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Was Martin Luther a revolutionary or conservative leader in the 16th Century?

The Protestant Reformation caused a religious, political, intellectual and cultural change in Catholic Europe. Martin Luther was an important contributor to this reformation. In the beginning of the Reformation, Martin Luther started out as a conservative leader. Later on in the Reformation, Luther became a revolutionary. Throughout the 16th century the Reformation brought many changes. Many people both agreed and disagreed with the ideas that the Reformation brought along. The revolutionaries believed that the ideas of the Reformation were right and that the change should be made while the conservative leaders thought that the ideas that the Reformation brought along were not good and that there should be no change. The ideas of the Reformation affected the Christian Church. The fact that Luther was excommunicated by the Roman Catholic Church and that Luther made his own ideas of the *Holy Bible* being the center for religious authority and God being the only one who can give salvation to a person shows that Martin Luther was a revolutionary in the 16th century.

Martin Luther was a very important revolutionary to the Reformation movement in the 16th century. In the beginning of the Reformation, Martin Luther wanted to keep the church the way it was. However, after a while Martin Luther created his own ideas for the church. Martin Luther believed that the *Holy Bible* was actually what the religious law was. Previously, before the Reformation, the Roman Catholic church officials were the ones who dictated what the laws of the religion were.

Martin Luther was one of the first to use the printing press to spread his ideas. This shows that he was revolutionary. Martin Luther spread his own ideas and tried to change how people thought about the laws in the church. The idea of the *Holy Bible* being the new basis for law was part of Martin Luther's "95 Theses." The "95 Theses" were what Martin Luther used to express his new ideas for the Reformation. There is a legend that on October 31, 1517 Martin Luther

nailed a copy of his “95 Theses” on the door of the Wittenberg Castle Church. Even though this legend may be a little exaggerated the truth probably is that Martin Luther put the copy on the door in a way that was not rude. Martin Luther was a revolutionary because of the fact that he introduced his own new ideas and spread his ideas quickly.

Another way that Martin Luther was a revolutionary is that he introduced the idea of only God bringing salvation to people. This meant that God was the one who chose whether you have received salvation or not. Previously, salvation was said to have been brought through good deeds. Martin Luther contradicted these ideas by saying that God was the only one who could say who had received salvation. This idea was also part of Martin Luther’s “95 Theses”. The first two theses of the “95 Theses” were about God being the only one who gave salvation and doing good deeds had no effect on whether you had achieved salvation or not. The other 93 theses of the “95 Theses” were criticisms about the indulgences of the Roman Catholic Church. The “95 Theses” were constructed using a humble and academic tone. However, the tone of the piece was still provocative. One quote of the “95 Theses” was “*Why does not the pope, whose wealth today is greater than the wealth of the richest Crassus, build the basilica of St. Peter with his own money rather than with the money of poor believers?*” This quote asks why the pope constructed St. Peter's basilica with the money of his poor believers instead of his own money. This quote also shows that the pope was very rich. This implies that the pope is selfish so he does not have to use his own money to build the basilica. Overall, Martin Luther was a revolutionary because of his “95 Theses” and his other ideas that were the basis for the Reformation in the 16th century.

Martin Luther was also a revolutionary because of the fact he was excommunicated from the Roman Catholic Church. Being excommunicated means that the church kicked out someone. The church believed that the “95 Theses” that Martin Luther made were conflicting with the teachings of the Church. In 1519 a series of commissions were made to examine the teachings of Martin Luther. The first commission found the “95 Theses” as heretical and the second commission deemed the “95 Theses” as scandalous and offensive to pious ears. In 1520 Pope Leo

X issued a papal bull. A papal bull is a public decree. This papal bull stated that Luther's propositions were heretical and that he should recant in Rome within the next 120 days. When Martin Luther refused to recant in Rome, the pope decided to excommunicate Martin Luther from the Roman Catholic Church. Later on, Martin Luther again refused to recant when he was in Germany. This was when he said his famous words at the end of his testimony. "Here I stand. God help me. I can do no other." Martin Luther said these words because there was nothing else for him to do. After Luther said these words, the pope ordered Luther's writings to be burned. Luther hid in Eisenach a small town in Germany for the next five years and during this time he translated the New Testament into German. This shows that Martin Luther was a revolutionary because he made new ideas and spread them to the world.

Overall Martin Luther was a big revolutionary in the 16th century. Luther's ideas were the basis for most of the Protestant Reformation. Without Luther the Reformation would not have been possible. Also, Luther was one of the most influential figures in western history. His writings were what fractionalized the Roman Catholic Church and are what sparked the Protestant Reformation. His central teachings, such as the *Holy Bible* being the religious law and salvation being reached through faith and not good works, were the basis for Protestantism. In addition, the "95 theses" showed that he created his own ideas and he also spread his ideas out fast because of the printing press. Martin Luther was a very important revolutionary whose ideas made the basis of the Protestant Reformation in the 16th century.

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