



CHWNE Module 2 Lesson 3

John Calvin

Nicholas Cop

& the Massacre of The Waldenses



In early **1530**, the **agent of the Sorbonne - Noel Beda**, condemned the writings of Marguerite of Navarre and was banished.

Nicholas Cop was appointed as the new agent instead of Beda. He had a student named **John Calvin**, whom he asked for help to write his address for the opening of the academic year in **1533**.

Remember Cop was influenced by Jacques Lefevre d'Etapes, who trained preachers in Meux in 1523, using his translations of the Gospel and Epistles.

Nicholas Cop

(1501-1540)



John Calvin



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D'Etapes appointed Royal Librarian then left for Navarre

The address discussed the need for reform and renewal in the Roman Catholic Church and highlighted differences between the Beatitudes of the Gospels and the theology and practices of the Roman Catholic Church.

Calls were made for the ideas of both Nicholas Cop and Calvin to be repressed.



They fled Paris. **Nicholas Cop fled to Switzerland and John Calvin to Santoinge** a Huguenot stronghold and birthplace of Champlain.

In 1534, the 'placard' issue caused Calvin to finally leave France for Geneva.



However, those who shared his beliefs followed Calvin there, were trained by him and returned to France, spreading Reformation teachings. They grew at what Francis considered an alarming rate.



In January of 1535, Francis participated in a procession which culminated in the burning of 6 heretics.

The Parlement at Meaux were allowed to arrest 74 of them, burning 18.

He passed an edict which called for the extermination of the heretics and anyone sheltering them. Snitches were offered financial incentives.



By the end of 1535, Francis reversed his position and invited **Philip Melancthon** to Paris.

John Calvin, wrote an open *letter of defence of the Christian faith*, addressed to Francis I, dated **23rd August 1535**.

His letter, "*Institutio Christianae Religionis*" (*Institutes of the Christian Religion*), was published in Latin in **March 1536**.



It was this confession of the Christian faith that became a unifying call to those who no longer considered themselves Catholics but were vacillating between the teachings of Luther, Zwingli and other leaders of the Reformation.



In **1539 and 1540**, the **Edict of Toleration** which Francis had previously passed, was replaced with more power to the tribunals and magistrates.

They became the new inquisitors against the **'heretics'** with power to prosecute anyone shielding them.



Francis had the Sorbonne crafted a response to Calvin's Institutes, which they called The 26 Articles.

They prohibited the ownership or circulation of books by Luther, Calvin and Melancthon.



Large numbers of protestants all over France were burnt at the stake.

The Parlements were given authority to prosecute anyone preaching a doctrine contrary to the 26 articles.

This large-scale persecution set the stage for the reign of Francis' son, **Henry II**.



In 1535, at the city of AIX a decree from the Parlement ordered a general massacre of the Waldenses.

The Waldenses had claimed direct apostolic origin of their church from Paul's visit to Spain.

They took vows of poverty and did not believe in the excesses and wealth of the Catholic church.



According to the **Catholic Encyclopedia**, their doctrinal errors included a denial of *purgatory, indulgences and prayers for the dead.*

They denounced all lying as grievous sins, refused to take oaths and considered the shedding of human blood as unlawful.

They also condemned war and the death penalty.



They were given a 'grace period' of 5 months to give them time to convert to Catholicism.

Francis withheld his consent to the massacre for 5 years before he reluctantly authorised its execution.

In 1540, 800 people were massacred, which Francis regretted bitterly afterwards.