were too harsh and again he had to flee. However, in 1541, he was asked to return to Geneva, where this time he was able to establish a model government based on religious principles. Calvin ordered that stained glass windows, altars, and similar “distractions” be removed from churches. Dancing, fancy clothes, games, and other worldly “pleasures” were banned. According to Calvin, living a moral life was serious business.

Among the important teachings of Calvin are the following:

- Like Luther, Calvin believed Christians are saved through faith alone, not works.
- Like Luther, Calvin believed that the Bible was the only reliable source of God’s teaching.
- Like Luther, Calvin rejected the authority of the pope.
- Calvin rejected the doctrine of transubstantiation.
- Calvin also believed in predestination, that God decrees that certain people—the elect—will be saved and others will be sent to hell. (By contrast, the Catholic Church teaches that through free will, people make their own choice for salvation or damnation.) Calvin argued that the Bible said God was all-powerful and all-knowing. If God is all-knowing, he must know who will be saved and who will be damned. And if he knows who goes to heaven and who goes to hell, then how can people have free will?
- People must constantly strive to be good, and worldly success was an indication that a person was one of the elect (was saved).
- Fancy church decorations, like pictures of saints and the Virgin Mary, statues, elaborate altars, and stained glass windows (all very popular in Catholic churches) were corruptions of pure, genuine, simple Christianity. Calvin based his argument on the Ten Commandments, one of which is a prohibition of “graven images.” Since statues and other decorations were “graven images,” Calvin judged them to be improper.
- Calvin also protested against some rituals that had become traditional in the Church, against fancy priestly garments, and against observation of countless saints’ days. In each case he pointed to the conduct of the earliest Christians and argued that many rituals, garments, and festivals had been added to the Church many years after the time of Jesus. Calvin wanted to reform the Church so as to return to the simplicity of the early Christians.

Calvin was an effective preacher and his influence was felt across Europe. Calvinism, as his religious thought became known, spread to France (by the Huguenots), the Netherlands, Scotland (by John Knox and the Presbyterians), and England (by the Puritans). The Puritans, who ultimately settled Massachusetts Bay Colony, had their roots in Calvinism. Many Christians in America today are partly or wholly Calvinist in their views.

The Counter-Reformation

The Counter-Reformation, or Catholic Reformation, was the Roman Catholic Church’s own effort to reform the Church and stop the spread of the Reformation. Recognizing that there were some problems with the Church and its policies, the pope convened the Council of Trent, a committee of important churchmen that

Teaching Idea

Point out that what Calvin established in Geneva was a theocracy, a government based on religious doctrine. Students in Core Knowledge schools should be familiar with this concept, though not the term, from their study of the Plymouth and Massachusetts Bay colonies in Grade 3.
met several times between 1545 and 1563. Among the reforms that resulted from this meeting of cardinals and the pope were the following:

- Many of the theological teachings of Luther and Calvin, such as predestination, were explicitly rejected.
- The Protestant principle that faith should be based wholly on the scriptures—"sola scriptura"—was rejected. The Catholic Church reaffirmed the value of the Bible but insisted that tradition and scholarly work were also important.
- The practice of selling indulgences was banned.
- Higher educational standards for priests were established.
- Moral standards for the clergy were reiterated.
- The authority of the papacy was reaffirmed.
- Various doctrines about the Bible, the sacraments, transubstantiation (the Roman Catholic doctrine that the bread and wine in the Eucharist changes into the body and blood of Christ) and the Mass were affirmed and clarified.

The administrative structure and doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church as they are today are, in large part, the result of the reforms decreed by this council.

Another lasting effect of the Counter Reformation was the founding of a new monastic order, the Society of Jesus, better known as the Jesuits, by a Spanish priest, St. Ignatius Loyola (1491–1556). The Jesuits took on the role of soldiers of the Church. Jesuits took the lead in reinvigorating the education of priests and of intellectual inquiry. Fearless Jesuits sailed to the New World to convert Native Americans. Jesuit scholars played a leading role at the Council of Trent.

**Copernicus and Galileo: Scientific Questioning**

While many of the scientific theories of the ancient Greeks and Romans stood the test of time—such as Galen's belief that the arteries carried blood and not air—some theories were not grounded in demonstrable facts. As scientists, philosophers, and mathematicians of the Renaissance attempted to test and prove these older theories using new scientific and mathematical tools, many of the theories were disproved and discarded. However, whether all the planets and the sun revolved around Earth or Earth revolved around the sun became a heated controversy during the Renaissance.

Until the 1500s, the most influential theory on the movement of the planets was that of Ptolemy, a Greco-Egyptian mathematician, astronomer, and geographer who lived in the 100s CE. He claimed that Earth was stationary and at the center of the universe, and that all the planets and the stars revolved around it. This view was generally accepted by Christians because it put Earth, God's "greatest creation," at the center of the universe, which was considered unmoving and perfect, and also because it seemed to accurately describe what we see in the skies every day: when the sun "rises" and "sets" each day, it certainly seems like the sun is moving and Earth is standing still.

Even before astronomical telescopes were invented, Nicolaus Copernicus used mathematics to try to prove or disprove the Ptolemaic theory. Copernicus, a Polish astronomer, could not prove the truth of Ptolemy's theory. In fact, Copernicus argued that the geocentric theory (which held that Earth was at the