Faith and Power

Church practices and the conflicts they sparked

SS24.8.10a "Summarize the policies and practices within the Roman Catholic Church that led to conflict with both religious reformers and secular authorities."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline church practices, circle reformers' objections, and number rulers' objections in the passage. Use your marks to compare why each group challenged the church.

Two Kinds of Conflict

1. In the early 1500s, a traveler in a German town might hear a preacher promise spiritual benefits connected to an indulgence. An indulgence reduced punishment for sins after forgiveness; it did not forgive the sins themselves. Some preachers linked indulgences to donations for rebuilding St. Peter's Basilica in Rome. Their claims could sound as if money secured release from punishment, alarming Christians who believed forgiveness could not be bought. Martin Luther challenged this preaching in 1517 and argued that trust in God's mercy, not payment, mattered for salvation.

2. Church authorities also asserted a role in approving bishops, but rulers wanted influence over powerful positions in their lands. Bishops could control property and collect income, so appointments affected political power as well as worship. Some church leaders held more than one office or spent little time in the places they served. Reformers argued that such leaders neglected spiritual duties, while rulers resented decisions made by officials outside their control. Disputes over who could choose leaders therefore joined religious criticism to struggles over local authority.

3. Money created another fault line. Church lands and courts operated across political borders, and church officials collected fees and taxes for religious institutions. Some rulers objected when funds from their territories went to Rome; they wanted greater control over local wealth and legal decisions. Reformers, by contrast, criticized church spending when it seemed to favor grand buildings or high officials over teaching and care for ordinary people. Not every critic wanted the same change: a preacher might seek a more faithful church, while a ruler might seek more power.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Summarize how indulgence preaching led to conflict with reformers.

2. How did the way bishops and other leaders gained or held office create different concerns for reformers and rulers?

3. Summarize the different objections rulers and reformers had to church money practices.

4. Besides money leaving their territories, what church practice could lead rulers to challenge church authority? Explain the political concern.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine you advise a sixteenth-century town council writing to church leaders. In four sentences, propose two changes to practices in the passage, explain how one addresses a reformer's concern and the other addresses a ruler's concern, and identify one difficulty your plan might face.

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PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline church practices, circle reformers' objections, and number rulers' objections in the passage. Use your marks to compare why each group challenged the church. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Summarize how indulgence preaching led to conflict with reformers.	**Some preachers linked indulgences to donations and seemed to suggest that money reduced punishment for sins. Luther challenged this preaching and argued that payment did not bring salvation.**
2	How did the way bishops and other leaders gained or held office create different concerns for reformers and rulers?	**Reformers said leaders who held multiple offices or were often absent neglected spiritual duties. Rulers wanted influence over bishops because bishops controlled property and income in their lands.**
3	Summarize the different objections rulers and reformers had to church money practices.	**Rulers objected to money leaving their territories for Rome. Reformers criticized spending that seemed to favor buildings or high officials over teaching and care.**
4	Besides money leaving their territories, what church practice could lead rulers to challenge church authority? Explain the political concern.	**Church authorities asserted a role in approving bishops. Rulers wanted influence because bishops held property and income within their lands.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The church should stop linking indulgence preaching to donations. This would address reformers' concern that people might think payment brings spiritual benefits. Local rulers should have a voice in approving bishops because those bishops control property and income in their lands. Church authorities might resist giving rulers more influence over appointments.

Accept accurate summaries that distinguish concerns about religious practice from concerns about political or financial control. For the open task, accept other specific proposals grounded in the passage if the response explains both interests and a plausible difficulty.