

But what the criticism and the fun-making alike did for the church was not to reform it but to make it suspicious of new ideas and so to force it to hide real truth under ever-deeper ideas of superstition. The concept of an infallible tradition known only to the ecclesiastical powers would be a sword held over the hearts of the comon world of the time.

THE IMMEDIATE SETTING FOR THE REFORMATION

II.3
The Immediate
Setting for the
Reformation

Within the Roman Church

As the reformation movement grew from the existing body there are a few factors necessarily needed in understanding how the movement generated some power and speed.

II.3.a
Within the
Roman Church

Failure of Conciliarism

The Conciliar Movement was born to resolve the problems left over from the "Babylonian Captivity" of the church. The chief one related to three claimants for the papacy, one in France, one in Rome, and one "on the loose." Summoned at Constance in 1415, the council voted by nation. It removed all three papal claimants and elected Martin V to the chair. It also condemned and saw to the burning of Hus. The work was so successful that it was thought a good idea to have one every ten years...and check on the health of the church. But the successive popes warred against this as they saw it a threat to the power of the Roman chair and after one or two conciliar movement gatherings had achieved little, the movement passed from the scene about 1449. What it left on the popes was the impression that a council could be a dangerous thing--if one removed three popes it was conceivable that one could remove one pope and the conciliar movement suffered from papal intrigue and a loss of imperial control on the member nations.

The Reformation Popes

Sixtus IV 1471-1484

A man of capable renaissance and political skills, Sixtus is the pope responsible for the Sis-