

Footstep #8 - The Architect of the Reformation – 1516

“The Christian humanists were not, however, revolutionaries. They exposed corruption and other evils in existing institutions, but they did not advocate their abolition. They were more concerned with proper conduct than with theology, with learning than with faith and love, and with nature than with grace. Yet, they questioned no fundamental doctrines of the church. To preserve the solidarity of the medieval Christian community, most of them refused to follow the Protestant leaders in their separation from Catholicism.” (Harold Grimm. *The Reformation Era*, p. 64)

Humanism is a critical movement in the Renaissance and elevated the importance of man to a level almost equal to God. Humanists encouraged learning through inquiry, the free will of man, reason, and the use of the scientific method as a means to discovering the truth. Christian humanism emphasized the need to reform the problems in the church and society by preserving the institution of the Roman Catholic Church.

Every state had their humanists and Christian humanists. In Spain it was **Cardinal Francisco Ximenes de Cisneros**, in France it was **Guillaume Bude** and **Jacques Lefevre**, in England it was **Thomas More** and **Erasmus**, and in Germany it was **Rudolf Agricola** and **Johannes Reuchlin**.

It is important to understand that Martin Luther challenged many of the teachings of the Christian humanists because he advocated that people were saved by faith and not by the works and actions that the Christian humanists reasoned were necessary to reform society. Because of the teachings and publications of the humanists and Christian humanists, the architectural design for social and religious reform was as vigorously discussed in 1517 as we discuss the issues of gun control, the national debt, and education in the 21st century. Everyone in Luther’s Europe was mindful of God and the Church. The educated were beginning to read the *Holy Bible* and form their own conclusions about what they read.



Erasmus of Rotterdam (the Netherlands) published the New Testament in Greek and Latin in 1516.