

Explore More—Religion in the “New World”

Directions: *Listen to your teacher talk about the religious divisions in Europe during the period after the Reformation. You will learn how this division affected the distribution of religions in the “New World.” Refer to the maps in your Explore Geography Picture Dictionary to locate the places your teacher mentions. Circle any words you don’t understand. Underline or highlight important ideas in the text. Write notes in the margins to help you understand key points. Then answer the questions in your own words.*

Religious Division in Europe

By the mid-1500s, Europe had split into two main religious groups—Roman Catholic and Protestant.

Point to this date on your class time line.

Martin Luther’s Protestant ideas spread to northern Germany, Scandinavia, Poland, and Austria, while other Protestant beliefs spread throughout northern Europe. People in Scotland and the Netherlands followed Calvinist ideas. People who lived in some areas in France and Switzerland also followed Calvinism. Meanwhile, the king of England had established the Anglican Church, which included both Roman Catholic and Protestant ideas and practices.

Point out these areas on your world map.

The Roman Catholic Church’s response to the Reformation helped slow the spread of Protestantism, and Protestants remained concentrated in northern Europe. The rest of Europe—especially France, Spain, Portugal, Italy, and southern Germany—remained loyal to the Roman Catholic Church.

Point out these areas on your world map.

Religious Divisions in the New World

Beginning in the late 1400s, European countries sent explorers to the Americas, which they referred to as the New World. Colonists arrived later, establishing settlements in both North and South America.

Point out North and South America on your world map.

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People arriving in the New World brought along their religious beliefs. This affected the distribution of Roman Catholicism and Protestantism in the New World. The areas where Roman Catholics settled became primarily Roman Catholic. And, the areas where Protestants settled became primarily Protestant.

Italian explorers encountered the native people in the Caribbean and the eastern coast of South America. Spain's Queen Isabella, a Roman Catholic, sponsored many New World expeditions and was especially interested in converting people in the New World to Christianity. Explorers from Spain conquered civilizations in present-day Mexico and Peru, forcing the native people to live under Spanish rule. Explorers from France traveled to North America, developing relationships with the Indians in present-day Canada. A few explorers from England arrived in the New World in the 1500s. Later, English colonists arrived in North America, establishing permanent settlements, as did colonists from Sweden and other northern European regions. Some English colonists were interested in finding gold; other groups were concerned with religious freedom and establishing Protestant colonies. All groups of colonists encountered the Native Americans living in the area. ❖

YOUR TURN!

Write your answers to the following questions.

1. What were the major religious divisions in Europe during this time?

2. How did the religious divisions in Europe affect the distribution of religions in the "New World"?

Questions for further discussion:

- Using your textbook, historical anthology, and the *Explore Geography Picture Dictionary*, identify the Protestant and Roman Catholic regions in Europe during this period. Create a matrix or graphic organizer to show the relationship between the religious regions in Europe with the distribution of religion in the “New World.” Discuss the information you have arrayed.
- What would you like to know more about in terms of the distribution of religions in the “New World”? Frame questions that you can answer by historical study and research. Conduct this research and discuss your findings.