

# Christinaity in middle ages



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

## Christianity in the Middle Ages

By: Erica Bottoni

E-mail: emailprotected

Christianity played a major role throughout the Middle Ages in society and politics. The Middle Ages, classified from 600 AD to 1350 AD, was significantly effected by Christianity because of the impact it had on the daily lives of people of the time. The beginning of the Early Middle Ages, after the Fall of Rome in 476 AD and the period known as the Dark Ages, the reorganization of the empire brought a desire for faith and religion, primarily Christianity. This trend of Christian importance was apparent until 1350, when the Black Death caused the end of a systematized era. The church is often viewed, during this period of time, as a center of corruption, greed, and evil, with materialistic popes and unholy acts. Even though there were immoral times, the presence of Christianity brought hope and stability to the empire politically and socially. In the Late Age of Antiquity, Christianity had started its rapid spread becoming the state religion in the fourth century, and emerging as a “ cultural trend” (212). It became further defined, and was the bases of the Western World’s proceedings. Christianity’s popularity influenced the church by people’s newfound ability to concentrate on faith and a better life. With this foundation, the Middle Ages expanded religious importance by employing it in day to day life. Christianity was consistently present in the social arena of the Middle Ages. There were many controversies over Christian beliefs. The engrossment in Christianity in the eighth century had a non peaceful turn because of the Iconoclastic

Controversy. It divided the Western and the Byzantine Empires additionally with the dispute over the use of icons in religious worship. This quarrel resulted in religious vigor through exploration of religious traditions and mysticism. The division between the empire was a constantly present with the arousal of disputes. The view of the Christian Church by the people varied from agreeable to immoral. In the Early Middle Ages, the church was disorganized and non-established. Although the progression of the Middle Ages led to the furtherance of the Church, there were many set backs in the reputation of the papacy. The weakness of the papacy was a result of ineffective and corrupt churches. The tenth century was a period of religious decline with privately owned monasteries and churches, the selling of papal positions, and the incompetence of the popes. Pope John XII, 955, is an example of the inadequacy of the popes of this time period. He was young and incapable, and gave the papacy a bad name by acting sinfully. The people lost respect for the church, and could no longer view it as the ideal way of life. These views were altered in the High Middle Ages when the papacy became increasingly powerful in a prosperous time. The centralization of the church enabled Christianity to revitalize the spirit and faith of the Church. The church was organized by several reforming movements of the cluny, monastery, and papacy. Corruption was cleansed by new clerical laws, in addition to the canon law, that banned simony, clerical marriages, and immorality in the church. The succession of popes became more favorable because the expectations of the pope were heightened, as he was seen as a leader of faith having the grandest morals. Pope Gregory VII brought hope to the people by wanting to establish "right order in the world," and this stimulated people to regain faith in Christianity.

Christianity influenced art, literature, and education. Art and architecture were ways to demonstrate Christian belief through divine cathedrals, paintings of biblical scenes, and portraits of popes. Charlemagne initiated the increase of literacy importance by instituting schooling in monastic communities. Changes in education during this time period were the foundation of cathedral schools, interests in ancient texts, and the education of the common people with the establishment of the University of Paris. This led to a greater desire for knowledge, and the beginning of Scholasticism, which was the theory of conforming classical philosophy and Christian faith. Peter Abelard was a forerunner of conceptual discovery by studying and organizing philosophies that would answer the questions of Scholasticism. In addition to Abelard, St. Thomas Aquinas created the Summa Theologica where he confirmed the foundations of faith. People embraced these theories because they allowed people to investigate their faith questions. The political realm of the Middle Ages was closely knitted with Christianity. Emperors used religion as an aid in controlling the empire. Emperors were often viewed as Godlike figures and the papacy was generally the supporting force of this view. The pope often crowned the king, signifying the papal support of the emperor. The power fluctuated between the Church and the Empire. Before the eleventh century, the papacy was generally weak. The Roman nobility had full control over the papacy until 1050 AD, when papal power was weak by an ineffectual period. With the reign of Pope Gregory VII and the new religious vitality, papal power was more substantial than monarchical power. Religion was seen in military conquests and territorial expansion. Emperor's used Christianity as justification for wars, and they gained the support of the people by utilizing Christian beliefs. During the

<https://assignbuster.com/christinaity-in-middle-ages/>

Carolingian Renaissance, Charlemagne expanded the empire “ in the name of Christianity” (266). He had full support of the papacy, as he advised monks and priests to encourage the expansion of the empire. Charlemagne would label the enemies as “ descendants of the devil”, and this resulted in military vivacity. He gained order amongst the empire by having Christian ideas present in his set of laws in The General Capitulary of the Missi in 802. The Crusades had an important root that lead to the rise, and the eventual decline of papal power. The First Crusade was a successful venture for the papacy as it was considered an “ armed pilgrimage” (325). To gain the support of the Christian community, Urban II promised an afterlife without purgatory and a direct ascent to heaven for Crusade participation. This “ plenary indulgence” (325) made the First Crusade a favorable undertaking. On the other hand, the papal monarchy suffered from the additional Crusades that forced people to question the unity of the Christian Church. Christianity was an effective theme in the Middle Ages because it implemented most people and events of the time period. Socially, Christianity effected people’s daily lives because faith offered another consideration for how life progressed. The introduction of new intellect and innovative advancements were growing with religious influenced. Politically, the emperor’s were aided and impaired. The support of the papacy was useful in the coronation of emperors and the influence over the common people. On the counter-side, the papal monarchy offered competition for power. Christianity was always present in the Middle Ages, and it changed concepts and faith for all.

Words

