

The Golden Age of Faith

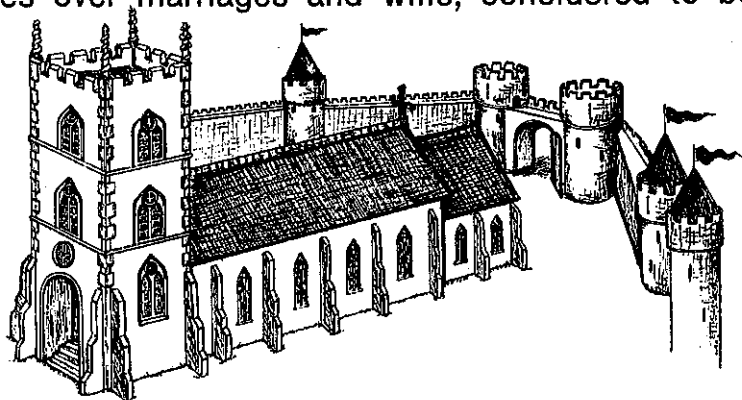
The Church played a very important role in medieval society. Its influence could be found in all facets of people's everyday lives. In fact, the Middle Ages is often referred to as the Golden Age of Faith.

In 1054 the Church officially split into two branches: the Church of the East, headed by the archbishop of Constantinople (Byzantium), and the Church of the West, which came to be called the Roman Catholic Church. The Roman Catholic Church was ruled by the pope, bishop of Rome, who claimed complete authority. The power of the pope increased greatly and reached its height in the eleventh century.

The powers of the medieval Church were great—almost like those of a modern government. It had its own laws and courts. Even kings and emperors were afraid to disobey, for fear of excommunication! The Church also became a major landowner. It amassed a great deal of money by collecting rents and fees.

Almost every village had a church. In addition to the **glebe**, the plot of land given to a church as a benefice in the feudal arrangement, the church also collected a **tithe** from all the tenants on the lord's manor; this meant that the tenants had to give to the church one-tenth of their income, usually in the form of grain and livestock. There were other taxes paid to the church as well: Peter's Pence, a tax collected from each household; money collected for religious services; indulgences for removing sins; and fines from the church's courts.

Only a churchman could judge a churchman. The bishop held court to try cases in which a priest was charged with a crime. That court also tried men who were not priests, but who were accused of an offense against the church. It also tried cases involving disputes over marriages and wills, considered to be church matters.



CHAPTER 13

Daily Quiz 13.3

Modern Chapter 4

The Church

TRUE/FALSE Mark each statement *T* if it is true or *F* if it is false. If false explain why.

- _____ 1. Part of the medieval church's power was based in its ownership of vast amounts of land.

- _____ 2. The church had little political power because of strong central governments in European countries.

- _____ 3. Parish priests' high rank within the church was based on their ability to administer sacraments.

- _____ 4. Kings usually appointed bishops based on their political or family ties.

- _____ 5. The pope's most important advisors were the archbishops.

- _____ 6. The strict monastic lifestyle was meant to show an extreme devotion to God.

- _____ 7. The church could reward an entire region and its churches by issuing an interdict.

- _____ 8. Anyone who questioned the church's principles or beliefs was called a heretic.

- _____ 9. Poor people could receive money, or tithes, granted by the church.

- _____ 10. Simony was the process by which bishops were elected.
