

Martin Luther

By Sharon Fabian



¹ Martin Luther didn't plan to start a new church, much less change the course of history. Yet, he did both of those things. Martin Luther was the leader of the Protestant Reformation movement that was the beginning of the Lutheran Church as well as many other protestant churches that followed. The effects of the Reformation were felt all over Europe and even as far away as North and South America.

² What Martin Luther did hope to do was to make improvements in his own church, the Catholic Church. Like many other religious people before him, Martin Luther was troubled by the problems he saw in the Church. The Church had grown rich and powerful. Some of its activities seemed more about accumulating wealth and influence than about spiritual matters.

³ The church had, for years, preached that a person could obtain forgiveness for his sins by doing good works, for example - going on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. More recently, however, it had begun to allow people to buy forgiveness by donating money to the church. The sale of these *indulgences* had become a big business. Martin Luther, a Catholic priest, thought that it was all wrong.

⁴ According to Martin Luther's beliefs, the decision about who would be forgiven was up to God, not the Church. A person could not buy forgiveness. All he had to do was to have faith in God.

⁵ In 1517, Martin Luther published his ideas where everyone could see them. He nailed his *Ninety-five Theses* to the door of the Wittenburg Castle Church. Luther was a professor in Wittenburg, and it was not all that unusual at the time for ideas to be posted in this way so that scholars could debate them.

⁶ Martin Luther's *Ninety-five Theses* must have stated just what many people had been thinking. They stirred up a great deal of interest. Soon, people were talking, not just about changes in the Church, but about starting a new church. Groups began to form. They called themselves Lutherans, after Martin Luther.

⁷ The Lutheran Church taught that the Bible, not the Pope, has the final authority over what is right or wrong. It taught that people can be saved by faith, not by buying indulgences or doing good works. Many people were attracted to the teachings of the Lutheran Church, and it eventually became the largest Protestant church in the world.

⁸ Lutheran churches were not all the same, and they did not all practice the same forms of worship; some were more formal, like the Catholic Church, and some were more simple, like Puritan Churches. Many of them included elements that Martin Luther

more parts of the services in German and other everyday languages, and less in Latin.

⁹ Martin Luther remained a professor of theology at the University of Wittenburg for many years. He became well known for his work in literature and music as well as for his religious doctrines. Martin Luther wrote a reader-friendly translation of the Bible in German. He also wrote the *Small Catechism*, a book to teach the values of a Christian life to everyday people. He wrote the hymn, "A Mighty Fortress is our God."

¹⁰ Martin Luther's disagreements with the Catholic Church eventually caused him to be excommunicated, or put out, of the Church. The Church ordered him to take back the negative statements he had made about the Church. Martin Luther refused. Now, he was in danger of being killed. Friends of his "kidnapped" Martin Luther and hid him away until the danger had passed.

¹¹ His Reformation movement was picked up by more reformers across Europe. More new churches formed. These new religious groups brought about changes in the way countries in Europe were ruled. Europe would no longer be ruled by kings and queens who all answered to one Pope. Other reform groups chose to start out fresh in a new land and set sail for America. The Reformation started by Martin Luther was one of those events in history that has had more far-reaching effects than anyone could have imagined.

1. Martin Luther began the _____. <input type="radio"/> (A) Puritan Church <input type="radio"/> (B) Catholic Church <input type="radio"/> (C) Church of England <input type="radio"/> (D) Reformation	2. The _____ Church was named after Martin Luther. <input type="radio"/> (A) Protestant <input type="radio"/> (B) Lutheran <input type="radio"/> (C) Catholic <input type="radio"/> (D) Martin
3. Martin Luther was a _____. <input type="radio"/> (A) Painter <input type="radio"/> (B) King <input type="radio"/> (C) Priest <input type="radio"/> (D) Pope	4. Martin Luther preached that people could be forgiven for their sins by _____. <input type="radio"/> (A) Singing hymns <input type="radio"/> (B) Believing in God <input type="radio"/> (C) Going on pilgrimages <input type="radio"/> (D) Buying indulgences
5. Which is the most likely reason why Martin Luther translated the Bible into German? <input type="radio"/> (A) To make it more accessible to everyday people <input type="radio"/> (B) To impress Church authorities <input type="radio"/> (C) To make the language sound more formal <input type="radio"/> (D) So that he could read it more easily	6. Martin Luther _____. <input type="radio"/> (A) Was a professor of theology <input type="radio"/> (B) Was a writer <input type="radio"/> (C) Wrote a well-known hymn <input type="radio"/> (D) All of the above
7. Martin Luther was kidnapped by his friends _____. <input type="radio"/> (A) Because his ideas made them angry <input type="radio"/> (B) To save his life <input type="radio"/> (C) Because they wanted him to remain in the Catholic Church <input type="radio"/> (D) All of the above	8. Which of the following is <u>not</u> a Protestant Church? <input type="radio"/> (A) Lutheran <input type="radio"/> (B) Catholic <input type="radio"/> (C) Baptist <input type="radio"/> (D) Methodist