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## The Reformation Of Catholic Church

Beginning in the early sixteenth century, the people who spurred and supported the Protestant Reformation began to question and challenge the views of the largely popular Catholic Church. Much of this came from strong ties which formed between religion and politics during the Reformation, as well as beforehand. The Pope seemed to lead not only the Catholic Church, but also had a large say in European politics and settling conflicts either through mediation or dispute. Not only was the Pope a center for debate, but so were the rulers at the time who believed to be on the throne as part of God's will. These connections between religion and politics were frivolous at best, but were taken very seriously by all those they affected and thus those who followed them. They are among the reasons the Catholic Church came under fire in the Reformation.

Perhaps the earliest and perhaps the clearest example of interference with politics was the Treaty of Tordesillas, where Portugal and Spain made an agreement splitting the conquered lands in the Atlantic between the two countries. Spain would lay claim to all lands to the west of the line, and Portugal would be in charge of the spoils east of the line. During this process, Pope Alexander the VI helped mediate the treaty and even drew the line for the two parties involved, which was consequently what was being revised in the treaty. This may have been seen as corrupt or unethical because of the fact that the Pope was not entirely neutral since he was in control of a sizeable nation. This means he could have favored one of the two countries over the other for a political reason, rather than respecting both parties as purely a religious figure and mediator.

Not only was the Pope a political adviser and moderator, but he also acted as the leader for the Papal states on the Italian peninsula, of which he commanded the army and its citizens. The Pope at this time acted not only as the figurehead for the Catholic Church but also as the monarch of an independent nation. This drew controversy and was something that was noted in Martin Luther's 95 theses. The amount of power the Pope has, and subsequently the Catholic Church, is much too great and as a result they can exploit their parishioners without retaliation. That is, until Luther brought these conflicts to public attention. Luther calls upon the Pope and says, "He wears a triple crown, whereas the mightiest kings only wear one crown." With this statement he says that the Pope possesses more power than any other singular man in the world, simply by his own appointment and the popularity of the Catholic Church in Europe. Not only is he the most powerful, but it is also the most prevalent example of the ties that exist between religion and politics; his power as a ruler and as the head of an entire religion cannot be matched and places too much power into the hands of a single ruler. That is one of the reasons Martin Luther called for a reform of the Church.

Once the Reformation was in full swing and the word of Martin Luther had spread, people began forming their own opinions of what religion should and shouldn't be, and what rights leaders like the Pope and any other king should have. Bishop Jacques Benigne Bossuet wrote a number of texts speaking about the correlation between rulers and God, and the unspoken rules that surround them. Rulers are supposed to only stand as the head of their country and respective lands, but during this time there was a connection made between many kings and God. This connection seemed to put a halo over the heads of kings and they became a sacred

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symbol and their word became scripture. Bossuet says, in an article about divine right for kings to rule and the power of God behind them, "It appears from all this that the person of the king is sacred, and that to attack him in any way is sacrilege...But even without the external application in thus being anointed, they are by their very office the representatives of the divine majesty deputed by Providence for the execution of his purposes." The message being sent is that even though there doesn't seem to be anything holy about a king they are treated with such high regard, and if anything is done against them it is as if the convicted had attacked the Lord himself. This is critical of rulers such as King Henry VIII, who, after being denied a marriage annulment by the Pope he separated himself from the Catholic Church and started the Church of England, all so he could annul his marriage. It should be added that before he needed an annulment, Henry was in full support of the Catholic Church and attacked Martin Luther. Once he realized that the Church would not do such a service for him, he created the Church of England and his people had no real say because of the power of God he inherited as the head of a Church, and a country. As the leader of his country and his church, he assumed a much higher role than before, since now it includes the power of God by his side.

Much of the reason behind the reformation was that people were becoming self-reliant and questioning some of the things they followed and believed in. When Martin Luther posted his theses and made known his disparities, it spurred people to step away and really think about their faith and how they were practicing. It was apparent that the church had a firm grip on its parishioners, because they read them the word of the lord, and they lied to people saying that indulgences would pave your way into heaven. Martin Luther referenced the Bible after having studied it in depth and stated that it was not said anywhere that you monetary exchange was necessary to gain access into the lord's kingdom; the only thing needed was to believe in God and practice good faith. The criticism of indulgences led to taking aim at the use of the money which people gave to the church for passage into heaven. Martin Luther stated in his theses on point 86, "Why does not the pope, whose wealth today is greater than the wealth of the richest Crassus, build the basilica of St. Peter with his own money rather than with the money of poor believers?" It was well known that the Pope had religious as well as political power as head of the Papal States, and with that power comes wealth. The point being driven at by Luther is that even with the money and resources the Pope has from controlling most of an entire country, as well as being the head of Catholic Church, he still enforced the extortion of thousands of people. Going against the teachings of your religion and lying about what is said by God is absurd and is definitely not the example of a divine ruler even though that is the position he had put himself in.

Through the period of the Reformation it became evident that there were strong bonds between politics and religion, and at times they disrupted the way things were supposed to be run. There was a notion of Divine Rule embraced by rulers, saying that they were placed upon the throne by the actions of God, which allowed them the ability to do what they please since nobody wanted to go against God's will. On top of divine rule was the Pope, who was a monarch as well as the leader of the Catholic Church. His power and closeness to God allowed him to bend the rules as he pleased, such as extorting Catholics into paying indulgences in order to get into Heaven. All of these examples drove Martin Luther to publish his 95 Theses on what he saw wrong with the Catholic Church, its actions, monarchs in Europe and the ridiculous relationship with God they were given. Ultimately the ties between religion and politics during the reformation were quite strong, and drew attention to the Catholic Church which caused people to begin parting ways and seeking other religions.