

Religious crisis in the 16th century

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The religious schism took place in the 16th century, mainly between the Catholic Church and Protestants. During these times, many changes were brought forth to Europe during this schism. Although the religious schism brought forth an age of Reformation of the Catholic church, the religious schism started wars, revolts across Germany following the teachings of Luther, and the struggle for power between Catholicism and Protestantism. The religious schism began because of the making of Protestantism. The Catholic Church was corrupted in many ways, for example, the selling of indulgences, as Albrecht writes, "... the contribution to the chest [church funds], of the rebuilding of the said church.... " (Doc1).

Albrecht reveals the uses of the money made by indulgences, and it is the church's funds. Martin Luther was one of the critics that criticized the corruption of the church and was excommunicated in his trial (The Diet of Worms) and he escaped to Germany. The idea of Protestantism quickly spread over Germany, as people began to be interested because his religion was simpler and was based on faith. Luther worked with authorities and brought upon reforms of the papacy and instructed all Christians to obey their rulers.

However the radicals (the group of people that did not want the church and state together) began to interest German peasants with their ideas of social change. Since the 15th century, the peasant's conditions have worsened and the failure of crops in 1523 and 1524, and nobles began to anger peasants requiring extra work and taking livestock. The peasants believed that Luther will be on their side, and in the beginning, he was. He was against the lords

for robbing their own subjects. However, he did not want a rebellion, as Luther states, “...

Remembering that nothing can be more poisonous, hurtful, or devilish than a rebel. ”(Doc 3). When the rebellion broke out, Luther did not support the peasants. He stated that the bible had nothing to do with earthly justice. In the HRE, the church officials viewed the spread of Protestantism in Germany (which they viewed as heresy) was causing the rebellion to happen. As Michael Eisenhart is possibly a church official and views the rebellion as a part of Protestantism’s teaching. “...through certain citizens here who adhere to the heresy of Luther, it has come about that bad, false teaching has greatly got the upper hand.”(Doc 5)

The church viewed this event as an event caused because of the teaching of a “ heretic. ” In the end, the nobles crushed the rebellion and killed about seventy five thousand peasants. This event strengthened the strength of nobles and Protestantism lost its appeal in the lower classes. However, Protestantism continued to spread to areas in Europe. Other types of churches were made that was similar to Lutherism but different in ways of their own. For example, the Calvinists believed that no matter what people do, God has already decided their fate.

One of the churches of Protestantism is the Anglican church. It was made by King Henry VIII, after the pope refused annulment from his wife. In the Act of Supremacy, English Parliament in 1534, Parliament, influenced by the monarchy and declared, “... that the king, our sovereign lord, his heir and successors, kings of this realm, shall be taken, accepted and reputed the only supreme head in earth of the Church of England, called Anglicans

Ecclesia...". Parliament agreed with the king and broke away from the church and admitted the king, King Henry VIII power over the church.

He was able to gain wealth from the lands of the church he seized and took its riches. This help with the economy of England. The constant fighting and quarrels in Germany was because of Catholicism and Protestantism against each other. Protestantism Northern States were against the Catholicism Southern States. After years of fighting, the Peace of Augsburg was signed. The HRE declared that,"... the Holy Empire, will not make war on any estate of the empire on account of the Augsburg Confession and the doctrine, religion, and faith of the same."

The peace of Augsburg will last about 70 years before the Wars of Religion begins. However, this treaty, ended fighting in Germany and the Church admitted Protestantism as a religion, but the fighting will resume after the failure of the peace. Though the religious schism brought for an age of Reformation, it also brought an age of war and revolts against the nobles. Also, during this age, there was a power struggle between the Catholic Church and Protestants. It brought an age for power and intensifying atmosphere, as the two religions faced off in Europe.