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EHAP

The Northern Renaissance – Document Packet

Question(s):

- What are some of the criticisms of the clergy made by Erasmus in this document?
- What did Erasmus feel were the problems of the Papacy of his day?

Document 1

...The next to these are another sort of brainsick fools, who style themselves monks and of religious orders, though they assume both titles very unjustly; for as to the last, they have very little religion in them; and as to the former, the etymology of the word monk implies a solitariness, or being alone; whereas they are so thick abroad that we cannot pass any street or alley without meeting them. Now I cannot imagine what one degree of men would be more hopelessly wretched, if I did not stand their friend, and buoy them up in that lake of misery, which by the engagements of a holy vow they have voluntarily immersed themselves in. But when this sort of men are so unwelcome to others, as that the very sight of them is thought ominous, I yet make them highly in love with themselves, and fond admirers of their own happiness. The first step whereunto they esteem a profound ignorance, thinking carnal knowledge a great enemy to their spiritual welfare, and seem confident of becoming greater proficient in divine mysteries the less they are poisoned with any human learning. They imagine that they bear a sweet consort with the heavenly choir, when they tone out their daily tally of psalms, which they rehearse only by rote, without permitting their understanding or affections to go along with their voice.

Among these some make a good profitable trade of beggary, going about from house to house, not like the apostles, to break, but to beg, their bread; nay, thrust into all public-houses, come aboard the passage-boats, get into the traveling wagons, and omit no opportunity of time or place for the craving people's charity; doing a great deal of injury to common highway beggars by interloping in their traffic of alms. And when they are thus voluntarily poor, destitute, not provided with two coats, nor with any money in their purse, they have the impudence to pretend that they imitate the first disciples, whom their master expressly sent out in such an equipage.

It is pretty to observe how they regulate all their actions as it were by weight and measure to so exact a proportion, as if the whole loss of their religion depended upon the omission of the least punctilio. Thus they must be very critical in the precise number of knots to the tying on of their sandals; what distinct colours their respective habits, and what stuff made of; how broad and long their girdles; how big, and in what fashion, their hoods; whether their bald crowns be to a hair's-breadth of the right cut; how many hours they must sleep, at what minute rise to prayers, and so on. And these several customs are altered according to the humours of different persons and places. While they are sworn to the superstitious observance of these trifles, they do not only despise all others, but are very inclinable to fall out among themselves; for though they make profession of an apostolic charity, yet they will pick a quarrel, and be implacably passionate for such poor provocations, as the girding on a coat the wrong way, for the wearing of clothes a little too darkish coloured or any such nicety not worth the speaking of.

...Now as to the popes of Rome, who pretend themselves Christ's vicars, if they would but imitate his exemplary life, in the being employed in an unintermitted course of preaching; in the being attended with poverty, nakedness, hunger, and a contempt of this world; if they did but consider the import of the word pope, which signifies a father; or if they did but practice their surname of most

holy, what order or degrees of men would be in a worse condition? There would be then no such vigorous making of parties, and buying of votes, in the conclave upon a vacancy of that See: and those who by bribery, or other indirect courses, should get themselves elected, would never secure their sitting firm in the chair by pistol, poison, force, and violence.

How much of their pleasure would be abated if they were but endowed with one dram of wisdom? Wisdom, did I say? Nay, with one grain of that salt which our Saviour bid them not lose the savour of. All their riches, all their honour, their jurisdictions, their Peter's patrimony, their offices, their dispensations, their licences, their indulgences, their long train and attendants (see in how short a compass I have abbreviated all their marketing of religion); in a word, all their perquisites would be forfeited and lost; and in their room would succeed watchings, fastings, tears, prayers, sermons, hard studies, repenting sighs, and a thousand such like severe penalties: nay, what's yet more deplorable, it would then follow, that all their clerks, amanuenses, notaries, advocates, proctors, secretaries, the offices of grooms, ostlers, serving-men, pimps (and somewhat else, which for modesty's sake I shall not mention); in short, all these troops of attendants, which depend on his holiness, would all lose their several employments. This indeed would be hard, but what yet remains would be more dreadful: the way Head of the Church, the spiritual prince, would then be brought from all his splendour to the poor equipage of a scrip and staff.

But all this is upon the supposition only that they understood what circumstances they are placed in: whereas now, by a wholesome neglect of thinking, they live as well as heart can wish: whatever of toil and drudgery belongs to their office that they assign over to St. Peter, or St. Paul, who have time enough to mind it; but if there be any thing of pleasure and grandeur, that they assume to themselves, as being hereunto called: so that by my influence no sort of people live more to their own ease and content. They think to satisfy that Master they pretend to serve, our Lord and Saviour, with their great state and magnificence, with the ceremonies of installments, with the titles of reverence and holiness, and with exercising their Episcopal function only in blessing and cursing. The working of miracles is old and out-dated; to teach the people is too laborious; to interpret scripture is to invade the prerogative of the schoolmen; to pray is too idle; to shed tears is cowardly and unmanly; to fast is too mean and sordid; to be easy and familiar is beneath the grandeur of him, who, without being sued to and ill-treated, will scarce give princes the honor of kissing his toe; finally, to die for religion is too self-denying; and to be crucified as their Lord of Life, is base and ignominious.

Their only weapons ought to be those of the Spirit; and of these indeed they are mighty liberal, as of their interdicts, their suspensions, their denunciations, their aggravations, their greater and lesser excommunications, and their roaring bulls, that fright whomever they are thundered against; and these most holy fathers never issue them out more frequently than against those, who, at the instigation of the devil, and not having the fear of God before their eyes, do feloniously and maliciously attempt to lessen and impair St. Peter's patrimony: and though that apostle tells our Savior in the gospel, in the name of all the other disciples, we have left all, and followed you, yet they challenge as his inheritance, fields, towns, treasures, and large dominions; for the defending whereof, inflamed with a holy zeal, they fight with fire and sword, to the great loss and effusion of Christian blood, thinking they are apostolical maintainers of Christ's spouse, the church, when they have murdered all such as they call her enemies; though indeed the church has no enemies more bloody and tyrannical than such impious popes, who give dispensations for the not preaching of Christ; evacuate the main effect and design of our redemption by their pecuniary bribes and sales; adulterate the gospel by their forced interpretations, and undermining traditions; and lastly, by their lusts and wickedness grieve the Holy Spirit, and make their Savior's wounds to bleed anew.

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| Question(s): | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To whom does More direct his criticisms regarding their contributions to the production of essential goods? • What are some of the moral/economic/social/political values of More's Utopia? • What role does religion play in Utopian life? • What is the Utopian view of sickness and a "good" death? • What do they consider to be a "bad death"? Why? |
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Document 2

... To understand their way of life fully we must look at one point more carefully. They allot only six hours to labor, and you might think that a scarcity of essential goods would result. Actually their working hours are sufficient to provide not only an abundance, but even a superabundance of all the necessities and conveniences of life. You will easily understand this if you consider how large a part of the population in other countries is idle. In the first place, the women (and they are half the whole population) usually do not work, or if they do, their husbands lie snoring. Secondly, there is the multitude of priests and so-called religious men, as numerous as they are idle. Add to these all the rich men, especially great landlords, who are commonly called well-born and noble. Add their henchmen, the whole flock of swaggering bullies. Reckon in with these the strong and lusty beggars, who go about feigning some disease to excuse their laziness. You will find that actual number of workers who supply the needs of mankind is much smaller than you would think. And now consider how few of these workers are employed in really necessary work. Because we measure values by money, we have to carry on many superfluous trades to support luxury and wantonness. If the multitude of our workers produced only what men need for good living, there would be such an abundance of goods that prices would go down and workmen would prosper. You can easily imagine how little time would be enough to produce the goods that man's needs and convenience demand (and his pleasure too if it were true and natural pleasure), if only the workers in useless trades were placed in worthwhile occupations and all the idlers who languish in sloth but eat twice as much as laborers were put to work on useful tasks.

THEIR MORAL PHILOSOPHY

The Utopians wonder that there is any man who delights in the faint gleam of a little gem when he can look at some star or even the sun itself. They marvel that there is any man so foolish as to think himself the nobler because of the fine texture of his woolen clothing. No matter how fine the thread, a sheep once wore it, and the sheep was a sheep still for all its wearing it. They wonder that gold, so useless a thing in itself, is everywhere so highly esteemed that man himself, through whom and by whose use it obtains its value, should be less revered than it. And they do not understand why a blockhead with no more brains than a post, and bad as well as stupid, should have many wise and good men serving him, only because he happens to own a great sum of gold. If he should lose all his money to some utterly worthless fellow in his household, either by some chance or by a legal trick (which can produce changes as great as chance does), he would soon become one of this fellow's servants, as though he belonged to the money and was bound to follow its fortune. . . .

The Utopians have absorbed these and similar attitudes partly from their education, for they are brought up amidst customs and institutions quite opposed to such folly. They have also acquired these notions from their learning and literature. . . .

In their moral philosophy, they argue much as we do. They consider what things are truly good, both for the body and the mind, and whether it is proper to call external things good or only the gifts.

of the mind. They inquire into the nature of virtue and pleasure. But their chief concern is about human happiness, whether it consists of one thing or of many. They seem much inclined to the view that all or most of human happiness lies in pleasure. And what may seem strange, they seek support for their pleasure philosophy from religion, which is serious and stern, somewhat severe and forbidding. For they never discuss happiness without combining the rational principles of philosophy with principles taken from religion. They think any inquiry concerning true happiness weak and defective unless it is based on religion.

The religious principles are these: that the soul of man is immortal and by divine beneficence has been ordained for happiness; and after this life there are rewards appointed for our virtues and good works and punishment for our sins. They think that although these beliefs belong to religion, it is in accordance with reason that they be held and acknowledged. They do not hesitate to assert that if these were rejected, no one would be so stupid as not to discern that he ought to seek pleasure regardless of right and wrong. . . . For what can one hope for after life without pleasure, that is, after a miserable life, if there is no reward after death?

The Utopians do not believe that there is happiness in all pleasures, but only in good and honest pleasures. To such, they believe, our nature is drawn as to its highest good by virtue itself. The opposite point of view is that happiness consists of virtue alone.

They define virtue as living according to nature. . . . they conclude that nature herself prescribes a life of joy (that is, of pleasure) as the goal of life. That is what they mean by saying that virtue is living according to nature. And as nature bids us mutually to make our lives merry and delightful, so she also bids us again and again not to destroy or diminish other people's pleasure in seeking our own. . . .

Thus after weighing the matter carefully, they conclude that all our actions, and among these our virtues, ultimately look toward pleasure and happiness as their end. They call pleasure all the acts and states of body or mind in which man naturally delights. But they include in their concept of pleasure only those appetites to which nature leads us. And they maintain that nature leads us only to the delights approved by right reason as well as by the senses, that is, only those delights by which we neither injure others, nor lose a greater pleasure for a less, nor suffer for later. Those attractions which are inconsistent with nature and which men call delights only by the emptiest of fictions (as if men could change their nature by changing their name), these things they say diminish happiness rather than increase it. For men whose minds are filled up with a false idea of pleasure have no room left for true pleasures and genuine delight. . . .

The Utopians . . . discriminate several kinds of true pleasures, some belonging to the mind, others to the body. Those of the mind are knowledge and the delight which comes from contemplation of the truth; also the pleasant recollection of a well-spent life and the assured hope of future well-being.

They divide bodily pleasures into two sorts. The first kind is that which fills the senses with immediate pleasure. This occurs when the body's parts are renewed and refreshed by food and drink, or when some excess in the body is discharged, as in bowel movements, procreation, or rubbing and scratching some itch.

There is a second kind of bodily pleasure that neither repairs nor relieves our bodies, but excites our senses with some hidden but unmistakable force and turns them inwardly upon themselves. Such is the pleasure that comes from music.

Another form of bodily pleasure consists of a quiet, sound condition of the body, its general well-being when disturbed by no disease. This condition in itself gives inward pleasure, though it is not excited by anything external. Although it affects the senses less strongly than the obvious satisfaction of eating and drinking, yet many count this the greater pleasure. Most of the Utopians say that this is the foundation of all pleasures, since it alone makes a calm and desirable condition. If it is lacking, there is no chance for any other pleasure. Mere absence of pain they call insensibility,

not pleasure, unless it is a state of health.

In times past they carried on a vigorous controversy as to whether assured and tranquil health is really a pleasure, since it only makes itself felt when it is threatened by its opposite. Today they all agree that health is the greatest of all bodily pleasures. . . .

Of all the pleasures they especially embrace those of the mind, for they esteem them most highly, thinking they arise from the exercise of the virtues and from the consciousness of a good life. Among bodily pleasures they give first place to health. They hold that the pleasure of eating and drinking and all other delights of the body are desirable only as they maintain health. They are not delightful in themselves, but only as they resist the encroachments of sickness. A wise man thinks it better to ward off sickness than to seek medicine, and to overcome troubles rather than to seek comfort. So it is better to reject these pleasures of sense than to be captivated by them. If any man thinks he is happy in the midst of these pleasures, then he must confess that he would be the happiest of men if he should spend his whole life in an unending round of hunger, thirst, itching, followed by eating, drinking, scratching and rubbing. Who cannot see that such a life is not only vile, but miserable? . . . So the Utopians think pleasures of this sort are not to be highly valued, except in so far as they are necessary to life. . . .

These are their ideas of virtue and pleasure, and they think that human reason can find none truer, unless some heavenly revelation should inspire more sublime ideas in men. I have no time to consider whether they are right in these views or not, nor do I think it necessary, as I only undertook to give an account of their customs, not to defend them. Whatever the validity of these principles, I am sure that nowhere is there a more excellent people or a happier commonwealth.

THEIR CARE OF THE SICK AND EUTHANASIA

The sick, as I have said, they tend carefully, omitting no medicine or food that will restore them to health. They relieve those who suffer from some incurable disease by sitting and talking with them and by alleviating their pain in every possible way. But if a person suffers from a disease which is both incurable and continually excruciating, the priests and magistrates come and urge him to make the decision not to nourish such a painful disease any longer. He is now unequal to all the duties of life, a burden to himself and to others, having really outlived himself. They tell him not to hesitate to die when life is such a torment, but in confidence of a better life after death, to deliver himself from the scourge and imprisonment of living, or let others release him. This, they say, he would do wisely, for by death he would lose nothing but suffering. Since he would be acting on the advice of the priests, who are the interpreters of God's will, he would act rightly and virtuously. Those who are moved by these arguments either starve themselves to death of their own accord or through the aid of an opiate die painlessly. If a man is not persuaded to this course, they do not force him to it against his will, nor do they lessen their care of him. To choose death under these circumstances is honorable. But they dishonor a man who takes his own life without the approval of the priests and senate. They consider him unworthy of decent burial and throw his body unburied and disgraced into a ditch.

SOURCE: Thomas More, *Utopia*, 1515.

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| Question(s): | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • According to Gargantua, what changes have taken place in learning from the time of his youth to that of his son, Pantagruel? |
| <p>Document 3</p> | |
| <p>But even though my late father Grandgousier, of blessed memory, strove with all his ability that I should profit from and learn political knowledge, and even though my labors and studies matched or even surpassed his desires, nevertheless, as you can well understand, the times were not fit or favorable for learning as is the present; and I did not have the abundance of such instructors as you have had. The times were still dark, and reflected the misery and calamity of caused by the Goths who had destroyed all good scholarship. But, through divine grace, during my life light and dignity have been restored to learning; and we witness in them so much improvement that now I would have trouble being accepted into a children's beginning class, I who in my maturity was reputed (and not wrongly) the most learned man of the time. I do not say this out of vain boasting--even though I could properly do so in writing to you as you may understand by the authority of Marcus Tullius Cicero in his book <i>Old Age</i>, and the teachings of Plutarch in his book titled <i>How to Praise Oneself Honorably</i>--but to inspire in you the desire to strive for the highest achievements.</p> <p>Now all the disciplines have been restored, languages revived: Greek, without which it is shameful for a person to call himself learned: Hebrew, Chaldean, and Latin. Elegant and correct printed editions are available, the result of a divinely-inspired invention of my time, as are in contrast guns--the product of diabolical suggestion. The world is full of learned men, fine teachers, ample libraries; and it is my opinion that neither in the time of Plato, nor of Cicero, nor of Papinian were there such opportunities for study as we see today; and no one should now go out in public who has not been well polished in Minerva's workshop. I see the robbers, hangmen, freebooters and grooms of today more learned than the theologians and preachers of my day. What can I say? Even women and girls aspire to the honor and celestial manna of good learning. Things have changed so much that at my advanced age I have had to learn Greek, which I had not rejected like Cato, but which I had not had the leisure to learn in my youth; and I delight in reading the <i>Morals</i> of Plutarch; the beautiful <i>Dialogues</i> of Plato, the <i>Monuments</i> of Pausanias, and the <i>Antiquities</i> of Athenaeus as I await the hour at which it may please God, my Creator, to summon and order me to leave this world.</p> | |
| <p>SOURCE: Francois Rabelais (1494-1553), "Letter from Gargantua to his son Pantagruel," in <i>Gargantua and Pantagruel</i>, early 16c.</p> | |

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| Question(s): | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What were some of the medieval values/virtues that Don Quixote clung to? • What role does Sancho Panza play in the story? |
| <p>Document 4</p> | |
| <p>At this point they came in sight of thirty or forty windmills that are on that plain.</p> <p>"Fortune," said Don Quixote to his squire, as soon as he had seen them, "is arranging matters for us</p> | |

better than we could have hoped. Look there, friend Sancho Panza, where thirty or more monstrous giants rise up, all of whom I mean to engage in battle and slay, and with whose spoils we shall begin to make our fortunes. For this is righteous warfare, and it is God's good service to sweep so evil a breed from off the face of the earth."

"What giants?" said Sancho Panza.

"Those you see there," answered his master, "with the long arms, and some have them nearly two leagues long."

"Look, your worship," said Sancho. "What we see there are not giants but windmills, and what seem to be their arms are the vanes that turned by the wind make the millstone go."

"It is easy to see," replied Don Quixote, "that you are not used to this business of adventures. Those are giants, and if you are afraid, away with you out of here and betake yourself to prayer, while I engage them in fierce and unequal combat."

So saying, he gave the spur to his steed Rocinante, heedless of the cries his squire Sancho sent after him, warning him that most certainly they were windmills and not giants he was going to attack. He, however, was so positive they were giants that he neither heard the cries of Sancho, nor perceived, near as he was, what they were.

"Fly not, cowards and vile beings," he shouted, "for a single knight attacks you."

A slight breeze at this moment sprang up, and the great vanes began to move.

"Though ye flourish more arms than the giant Briareus, ye have to reckon with me!" exclaimed Don Quixote, when he saw this.

So saying, he commended himself with all his heart to his lady Dulcinea, imploring her to support him in such a peril. With lance braced and covered by his shield, he charged at Rocinante's fullest gallop and attacked the first mill that stood in front of him. But as he drove his lance-point into the sail, the wind whirled it around with such force that it shattered the lance to pieces. It swept away with it horse and rider, and they were sent rolling over the plain, in sad condition indeed.

Sancho hastened to his assistance as fast as the ass could go. When he came up and found Don Quixote unable to move, with such an impact had Rocinante fallen with him.

"God Bless me!" said Sancho, "did I not tell your worship to watch what you were doing, because they were only windmills? No one could have made any mistake about it unless he had something of the same kind in his head."

"Silence, friend Sancho," replied Don Quixote. "The fortunes of war more than any other are liable to frequent fluctuations. Moreover I think, and it is the truth, that the same sage Frestón who carried off my study and books, has turned these giants into mills in order to rob me of the glory of vanquishing them, such is the enmity he bears me. But in the end his wicked arts will avail but little against my good sword."

"God's will be done," said Sancho Panza, and helping him to rise got him again on Rocinante, whose shoulder was half dislocated. Then, discussing the adventure, they followed the road to Puerto Lápice, for there, said Don Quixote, they could not fail to find adventures in abundance and variety, as it was a well-traveled thoroughfare. For all that, he was much grieved at the loss of his lance, and said so to his squire.

"I remember having read," he added, "how a Spanish knight, Diego Pérez de Vargas by name, having broken his sword in battle, tore from an oak a ponderous bough or branch. With it he did such things that day, and pounded so many Moors, that he got the surname of Machuca (3) and his descendants from that day forth are called Vargas y Machuca. I mention this because from the first oak I see I mean to tear a branch, large and stout. I am determined and resolved to do such deeds with it that you may deem yourself very fortunate in being found worthy to see them and be an eyewitness of things that will scarcely be believed."

"Be that as God wills," said Sancho, "I believe it all as your worship says it. But straighten yourself a little, for you seem to be leaning to one side, maybe from the shaking you got when you fell."

"That is the truth, said Don Quixote, "and if I make no complaint of the pain it is because knights-errant are not permitted to complain of any wound, even though their bowels be coming out through it."

"If so," said Sancho, "I have nothing to say. But God knows I would rather your worship complained when anything ailed you. For my part, I confess I must complain however small the ache may be, unless this rule about not complaining applies to the squires of knights-errant also."

Don Quixote could not help laughing at his squire's simplicity, and assured him he might complain whenever and however he chose, just as he liked. So far he had never read of anything to the contrary in the order of knighthood.

Sancho reminded him it was dinner time, to which his master answered that he wanted nothing himself just then, but that Sancho might eat when he had a mind. With this permission Sancho settled himself as comfortably as he could on his beast, and taking out of the saddlebags what he had stowed away in them, he jogged along behind his master munching slowly. From time to time he took a pull at the wineskin with all the enjoyment that the thirstiest tavern-keeper in Málaga might have envied. And while he went on in this way, between gulps, he never gave a thought to any of the promises his master had made him, nor did he rate it as hardship but rather as recreation going in quest of adventures, however dangerous they might be.

Finally they settled down for the night among some trees. From one of them Don Quixote plucked a dry branch to serve as a lance, fixing on it the head he had removed from the broken one. All that night Don Quixote lay awake thinking of his lady Dulcinea, in conformity with what he had read in his books, how many a night in the forests and deserts knights used to lie sleepless, borne up by the memory of their mistresses.

Sancho Panza spent it thus: having his stomach full of something stronger than chicory water he slept straight through. If his master had not called him, neither the rays of the sun beating on his face nor all the cheery notes of the birds welcoming the approach of day would have had power to waken him.

SOURCE: Miguel de Cervantes, *Don Quixote*, 1605.

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| Question(s): | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do these excerpts from several of Shakespeare's plays, reflect the Renaissance mindset? |
| <p>Document 5</p> | |
| <p>What a piece of work is man! How noble in reason, how infinite in faculty, in form and moving how express and admirable, in action how like an angel, in apprehension how like a god.... --- <i>Hamlet</i></p> <p>Be not afraid of greatness. Some are born great, some achieve greatness, and some have greatness thrust upon 'em. --- <i>Twelfth Night</i></p> <p>We are such stuff as dreams are made of... -- <i>The Tempest</i></p> <p>All the world's a stage, And all the men and women merely players. They have their exits and their entrances, And one man in his time plays many parts,.... --- <i>As You Like It</i></p> | |
| <p>SOURCE: Excerpts from William Shakespeare's plays.</p> | |

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| Question(s): | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • According to Nauert, why did the intellectual elite of Northern Europe embrace the ideals of the Italian Renaissance? • How did the North adapt the Italian Renaissance style and viewpoint to Northern sensibilities? |
| <p>Document 6</p> | |
| <p>The North itself would never have accepted Renaissance culture if that culture had not suited its needs. The reorganized, powerful monarchies of the late 15c and early 16c needed a new ideal for their servants and courtiers, and the emphasis on public service, on personal merit, and on learning provided an attractive substitute for the traditional manners of the unlettered, unruly, and discredited feudal classes. The new ideal contained enough emphasis on social class and military prowess to make it credible to a society where the hereditary nobility still counted for much. For the kings, it offered the added advantage of servants who were refined and cultivated, and who would wield the pen as well as the sword for their master.</p> <p>In addition to the monarchs and their courts, other important groups in the North also found humanistic culture attractive. The powerful, self-confident merchant oligarchies that governed the important towns, especially the prospering towns of the Rhine Valley and of south Germany, found in humanism a cultural ideal far more suited to the needs and prejudices of urban magnates than were the chivalric and scholastic traditions of the Middle Ages. The large group of would-be Church reformers found the characteristic Renaissance repudiation of the recent past and the desire to return to the original sources quite attractive, for the Roman past included the apostolic and early</p> | |

patristic age, when the Church was still pure and uncorrupted....

The humanism that grew up in the North was not a mere copy of the Italian culture, but a grafting of Italian elements into a cultural tradition that varied from country to country. Obviously, for example, Germans or even Frenchmen could not revere the ancient Romans as their ancestors in quite the same sense that Italians could.

What did develop everywhere was a revulsion against the heritage of the immediate past (often more open and violent than in Italy because scholastic traditions and a clerical spirit had much greater strength in the North), and the conscious adoption of an idealized Greek and Roman Antiquity as the model for reforming literature, education, and the whole ideal of the educated man. Even more than in Italy, Northern humanists enthusiastically looked to the apostolic and patristic age of the Church as a valuable part of the ancient heritage they sought to restore. This emphasis on ancient Christianity, combined with the widespread movements of lay piety that flourished in the lower Rhine Valley and other parts of Northern Europe, explains why humanism north of the Alps directed much of its reformist activity toward reform of the Church and deepening of personal religious experience.

SECONDARY SOURCE: Charles G. Nauert, *The Age of Renaissance and Reformation*, pp. 116-117.