

The renaissance and religion essay

[Art & Culture](#), [Renaissance](#)



The renaissance is a very interesting era in the history of humanity. It is an era which has been associated with many discoveries and changes in the life of mankind. To have a clear picture of the significance of the renaissance it is better to slightly examine the way of life just before 1400.

Before 1400 and actually the early part of 1400, the Roman Catholic Church had a great influence on the society. The church was supreme in every way and commanded unrivalled authority on both religious issues and politics. The pope wielded immense influence on political leaders and kings likewise. What was communicated from the pope was final regardless of who the subject was.[1]

The Catholic Church was the only church in the world and its branches were in many countries. It is also worth noting that the church was the wealthiest organization and this wealth was acquired by means which were later found to be unacceptable.

Payment for services rendered by the church was very frequent actually there was not a single activity that the priest would preside over without any payment being done weather it was a funeral, baptism or any other. Selling of indulgence and some pieces of artwork representing saints was a common practice.

This sounds ridiculous and this is where the Renaissance man comes in. The church had used some weird philosophy to tame the thinking of the society to view the pope and the church in general as divinely superior to them and that the pope had the power to determine whether a person could access

heaven or not. With this nature of thinking people were subjected to a rigid way of life where everything started from and ended with the church.[2]

The Renaissance period can be said to have stirred people to wake from some kind of sleep they were in. The renaissance period was a time when humanism for the first time was experienced. It must be pointed out that renaissance was very secular but not necessarily evil as such. It has also been pointed out that the renaissance weakened the influence of the church but helped to spread it further; the roman church was weakened as reformations broke up all the over Europe.

The renaissance was an invitation to reason and question issues about life - the church was questioned about some of its practices and it was found wanting.[3] According to Kreis (2008), " the return to favor of the pagan classics stimulated the philosophy of secularism, the appreciation of worldly pleasures, and above all intensified the assertion of personal independence and individual expression." [4]

It is recorded that man started to appreciate the pleasures of this world and less depended on supernatural teaching from the church. This period has often been described as the " germinal period of modernism" [5] with the Renaissance man being said to have " stood at a point midway between medieval supernaturalism and the modern scientific and critical attitude." [6]

The renaissance brought in great surprises to humanity as reasoning and thinking was put to test producing great works in the fields of " art, literature, exploration, mathematics, science and religion." [7]

People were able to think independently testing new ways and ideas which originated from their minds and not from the church. Some of the achievements of this period are still a great inspiration today for instance the great Mona Lisa was an art work of this period. The renaissance brought in secular thought to people helping to reduce the influence that the church had on their lives.

Kreis, Steven. " Lectures on Modern Europe Intellectual History." The History Guide, 2008. Web.

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