

## Protestant Reformation - Part B

Martin Luther famously burned the Papal Bull that excommunicated him from the Church in 1520. This act of defiance would split the Church and those Christians in Europe into two groups; the Catholics who still followed the authority of the Pope, and the Protestants who would emphasize their own faith and follow their own interpretations of the bible. This division was fueled by the ideas and inventions of the Renaissance, and by dramatic challenges to **Papal Authority** such as Martin Luther's protest.



Spanish Inquisition Torture

There is little doubt that the excesses and the indulgences of the Church led to the Protestant Reformation. Reformers like Savonarola had been criticizing the Church since the 15<sup>th</sup> Century. However, it wasn't until the 16<sup>th</sup> Century do, we see the conditions for a true **revolution** to occur. When Martin Luther began his "protests" in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century, he was able to share his ideas and criticisms all over Europe thanks to the printing press and the newfound ability to share ideas and information. Education and the ability to read now took on an even greater importance because knowledge was no longer the domain of the Church or the wealthy. The culture of knowledge and of wanting to learn was in full force (thanks to the Renaissance) and there now existed ways in which to spread knowledge widely.

During the Middle Ages, the Church worked hand-in-hand with the Monarchs of Europe. The Church would supply the necessary skills like reading, writing and numeracy that were needed to run a kingdom. It would also preach to people that it was their duty to obey not only the Pope, but their King or Prince as well. As Luther's ideas spread and Protestants began to read and interpret the bible for themselves, the idea of everyone being equal in eyes of God became more accepted. Peasants were less likely to be happy with their lives and less happy to follow the instructions of priests who now seemed only interested in maintaining their own **opulent** lifestyles and the opulent lifestyles of the Monarchs and Nobels while they remained poor. What started as an argument over religion was turning into a social revolution.

### **Religious Differences Result in Violence**

Luther's ideas took hold of most of Northern Europe. Germany, located in the middle of Europe was divided. Many German Princes who governed and controlled Germany seized upon Luther's ideas that the Church should not own and profit from property and they used this as an excuse to increase their own land holdings. At the end of the Middle Ages, the Church would possess approximately one-third of all land in Europe, so opportunities to take and profit from that land existed all over. Some German Princes simply wanted freedom from Papal Authority and others still relied upon it for their survival. Germany would become a battleground between Catholics and Protestants.

**Papal Authority** - the control of the Catholic Church and the Pope

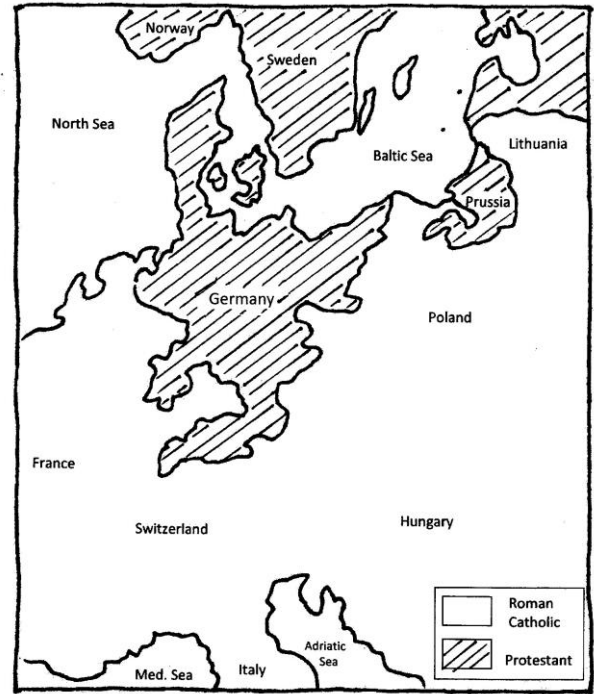
**Revolution** - the term used in the study of history to describe an event or a series of events that would radically change how people view and live in their world.

**Opulent** - overly wealthy and extravagant.

In addition to the warring Princes, peasants began to rise up and demand their equal share. In 1524 approximately 300,000 peasants would revolt against their princes in battles all over Germany. Small bands of poorly equipped and poorly resourced peasants would challenge the nobles. Although there were some successes for the peasants, when the rebellion was finally put down a year later, approximately 100,000 of the peasants had been slaughtered and in the end the monarchs remained in control.

### Counter Reformation

As Europeans massacred each other over Luther's ideas and church property, the Catholic church itself set in motion a series of reforms meant to address the complaints of the Protestants. They began with an increase in **propaganda** to improve its image and message to the people, and most frightening, they increased the power of the **Inquisition** which was a Catholic organization that was given the power to arrest, torture and execute anyone they felt were going against the Church.



Protestant and Catholic Northern Europe in 1555

Reforms were made to rid the Church of some of its most corrupt practices, and it is at this time you see new religious orders or groups within the Church such as the Jesuits be created to fight internal corruption. These were positive moves, however at a series of meetings called the Council of Trent which occurred in 1545 to 1563, the Catholic church only affirmed its right to be the only ones who could interpret the bible. These declarations would not address any of Luther's criticisms and would only strengthen the division between Catholics and Protestants.

Propaganda is the art of using words and messages to promote a particular belief or political viewpoint. It is used all the time, even today "alternative facts" are put forward to justify what people in power are doing. During the counter-reformation, Protestant books and bibles were banned and more art that glorified the church was produced. In addition to trying to win the minds of the Europeans, the Church sought to terrify them into submission with the Inquisition. The Inquisition had been a part of the Catholic Church for a long time, but during the 16<sup>th</sup> Century it was given even more power to arrest, torture and execute anyone it felt didn't support the Pope and the Catholic Church. In Spain, the Inquisition was particularly violent and although it was successful in terrorizing many to remain loyal to Catholicism, it also served as an example to Protestants as to why they could never trust the Church.

The divide between Catholics and Protestants would continue to plague Europe. Eventually, most of Europe would come to realize that they couldn't keep killing each other over their religious differences. A big step was the Peace of Augsburg of 1555, but religious intolerance would continue for centuries. Even today, in places like Ireland in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, the divide between these two views still results in violence and killings. Europe was only to emerge out of the Reformation divided and those divisions would eventually help lead to the modern nation states that we have today.

**Propaganda** - the art of using words and messages to promote a particular belief or political viewpoint. Still used by governments and dictators today.

**Inquisition** - a Catholic institution that used its powers to arrest, torture and execute "heretics" or people who did not believe what they want them to believe.

Protestant Reformation - Part Two

**Directions:** READ the handout entitled; "Protestant Reformation - Part Two" and then answer the following questions.

1. Use your handout to provide definitions for the following terms: (1 mark each)

**Papal Authority      Revolution      Opulent**  
**Propaganda              Inquisition**

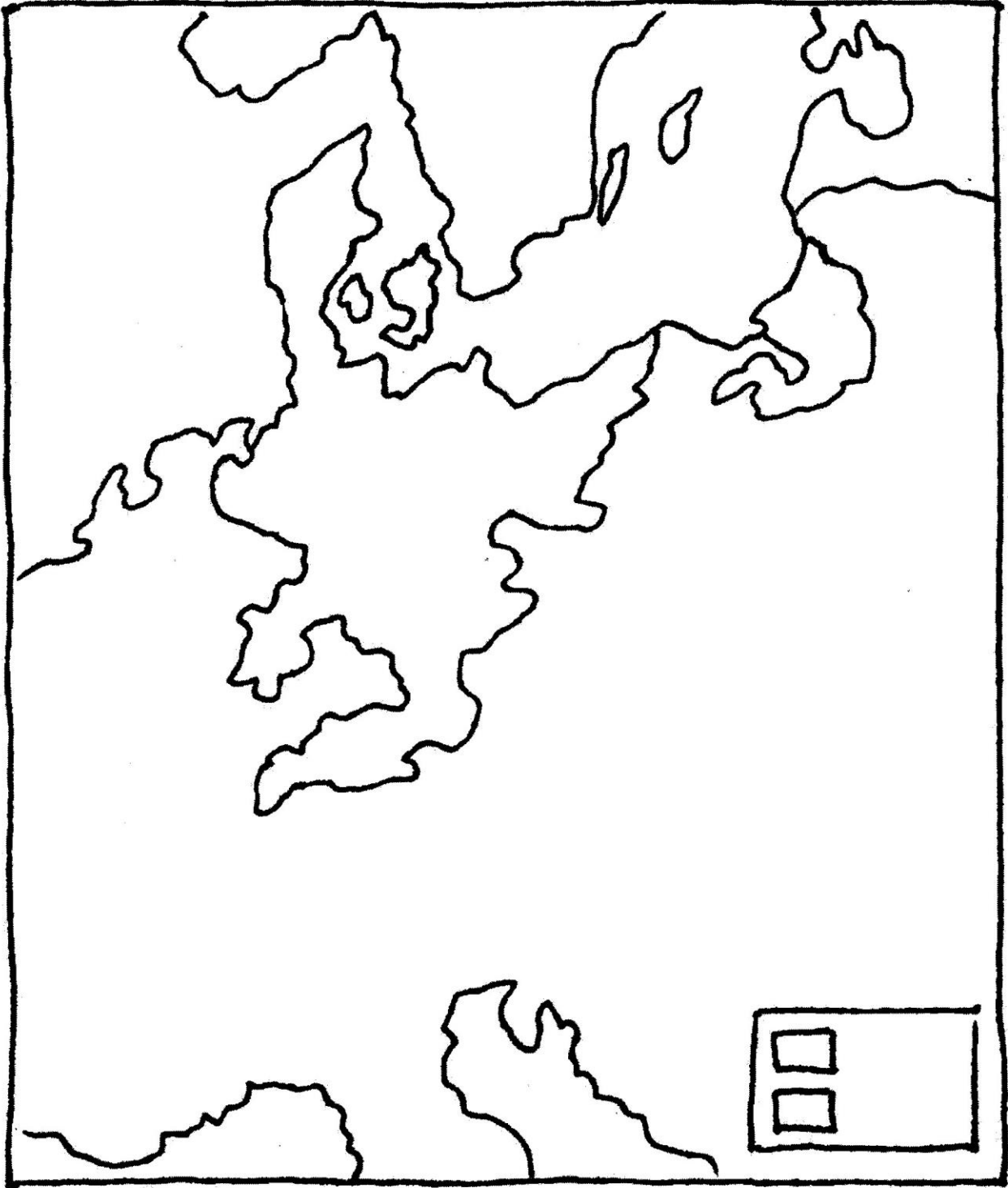
2. On a separate piece of paper, answer the following questions using **COMPLETE SENTENCES**.

- a. In your own words, describe why the conditions were right for Luther's idea to spread in Europe? What fuelled this idea to spread knowledge? (2 marks for quality of response and inclusion of details)
- b. In your own words describe why you think people liked Luther's ideas and went against the Church. Provide a specific example. (2 marks for the quality of your response and evidence of thought and effort)
- c. In your own words, describe what the Catholic Church did to counter the Protestant Reformation. Which response was the least "Christian"? (2 marks for quality of response and evidence of insight)

3. Map - Protestant and Catholic Northern Europe in 1555 - Color and label the following map.

You will be marked out of 5 for accuracy, quality of work and evidence of effort

Total: \_\_\_\_ /16



Protestant and Catholic Northern Europe in 1555