Faith and Power

Trace the causes and consequences of religious reform

WH.4.2 "Analyze the factors that led to the origin and spread of the Protestant Reformation, the Catholic Counter-Reformation, as well as reforming movements in other religions, including the wars of religion."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline causes of religious change, circle ways ideas or communities spread, and box actions taken by rulers or religious leaders. Use your marks to trace how reform movements developed.

When Religious Ideas Crossed Borders

1. In 1517, Martin Luther challenged the sale of indulgences, church grants that reduced punishment for sin and were often linked to donations. He argued that faith, not such payments, was central to salvation. Criticism of church wealth and abuses had already unsettled many Europeans. Printers copied Luther's writings in everyday German, allowing his arguments to reach readers far beyond his town. Some rulers in the Holy Roman Empire supported reform because they accepted its teachings and sought greater control over churches and property in their lands. Their protection helped new Protestant churches survive even when Catholic authorities opposed them.

2. Catholic leaders responded through the Council of Trent (1545 to 1563), which reaffirmed Catholic teachings and ordered better training for priests. The Jesuits, a Catholic religious order, founded schools and sent missionaries abroad. Yet reform did not end political rivalry. In France, tensions between Catholics and Protestants helped fuel decades of civil war; royal power and competition among nobles shaped who fought. In 1598, the Edict of Nantes gave French Protestants limited rights, but it did not erase religious divisions. Across Europe, rulers' attempts to impose one faith could turn disagreement into armed conflict.

3. Meanwhile, reform arose outside Christianity for different reasons. In Punjab, Guru Nanak (1469 to 1539) taught devotion to one God and challenged caste barriers and empty ritual. His followers shared meals across social divisions, and later Sikh Gurus built a lasting community. These teachings grew from the religious life of South Asia, not from Luther's protest. Sikhism developed into a distinct religion rather than a branch of Protestantism or Catholicism. In both cases, shared practices helped ideas spread, but the movements had different beliefs and faced different political settings. Comparing them reveals how local conditions shaped religious change.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did an existing grievance and a new way to share ideas work together to spread Luther's challenge?

2. Why did support from rulers help Protestant churches survive, even when some rulers also wanted more power?

3. How did Catholic leaders try to strengthen their church, and why did reform not prevent war in France?

4. Compare one factor that helped Sikhism grow with one that helped Protestant churches survive. How did the factors work differently?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine printed copies of Luther's writings had been scarce after 1517. Write one paragraph predicting two effects on Protestant churches and religious conflict, then explain why Sikhism might still have spread. Use at least three details from the passage.

ANSWER KEY

Faith and Power

HIGH SCHOOL · WH.4.2

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline causes of religious change, circle ways ideas or communities spread, and box actions taken by rulers or religious leaders. Use your marks to trace how reform movements developed. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did an existing grievance and a new way to share ideas work together to spread Luther's challenge?	**Criticism of church wealth and abuses made people receptive to Luther's challenge. Printers copied his writings in German, carrying his arguments to distant readers.**
2	Why did support from rulers help Protestant churches survive, even when some rulers also wanted more power?	**Rulers protected new churches from Catholic opposition. Some supported the teachings, while others also sought control over churches and property.**
3	How did Catholic leaders try to strengthen their church, and why did reform not prevent war in France?	**The Council of Trent reaffirmed teachings and improved priest training, while Jesuits founded schools and sent missionaries. Religious tensions, struggles for royal power, and competition among nobles still fueled war.**
4	Compare one factor that helped Sikhism grow with one that helped Protestant churches survive. How did the factors work differently?	**Shared meals brought Sikh followers together across social divisions, while rulers' protection helped Protestant churches withstand opposition.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

If printed copies of Luther's writings had been scarce, fewer readers far from his town might have encountered his arguments. Fewer rulers might then have supported new Protestant churches, so those churches could have spread more slowly. Religious conflict in France might have involved fewer Protestant communities, although competition among nobles could still have led to fighting. Sikhism might still have grown because followers shared meals across social divisions and later Gurus built a lasting community. Those ways of building a community did not depend on Luther's printed writings.

Accept other plausible predictions that connect scarce printing to the spread of Protestant ideas and conflict, while recognizing that political rivalries could continue. The Sikhism comparison should cite a means of building community described in the passage.