

# Western civilization through 1589 essay example

[Parts of the World](#), [Europe](#)



## 1. Discuss the Lay Investiture struggle and give its effects.

Lay investiture was a system in Europe where the kings and the noble lords used to appoint the church leaders such as bishops. The aim of these kings was to ensure that they would easily get any advice they required from the clergy. The people in the church usually accepted any religious leader who was appointed to them by these kings (Sherman, 123). These leaders also usually accepted their appointment by the kings. During the period, pope was given an authority that was not very clear to the people. The relationship between the church and the state was very tight during the period. The lay investiture struggle however arisen when the clergy and the other people in the society started feeling that the church officials were more powerful than the kings. This is due to believe that the clergy represented the heavenly power that is usually greater than the earthly powers that were represented by the kings and the noble lords.

### **What was really at stake?**

The lay investiture led to struggle and conflicts between the clergy and the kings in the European countries. The kings and the noble lords wanted to use the clergy to increase their powers and use them as their political advisors. To effect this, the kings wanted to make these church officials dependent on them in terms of land use (Cantor, 98). When the church leaders realized this, they started to struggle for their independence.

The effects of the struggle between the two parties were that the kings lost the powers that they had over the church. People all over the world recognized pope as the head of Christian religion. Strict rules were put in place to ensure that any religious leaders who affiliated themselves with the

kings were excommunicated from the church (Aberth,, 243). In addition, the church leaders were no longer appointed by the secular leaders.

After effectively evaluating the situation, the stake in this case was to prove who was powerful than who. Each part believed that it was powerful than the other and these conflicts is what brought out the struggle that was experienced. The secular leaders and the church leaders wanted to prove that they were powerful and this is what initiated the conflicts between the two groups.

2. In what ways did life improve during the High Middle Ages? Consider in your response the advancements in the Muslim world compared to the Christian one.

High Middle Ages is an historical period in Europe because it was accompanied by many benefits. Even though the period is associated with many religious problems, many people in Europe benefited during this period. Agricultural methods improved in the European countries. New technologies in agriculture were realized in the region that was then applied in the farming activities (Sherman, 134). The results were that the agricultural output greatly increased. This played a role in boosting the economy of the European countries. Agriculture was also boosted when the feudal system was abolished.

With the increased production of goods in the countries, trade emerged. People would exchange the goods they produced with what they did not produce. This improved the living standards of the people in that people had a choice on what they would buy (Healy,, 129). Trade led to emergence of social classes in Europe. However, many people became wealth since there

was no exploitation by the lords as before. Trade activities led to emergence of urban centers that provided better social amenities to the people.

When people became very rich, they got a lot of free time that they used to pursue education. The Christians were specifically behind in terms of education and technology. The Muslim spread the new technologies to the other groups of people. In addition, the Muslims had a system where they offered scholarship to their members to pursue higher education. The Christians also learnt this system and adopted it and this is what led to emergence of various universities in the region (Healy, 112). People were able to pursue their education and this formed the beginning of the renaissance period that was characterized by many inventions. Various art works were created during the period.

The health of the people improved during the period and this led to increased population and specifically, the life span of people increased (Drees, 219). This was due to good diets that were available during the period. For example, the women were able to access legumes that supplied iron that was helpful in replacing blood that was lost during the menstrual cycle.

3. What were the crises which plagued the Church during the middle ages? How did these crises damage or improve the Church's status?

Many crises arisen in church during the middle ages. The first crises related to the location of the office of the pope. Initially, the office was in France. The office here was misused in search for wealth since office churches were sold for money. The French government to a great extent controlled the church in Europe (Bailey, 312). The people in Italy wanted the office to be located in

Italy. This led to conflict between Christian on the location of the office. The office in France used various methods to raise money such as taxation. The people started viewing the office as a place where people used to accumulate wealth.

It is during the period when people started fighting for the office. This was witnessed when two popes occupied the leadership of the Catholic Church. One pope was located in France while the other one was found in Italy. This divided the Catholics into two groups. An attempt to solve the issue resulted to an appointment of the third pope (Sherman, 217). This made the Christians more confused and their trust in the church leadership diminished.

The conflicts that were witnessed during the period damaged the image of the church to a great extent. Many people lost trust in their religion and then started their own churches. The churches that were in opposition of the Catholic Church also developed (Duiker,, 264). Witchcraft in the region increased. After the Christian lost confidence in the church, they turned to witchcraft as a way of solving their problems. The crises generally created a bad image of the church since the people saw the church as an institution that was aimed at making some people wealthier.

It is however important to note that the crises that were observed in the church were important in solving the problems that existed in the church. The struggle for power demonstrated that there was poor leadership in the church and that the leaders in the church were not just Christians but had their own motives of being in the leadership positions. These conflicts is what facilitated proper arrangement to ensure proper leadership in the church.

4. Explain the different views of Martin Luther, Ulrich Zwingli and Jean Calvin. Which of the three became the most influential and why?

The various reformists in church had different views. Luther, believed that the Catholic Church needed reformations and if the church was not willing to change, then a break would be the best option. Luther emphasized that the people should be allowed to read the scriptures by their own. He argued that the people would become better Christians if they read the scriptures on their own as opposed to the way Catholic Church operated (Olson, 157).

Zwingli also was in agreement with the assertions of Luther. However, the two individuals differed on the issue of Eucharist. Luther argued that God was present during the Eucharist in form of bread and wine. Specifically, Luther argued God and spirit was present during the occasion. On the other hand, Zwingli argued that the bread and wine were just the symbols of the presence of God during Eucharist. In addition, he argued that the best option was to separate from the Catholic Church as opposed to reforming the church as argued by Luther.

Zwingli also objected Luthers' assertions about the existence of a purgatory. He believed that there should be no teachings about purgatory. In addition, Luther did not belief in baptism of infants. However, Luther argued that even though he was baptized a day after his birth, infants should not be baptized because they have no beliefs in their faith. They need to know the scriptures so that they can make the decision about baptism. Luther supported the catholic way of prayers to the saints. However, Zwingli believed that prayers should only be made to God (Sherman, 168).

Calvin had similar arguments to Luther. He argued that reformations were

necessary in the Catholic Church. He supported that God and spirit was present during Eucharist. He however argued that only a few people were selected to join the kingdom of God. It is not all people who are selected to join the kingdom as argued by other reformist. Calvin also differed with Luther that people should break from Catholic Church. He only supported reforms and anyone who would break from catholic should have been arrested and punished.

Martin Luther was the most famous reformist among the three. This is because he continued to serve the Catholic Church but worked from within to oppose the practices and believes. Finally, he broke from the Catholic Church and started preaching. Many Protestants followed his teachings and this made him more famous (McNeese, 179). Three main teachings by him were universally accepted. The first is that the practices by the church should only be based on scriptures and not traditions and other writings. Secondly, priesthood was not acceptable as per the scriptures. However, this was not acceptable to some Protestants. Luther argued that all the people were equal and therefore the priests and others who served in the church were not in any way special. Finally, Luther preached that faith should be the basis of salvation of individuals and not the good actions demonstrated by individuals.

5. Discuss the role religion played in overseas exploration. Consider in your discussion both short-term and long-term effects.

Initially, spreading the gospel was a major aim of many European countries. They wanted to spread religion to all people in various parts of the world. As they moved from one place to another, these people discovered the

potentials of various lands. When the information reached back to their original countries, colonization was initiated (Perry,, 76). Religion was used to facilitate colonization.

People with other intentions other than religion migrated to new lands to explore after getting information about the various resources available in these areas. They went to these parts in pretence that they intend to spread the gospel (Sherman, 273).

The European countries used religion to create a long-term relationship with the people from the new lands. They ensured that these new people were friendly to them so that they would have a good environment to carry out their intended activities (Perry, 114). The religion taught people that living together is necessary for Christians and this formed the basis for settlement of colonizers to the new lands.

When religious leaders were appointed, it became possible to fully colonize the new lands. These people were promised good things in return for collaborating with the colonizers. These people guided the colonizers on the location of various resources. Therefore the colonizers were able to exploit all the available resources.

The missionaries created facilities such as health centers and schools linked to the churches. This made the Christians see the missionaries as good people who were there to help them. However, this was meant to make these new people not react against the activities of the missionaries that were against the expectations of the Christians (Spielvogel, 87).



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