

within both countries (Solt, 1990). Many times the various kings would tolerate certain kinds of interference, but at the Churches' demand for more money leaving from England to Rome, Richard II felt enough was enough. The Parliament of England passed the Statute of Praemunire, which was to restrain the Catholic Church and other foreign powers from having as much power in England (Pettegree, 2000). This mainly revolved around the issue of money, taxes, and tribute. This challenge toward the Catholic Church would give Henry VIII the boldness to break from the church altogether and form the Church of England. The European Continent had its reformers who would stand up to the Church, but England would provide loud voices of its own.

One of these voices was John Wycliffe, an outspoken young man who would rise from the Oxford culture challenging the authority of the Catholic Church in the late fourteenth century. He was first condemned by the Pope for his teaching that the English government had the divinely assigned responsibility to correct the abuses of the church within its realm and to relieve of office those churchman who persisted in their sin. He also taught that the state could even seize the property of corrupt church officials (Edwards, 2008). Wycliffe would become much bolder in his criticism of the Catholic Church as he passed from being an orthodox preacher, eager for the reform of the existing international Catholic Church, into a Protestant. He would even go so far as to question the office and authority of the Pope as well as the monks, friars, and priests. He would form a group of followers known as the Lollards, and would gain enough support that the Pope would not move against him (Lahey, 2005). Many of his beliefs were right in line with Luther, with both men seeking to destroy the medieval barrier of having someone between the individual and God. Both men could see the corruption of the Church and the Pope and were not afraid to blend this into their theological teachings.

There were numerous key events in the pre-reformation time frame involving the secular as well as religious aspect of the European culture. The thirteenth through the fifteenth centuries brought about changes in both of these sectors within the cultures, resulting in an uncertainty of the worldviews that the people had held for centuries. The people may or may not have liked the Church and Pope, but they did not have a better idea and many just accepted that was just the way it was going to be. The clashes between the kings and Pope had weakened the power of the Pope, but he was still able to wield power through threats of excommunication and the inquisition. The Papal office still had some power, but the Pope had lost much of his prestige and the mystique that had covered him throughout the centuries. More and more people on the European Continent, as well as in England, were getting used to the idea that they were English or French citizens whenever their thoughts reached beyond their own town or religion. In modern terms, they began to think of secular and sacred affairs, a realm of the state as well as a realm for the church (Shelly, 1995). The tipping point for change upon the European Continent and England is primed and ready for a push. Martin Luther would provide the impetus needed for many to break their ties with the Roman Catholic Church and begin the Protestant Reformation, a development that would forever change Christendom.