



Lisa Kljaich: The church excommunicated Martin Luther, which in the eyes of the church meant that they had damned him to a life in hell in the afterlife. What is a spiritual person to do? Well, you do what Luther and many other reformers did, you start worshiping on your own. These very charismatic reformers had followers who believed in their ideals, principles and they started worshiping with them and hence a church was created.

Some of the common beliefs that these Protestant churches had were threefold. One was that the opulent wealth and materialism of the Roman Catholic Church and this included the lavish expenditures on art that was going on in Rome at this time. They felt that this was not what the church should be focused on.

Their second issue was the idea that faith by itself would lead to salvation. They disagreed with this tenet and felt that in fact that you needed to have a moral life and goodly deeds coupled with faith in order to be saved. Lastly, they disagreed with the power of the papacy to have supreme matters in faith and morals. Luther and other reformers concluded that your relationship to God was an individual one and did not require the intervention of priests, rituals and doctrines.

This led to the translation of the Bible in the vernacular as opposed to Latin and this gave many more people throughout Europe direct access to the scriptures. Luther and other Protestant reformers strove to focus the church on only the essentials, to do away with elaborate rituals and practices which they felt came in-between the believer and God. This had some consequences for the arts.

A personal story, I remember when I was in college attending a wedding in Sellersburg, Indiana which is in United States where there are many denominations of Christian churches including the Amish. In this particular wedding, the bride wanted some traditional instrumental music when she came down the aisle, both going in for the ceremony and coming out.

Her intended groom attended a church where no instruments of any kind were allowed in the church, only vocal music. This is the church where they were going to be married. The men in her family helped construct a platform outside the church along with a ramp, procured a piano, rolled it up the ramp and stationed it there outside the church so that she could have her music, and yet the tenets and practices of this church could still be followed and not violated. In my opinion, that's one of the examples of the downside of what happened as frivolous worldly matters restrict away from church practices.

However, on the other side, Bach, the most famous composer, and you're probably familiar with him, he spent most of his adult life as a paid composer and musician for the Lutheran church and that he was paid to compose on a weekly basis. During that time he composed many, many beautiful and spiritually uplifting pieces, both vocal and instrumental, to be part of the sacred material for the Lutheran church.

That's the other side of the Protestant reformation. That's kind of a double edged sword, don't you think?



[00:04:14] [END OF AUDIO]