

Critical thinking on the early church

[Psychology](#), [Success](#)



Freeman Charles, “ The motives of Constantine” in A New History of Early Christianity (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1947), 225-333.

In his chapter “ The motives of Constantine,” Freeman argues that the motive for legalizing Christianity by Constantine was to increase his support base, especially among Christians. After defeating Maxentius, Constantine still had to seek support to defeat Licinius, who still ruled the Roman Empire until his defeat in 324 (Freeman 227). Freeman draws his sources from Constantine’s confidant, Eusebius who wrote History of the Church. This points to the idea that Constantine had political motives to legalizing the church. However, by that time, religion still constituted a paltry population of the empire, with less wealth and influence, whose members came from different sects (Cook 32). The author is not successful in explicitly explaining the motives of Constantine for legalizing Christianity. The chapter was very useful for the course because it draws from primary sources covering the topic of study. The main weakness of the chapter is that the primary source used can give biased information owing to the relationship between Eusebius and Constantine.

Justo L. Gonzalez, “ Preparing the Way for Constantine,” in Faith and Wealth: A History of Early Christian Ideas on the Origin, Significance, and Use of Money (San Francisco: Harper and Rowe, 1990), 132-145.

In his chapter “ Preparing the Way for Constantine,” Gonzalez argues that by the time of Constantine, Christianity had become the dormant religion in the Empire, though it was fragmented into various sects and dominations. On page 133, he states that, “ As Christianity approached the fateful events of

the fourth century, its social and economic profile continued to change.” Throughout the fourth century, Christianity continued to spread in both cities and rural areas with church leaders immersing more wealth and power. The author supports his arguments by citing biblical texts and literature produced by well-known authors such as Clement of Alexandria. The author is successful with his argument as he concludes the chapter by highlighting the forces that influenced Constantine’s motives to legalize Christianity. This essay has addressed the motives behind Constantine’s motive for legalizing Christianity. Could he have been successful to defeat Italy successfully ruled the empire given the considerably small number and fragmented nature of religion?

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