

When DARKNESS FALLS

INVESTIGATING RELIGION'S HISTORY OF EVIL

Part 5: The Protestants

The history of religious institutions has been such an abysmal panorama of bigotry, persecution and cruelty that I can see why it could lead someone to wish to be rid of the whole business.

~ Roy Clouser, *Knowing with the Heart: Religious Experience & Belief in God*

The Christian church has left a legacy, a world view, that fosters sexism, racism, the intolerance of difference, and the desecration of the natural environment. The Church, throughout much of its history, has demonstrated a disregard for human freedom and dignity. It has attempted to control, contain, and confine spirituality, the relationship between an individual and God. As a result, Christianity has helped to create a society in which people are alienated not only from each other but also from the divine.

~ Helen Ellerbe, *The Dark Side of Christian History*

We cannot escape the fact that the Protestant Reformers, such as Zwingli, Luther, and Calvin, all placed their stamps of approval on the death sentence for heretics.

~ Ergun & Emir Caner, *Christian Jihad*

Those who are innocent should be spared, but the wicked, stab, smite and slay all you can. These times are so extraordinary that a prince can win heaven more easily by bloodshed than by prayer.

~ Martin Luther

And as for the violence of the Protestant Reformers such as John Calvin – gore, not glory, was their immediate legacy.

~ Brian Moynahan, *The Faith: A History Of Christianity*

Anabaptists are not to be tolerated nor listened to, even though they seek to teach the pure Gospel. ... They must be hanged, the only proper punishment for a treacherous wretch.

~ Martin Luther

A traitor to God is also an enemy of the human race and worse than a murderer because he brings poor souls to perdition. We muzzle dogs, and shall we leave men free to open their mouths as they please? Those who object are like dogs and swine.

~ John Calvin, *(Defending the death penalty for heretics)*

First, I advise you to set fire to their synagogues or schools and to bury and cover with dirt whatever will not burn, so that no man will ever again see a stone or cinder of them.

~ Martin Luther *(Instruction to German princes)*

Second, I advise that their houses also be destroyed. For they pursue in them the same aims as in their synagogues.

~ Martin Luther *(Instruction to German princes)*

Third, I advise that all their prayer books and Talmudic writings, in which such idolatry, lies, cursing and blasphemy are taught, be taken from them.

~ Martin Luther *(Instruction to German princes)*

Forth, I advise that their rabbis be forbidden to teach henceforth on pain of loss of life and limb.

~ Martin Luther *(Instruction to German princes)*

Christ reveals that God's ultimate will for dealing with violence is not retaliation, but reconciliation. And Christ rejects violence as a realistic means to reconciliation.

~ Brethren In Christ, *Accents & Issues: Violence*

Let us keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, on whom our faith depends from beginning to end.

~ *Hebrews 12:2 (TEV)*