

*Definition:*

In Webster's College Dictionary the word religion is defined as "a set of beliefs concerning the cause, nature and purpose of the universe". In Middle Ages Europe the idea of religion was a fundamental force in the lives of the people, both nobles and peasants alike. The driving force behind religion during this period was the Catholic Church. Everyone was Catholic during this period and they served as the guides to all of society. The Church was the most important and powerful institution in the lives of the people in the Middle Ages.

*Quote:*

"Whoever, therefore, shall determine upon this holy pilgrimage and shall make his vow to God to that effect and shall offer himself to Him as a, living sacrifice" so spoke Pope Urban II to followers in 1095. This powerful statement would prove the catalyst for the movement of thousands to the Holy Land. Religion was one of the most significant ideas in the Middle Ages. If you were not Catholic, you were nothing in their society. The Church was the most powerful and important institution in the lives of the people in the Middle Ages.

### *Anecdote*

Everyday Sunday through the mud and rain, hundreds of people from tiny farms all across Europe would make the same journey. They would trek to a great monument on the horizon. They would go with anticipation and excitement to learn and hear the stories about their god. They thrilled to the prospect of seeing the multicolored windows that told them stories and inspired them in their own lives. Religion was the most important thing in their lives. It was through religion that people found a way of dealing with the hardships they faced in the Middle Ages. For this reason, the Church in the Middle Ages was the most powerful and important institution in the lives of the people.

### *Question:*

Why would people leave the only lives and security they knew to travel across lands that offered only danger and the unknown? In the era of the Middle Ages, thousands of people moved across the earth in the name of Christ. Religion was one of the most powerful ideas of the day. For this reason, the Church in the Middle Ages was the most powerful and important institution in the lives of the people.