

della Mirandola and the influence of his school was carried to England in the work of Colet and the Oxford clique that centered on him. Eventually it would gain speed in the 1500's in Germany through Reuchlin and in France through LeFevre. Virtually all of these early humanists were men of religious feelings and emotions. They saw man as a created being with certain privileges and creative skills and in their own way they were seeking to liberate him from the press of the then-existing life so that he might enter something better. It is hard to dislike such ideas.

This humanism is very close to the founding of the Reformation although it certainly did not produce it. The affairs of men as a total community are used of God in achieving His will.

VIII.2 Church Life

The Life of the Church

The Conciliar Movement

VIII.2.a Conciliarism

The religious setting of 1400 required some sort of drastic action. There were popes in Avignon and Rome and occasionally in other places! For the last two centuries the Lateran Councils, etc., had been the real backbone of the church and it was determined that, as there had been no general council for some time, one was needed to correct the Papal situation and restore stability to the church at large. It was recognized that the Greek church would not participate but the rulers of the west could not continue in the present confusion.

Consequently a council was convened in Pisa in 1409. It laid the groundwork for a grand council to be held in 1415-1416 in Constance..a Swiss/German city. Sigismund of Austria, heir designate to the imperial throne, called the council in the terms of his title "King of the Romans" in 1415. All of the claimants to the papal throne were summoned but none planned to attend and all denounced the idea. Sigismund secured a major victory when it was decided that the voting would be on a national basis rather than on the basis of the attending delegates. This resulted in the fact that no nationality group could control the outcome of the council or unduly influence its decision. Numerical superiority of delegates was therefore not a factor.