



Speaker 1: Religious strife and upheaval dominated the landscape of Northern Europe. Probably the most important figure of the Northern Renaissance was Martin Luther, who played a critical role in the Protestant Reformation. Luther was a monk as well as a professor of philosophy and biblical studies at Wittenberg University. Teaching and learning at Wittenberg was based on a versatilian logic and this was fostered through disputations. This was a form of debate.

One of Luther's disputations was entitled *Ninety-Five Theses*. *Ninety-Five Theses* was an attack focused primarily on the payment of indulgences. If a person paid an indulgence and if it was a large enough sum, a priest could absolve that person from his churchly duties, such as attending Mass, going to confession and even moral practices. The payment of indulgences guaranteed an escape from purgatory and an entrance pass into heaven.

The printing press was hugely instrumental in the dissemination of Luther's ideas as well as Luther's German translation of the Bible. Through the publication of his ideas, the reformation of Christianity swept throughout Europe and particularly in the north. This launched the Protestant Reformation which resulted in the creation of separate protest churches that no longer held allegiance to the pope.

It was not Luther's intention to be an iconoclast. He loved the arts and music and even composed hymns such as *A Mighty Fortress Is Our God*, which hundreds of years later was fabulously redone by Bach.

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