

# Example of religious studies research paper

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## **Introduction**

Scholars and historians have always speculated the significance of the 19th century and all the events that happened within that period to religion, particularly Christianity. According to a review conducted by a group of researchers from the U. S., the 19th century was indeed a significant period for religion (Rosenberg 1973, 3). Pair the events that occurred within the whole 19th century and the events that occurred from the start until the end of the renaissance period, and that could be a very strong formula that could clarify most, if not all, puzzles and mysteries associated with religion and its development.

The objective of this paper is to discuss the relationship between the religion-related events that occurred during the 19th century and Friedrich Schleiermacher's articles about Christianity.

## **The 19th Century**

It seems pretty ironic how a lot of historians believe that the 19th century is one of the most significant periods in Christianity's developmental history despite the fact that that very period was marked by the plateauing of power which eventually led to the downfall of some of the old world's superpowers such as the Portuguese, the Chinese, the French, the Mughal empire, the Holy Roman empire, and the Spaniards. These factions were actually the major proponents of the spread of Christianity. What is the reason why a lot of historians firmly believe on the truth about 19th century's significance to the developmental history of religion and Christianity?

One of the most probable answers to that can be the rise of the United States and the British Empire. The period, a few years after the downfall of the abovementioned European superpowers, had been marked by the Rise of the British Empire and the United States which also played key roles in the spread of Christianity.

Organized religion during the 19th century was far more important than it is today. Nations had preferred to convert their natives so that they may have a uniform religion, ideologies, ethics and philosophical system. In the context of the 19th century United States for example, an individual cannot consider himself “religious” if he is not a believer of Christ. The reason why organized religion used to be so important is because a society composed of citizens who have different beliefs, religions, and ethical & philosophical systems could be very prone to unrest which could eventually lead to civil wars.

The 19th century was also marked as the era of the Industrial Revolution, a period which lasted from late 18th century up to the first half of the 19th century, and the Second Industrial Revolution which corresponds to the late 19th century until the First World War. It was during these periods where the first major breakthroughs in the fields of farming & agriculture, mining, manufacturing, and transportation were achieved. These practically show us how modern thinking which most likely originated from the Age of Enlightenment influenced the people who lived during the somewhat chaotic 18th and 19th centuries.

## **Friedrich Schleiermacher**

Here is a brief background of Friedrich Schleiermacher's life. Friedrich Schleiermacher was not called the "Father of Liberal Theology" for nothing. The belief that this man spent his entire life being a theologian is purely inaccurate. He has a strong background in philosophy-- particularly in Plato, Kant, and Spinoza's works, ethics—particularly in Kant and Fichte's works, and biblical studies—an entirely different discipline from theology (Schleiermacher 1998, 22). He was a natural-born German, who lived in a time when Christianity was not that ubiquitous as it is today. As we all know, the Enlightenment Period or the Renaissance lasted until the mid-17th century. The Renaissance Humanism period on the other hand lasted until the mid-19th century. So what do these tell us? These details basically tell us that Friedrich Schleiermacher existed in a period of transition. We could presume that he got exposed with the different ideologies brought about by the transition from the Enlightenment Period to the Renaissance Humanism Period in his childhood years. Meaning, he could tell what religion and Christianity was and is like during his time. He earned a living by working as a local hospital chaplain, professor and eventually a pastor.

Friedrich Schleiermacher and his works are some of the greatest and most influential in Christianity's developmental history. He died at the age of 65, leaving a great legacy that significantly changed people's belief about religion and man & man's ego. He lived from 1768 up to 1834, some 65 years of existence. It is not really surprising how his works and ideologies continued to be patronized by the early up to the late 19th century. But what

was there in his works that led to the great changes in people's belief about man's existence, God, ethics and philosophy?

One who wishes to discover Christianity's mysteries cannot afford to miss reviewing Friedrich Schleiermacher's works. At the peak of his career, he published several manuscripts relating to Liberal Christianity, Neo-Christianity, ethics and Philosophy. His defense of Christianity, one of his greatest works, have been used by people in the early to late 19th century as one of the bases to continue the spread of Christianity.

## **Defense of Christianity**

Friedrich Schleiermacher published several manuscripts throughout his entire lifetime. His works, according to historians, are spiced with German Romanticism and ideologies of his favored early Greek philosophers such as Plato and Aristotle. Most of his works then became controversial as more and more ideologies about religion and Christianity flocked people living in the 19th century's mind. One of Friedrich Schleiermacher's works that was greatly challenged and criticized by the 19th and 20th centuries' philosophers and biblical scholars is his Defense of Christianity. It is essential to know however, that in the field of philosophy and theology, criticisms are almost inevitable. Friedrich Schleiermacher himself is a critique. In his early years, he criticized, from a theologian, biblical scholar and a philosopher's point of view, the criticisms of the Traditional Protestant Orthodoxy and the Enlightenment (Dilthey 1966, 3). In the succeeding years, he focused on the reconciliation of criticisms which made him a very influential entity in the evolution and developments in Higher Criticism. His works, even though they were highly challenged and controversial helped form some parts of the <https://assignbuster.com/example-of-religious-studies-research-paper/>

foundations of modern Hermeneutics or the study of how written texts and manuscripts could be interpreted (Geisler 1999, 27).

Technically, everyone can formulate and then write his own defense of Christianity. Throughout religion's history, many apologetic manuscripts were written and published to defend a currently controversial religions position. Apologetics is a discipline concerned with the defense of a position that is often religious. There are different types of Apologetics and each can be directly attributed to the position or the discipline that it defends.

Therefore, Friedrich Schleiermacher and other biblical scholars' defense of Christianity can be classified as a form of Christian Apologetics. It can be derived from another person's defense or it can challenge an older defense. In Friedrich Schleiermacher's case, it is highly likely that he wrote his defense of Christianity to criticize or challenge a set of contradicting ideologies.

Now, the reason why people during Friedrich Schleiermacher's time patronized his defense of Christianity is because of the presence of an ongoing conflict between modernization of thought and lifestyle, and religion. The periods before the 19th century are often identified as periods wherein religious and civil unrest were not uncommon. It was during the 19th century that an almost organized, uniform religion was established to unite the people in terms of beliefs and ideologies and ultimately prevent civil unrest sparked by religious conflicts. Christianity was also not that stable during the 19th century. So those who were Christians would try to hold on to something to keep their beliefs and ideologies alive. It is not really surprising why a lot of people, even those who were knowledgeable in <https://assignbuster.com/example-of-religious-studies-research-paper/>

Christianity and its roots found Friedrich Schleiermacher's defense of Christianity to defend Christian ideologies in a period marked by a fast-changing environment.

## **Conclusion**

Friedrich Schleiermacher's is a very influential entity in the field of Apologetics, theology and even philosophy. He clearly and successfully reconciled criticisms regarding the Enlightenment and Traditional Protestant Orthodoxy. He was the Father of Modern Liberal Theology merely because of the influence of his works in Liberal Christianity. His defense of Christianity, one of his most influential and at the same time, controversial and highly-challenged works, was one of 19th centuries greatest and most influential Christian Apologetic manuscripts.

## **Works Cited**

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