

flict. He firmly believed that he must retain control of episcopal appointments, because his government's effectiveness depended on his ability to choose bishops – like Landulf of Turin – who would act as reliable local administrators. The reformers, on the other hand, saw the bishops' political function as a corrupting influence. To purify the Church, the reformers contended that they must break free of their symbiotic relationship with the secular power, epitomized by the emperor's appointment and investiture of bishops. They demanded that bishops be chosen and appointed by their fellow clerics, and not by the emperor. They extended their criticism to other abuses which they believed were part and parcel of this same web of worldliness: simony (the sale of clerical offices), and concubinage (which created clerical dynasties eager to divert the Church's property into their own hands). Countess Adelaide seems to have been sympathetic to some of the reformers' demands, and she was in fact a friend of one of the leaders of the reform party, Peter Damian. In his letters to her he urged her to use her influence on the side of the reforming party. But his hopes went largely unfulfilled. Adelaide was by all accounts a very pious woman – she founded a number of monasteries and convents in different parts of her extensive domains – but although she might sympathize in principle with the reformers' program, she could not approve of the manner in which they sought to implement it. She favored reform from above, through the existing political and ecclesiastical hierarchies, rather than reform brought about by pressure from within the body of the Church.

The dispute over the investiture of bishops came to a head after the election of Pope Gregory VII in 1073. He had been one of the leaders of the reform party, and as soon as he was elected pope he began to issue decrees implementing its program. In 1075 he banned the investiture of bishops by lay persons. Henry IV saw this decree as a direct challenge to his authority and to the integrity of his government, and retorted by convoking a council of loyal German bishops, who declared Gregory deposed. Gregory responded by excommunicating the emperor and releasing his subjects from their oath of allegiance, sparking a revolt that forced Henry to flee from Germany and seek the pope's forgiveness. In a dramatic confrontation at Canossa in the northern Apennines early in 1077 Henry did penance and received absolution from the pope. Countess Adelaide was closely concerned in these events, but her loyalties were divided. On the one hand Henry IV was her son-in-law (he was the husband of her daughter Bertha), but she was also related by marriage to Matilda, the powerful countess of Tuscany, who was a supporter of the reformers, and who had given sanctuary to the