

QUESTIONS ON EARLY CENTURIES OF CHRISTENDOM (500-1000 AD)

1. How did a cultural synthesis between Roman culture and the culture of the Germanic tribes occur?

Because the Romans had built up a large empire and civilization, and the Germanic tribal peoples lived in forests and mountains close to nature in small hamlets, the Germanic peoples had a lot to learn from the Romans in the cultural synthesis which occurred. They learned from Roman military organization, Roman language (incorporated Latin words into their languages), architecture, engineering, law, and religion. Because the Germanic peoples lived very decentralized and Roman cities were in rubble when Rome fell, a decentralized lifestyle emerged which became the decentralized form called Feudalism. Feudalism was a system where a nobleman controlled the manor, he had mounted knights called vassals who took an oath of loyalty to defend the manor and in exchange could live on the manor, and serfs who lived on the manor growing food and giving it to the nobleman and vassals. This system endured for hundreds of years until more powerful kings emerged and took over several manors declaring them their kingdom. When foreign invaders (Vikings, Magyars, Saracens) plundered Europe from 700-1000 AD, vassals were there to fight them off. The practicality and functionality of having local armies of vassals fight off these invaders caused Feudalism to survive and endure longer than it would have if these invasions had not occurred.

2. With the Era of Zones of Cultural Expansion (500-1500 AD) as one of our main eras of world history, how did these cultural zones manifest themselves in Europe?

Roman culture spread out to Germanic peoples. Eastern Roman Empire centered in Constantinople influenced Byzantine Empire and Byzantine Empire influenced Russia. Both Byzantine Empire and Russia were Orthodox Christians, eastern Orthodox and Russian Orthodox respectively.. Moslems had a zone of culture in Spain and Sicily when they invaded and settled down in those places.

3. Why did Europe become politically decentralized after 500 AD with the feudal system predominating? That is, with nobles owning tracts of land and hiring vassals to defend them and serfs to farm the land and provide the food?

Germanic tribes (Goths, Visigoths, Saxons, Franks, etc.) traditionally lived in small groups and hamlets and had social brotherhoods which later became guilds. The Romans abandoned their cities when barbarians invaded and lived on the plantations called latifundia. Life reverted back to the countryside, barter was used rather than coins, trade diminished, and people lived a simple, self-sufficient life on manors. This system was Feudalism.

4. Why did Roman Catholicism spread throughout Europe and dominate Europe from 500-1500 AD? To answer this question, cite the strengths (and weaknesses) of Roman Catholicism.

STRENGTHS – Developed a view of the world rationally and emotionally appealing to scholar and peasant alike. Had profound beliefs – love of neighbor, forgiveness of sins, hope of eternal salvation. Had 7 sacraments honoring important passages in people's lives. Had art, music, magnificent cathedrals. Had enormous wealth as people bequeathed money and land to church. Had a vast administrative apparatus with pope in Rome and, bishoprics, dioceses and village priests. Had its own court system called the Papal curia which enforced Church Law called canon law. Church courts tried heresy, sorcery, blasphemy, usury, sodomy, and incest which were considered violations against God's divine order.

WEAKNESSES – Abuse of authority, excesses of inquisitions, fanaticism, intolerance for Jews, Muslims, witches and homosexuals, and the Crusades (8 missions to liberate the Holy Land from the Muslims.)

5. What happened when Vikings, Magyars and Saracens invaded and what were the consequences of their invasions?

QUESTIONS ON LATE CENTURIES OF CHRISTENDOM (1000-1500 AD)

1. What agricultural improvements occurred around 1000-1100 AD in Europe?
2. Why did these agricultural improvements lead to an increase in population?
3. Why did an increase in population lead to the rebirth of cities?
4. How did an increase in population lead to generation of wealth?
5. Once surplus wealth was generated, how did Europeans spend this money?
6. What prompted the Christians of Europe to undertake the 8 Crusades, why were the Crusades called a “rehearsal for Empire”, and what were some of the various motives of the individual crusaders?
7. Why did the Christians of Europe persecute Jews, Moslems, witches and Homosexuals?
8. What caused the Black Death plague and what were its consequences?
9. What caused the 100 years War and who was a heroine of that war?
10. What caused the Great Schism in the Roman Catholic Church?