Europe but also in the whole Catholic Church, which are still being felt and experienced even today. Although it may be true that the Protestant Reformation had been one of the causes of the gradual decline of the Catholic Church during the 16th century, it also brought about numerous contributions in the development not just of the Catholic Church but the whole Christian Civilization as well. It was through the establishment of these Protestant Churches that the Catholic Church started taking a second look and examining well what was happening to the Catholic faith. It began to see the flaws and shortcomings of its Church and started to fix and find solutions to the growing conflicts and problems within and outside the Catholic Church and its people. One very important lesson that Christian Civilization could learn from the events of the Protestant Reformation is that to never resolve to violence in trying to settle disputes and differences among people and to never allow ourselves to be influenced by wrong motives (more for our own selfish interests) in our pursuit for the " greater good". Even up to the present times, we can consider the Protestant Reformation a great contribution and influence in the formation of what we know now as Christian Civilization. As we try to look back to the events of the Protestant Reformation, we would see how bloody and violent things had turned out to be among the different groups and how ineffective and worthless were the wars that aggravated the disputes between the Catholics and Christians. The Reformation in France was a bloodier business than in either England or Germany, for the question of

reform became entangled with the political fortunes of the crown and of certain noble families. While reform proceeded relatively peacefully in the first part of the 16th century, the so-called Wars of Religion dominated the second half. The fights were not just about difference in religious beliefs but various powerful families saw in these events an opportunity to gain influence and advance their own interests. The Wars of Religion created a deep division within French society. They also weakened the kingdom that France's international position was seriously threatened in the later 1500s. These events clearly showed how grave and worst things could get in religious dispute once political matters and personal interests influence it. The disputes become more of a fight for one's own self rather than that for the greater good. In this manner, it becomes more of a selfish act. Just like with what is happening between the church and the state today and with other religious disputes among the different religious groups, we must always keep in mind that we are not fighting for ourselves but for what we believe is good for all. In the event of the St. Bartholomew Massacre, the growing conflict between the Catholics and Protestant even worsened. As Catholics around Europe rejoiced over the death of thousands of Huguenots, Protestants mourned and cried out in anger. The battle that was once a fight for faith instantly transformed to a battle of death in which both Catholics and Protestants around Europe felt deeply involved. Many events followed this massacre but eventually, through the Edict of Nantes, a proclamation that declared that France was Catholic but granted freedom of public worship and recognized their rights; France's religious wars ended. As in England and Germany, it did not bring a permanent peace but only a truce.

In these events, we learn a very important lesson and that is to resolve problems in the most diplomatic and peaceful way that we could. Here, we could see that violence would lead us nowhere and will not help us solve whatever disputes we have among others. In a war, there is never a winner or a victor. Everybody is in the losing end. With all these events that took place in the course of Protestant Reformation, it is undeniably true that Christian Civilization could get important and essential lessons and points from it, which can be of great help in the continuous process of development of Christian Civilization. All we have to do is recall our history and try to learn from the mistakes of the past as we try to search for the future. The past always has a link to the present and the future. Our civilization today will never have come to existence if not for the events that took place in history. Christian Civilization will not be what it is today if not for events of the past, one of which is the Protestant Reformation.