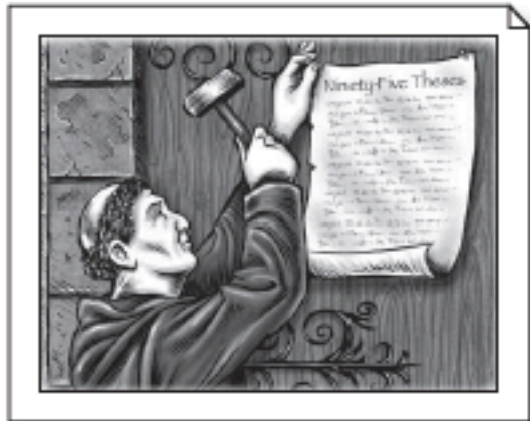


The Protestant Reformation

The Protestant Reformation is the name of the religious reform movement that divided the Roman Catholic Church. Corruption was the main reason that people wanted reform of the Church. Often, Popes were more concerned with politics than with spiritual matters. Many church officials used their church offices to gain wealth. Some clergy sold indulgences. An indulgence was a reduction of all or part of the punishment of a sin. In the Middle Ages, indulgences were earned by doing good deeds, such as joining the Crusades. But by the late 1400s, the Church gave indulgences in exchange for money.



Many Christians thought paying for indulgences was wrong. Martin Luther was one of these people. He was a German monk and professor who prayed, fasted, and tried to lead a holy life. The Church's corruption and worldliness disappointed Luther.

An event in 1517 was the last straw for Martin Luther. A priest named Johann Tetzel set up a pulpit near Wittenberg, Germany. He offered indulgences to any Christian who gave money to rebuild the Cathedral in Rome. Tetzel made it sound like buying these indulgences would guarantee entry into Heaven.

Martin Luther was outraged. He wrote a list of 95 arguments against indulgences. The list, called the "Ninety-Five Theses," said the Church was wrong to sell indulgences. Luther wrote that Christians could be saved only by faith in God. He posted his list on the door of the Wittenberg Church, and copies were distributed all over Europe. Later, Luther told Christians to reject the authority of Rome. He said that because the Church would not reform itself, it must be reformed by others.

The Church told Luther to take back what he had said, but he refused. The Pope excommunicated Luther in 1521, which means he was thrown out of the Church. The Holy Roman emperor declared Luther an outlaw. It became a crime for anyone to give him food or shelter.

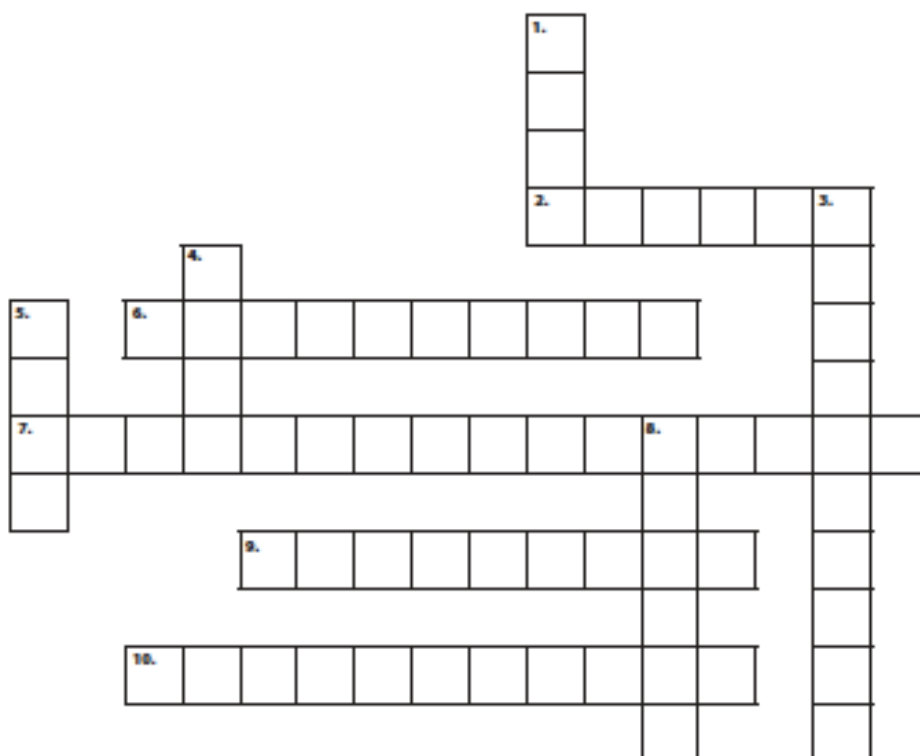
But Luther had many powerful supporters, and thousands of Germans said he was a hero. Many people liked Luther's ideas. By 1530, Luther's followers called themselves Protestants because they protested the Pope's authority. They set up Lutheran churches. The Western Church had split. The Roman Catholic Church was beginning to lose much of the political power it had held for centuries.



The Protestant Reformation

Crossword Puzzle

Write the best answer in each blank, and complete the crossword puzzle.



ACROSS

- The Holy Roman emperor declared Martin Luther a/an _____.
- _____ was the main reason that people wanted reform of the Church.
- The _____ said it was wrong for the Church to sell indulgences.
- Because of Martin Luther, the Roman Catholic Church began to lose much of its _____ power.
- Many Christians thought paying for _____ was wrong.

DOWN

- Martin Luther's supporters said he was a/an _____.
- Luther posted the "Ninety-Five Theses" on the door of the _____ Church.
- Luther told Christians to reject the authority of _____.
- Martin Luther was a German _____ and professor.
- A priest named Johann Tetzel made it sound like buying indulgences would guarantee entry into _____.