

## Church Structure History in Europ

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### Abstracts:-

Primary sacred building type of Europe is the church, a structure for Christian worship. The most prevalent church layouts are the **Latin cross** church (in Western Europe) and **central-plan** church (in Eastern Europe). For a summary of the emergence of these designs, see *Church Anatomy*. While Byzantine architecture remained relatively faithful to the simplicity and balanced proportions of Roman buildings, a dramatic transition away from classicism occurred in **Western Europe**, as the Germanic peoples (the new rulers of the West) built churches of ever-increasing verticality and intricacy. Styles of church architecture were often adapted to **other monumental buildings** of the medieval period, including residences, civic halls, and commercial structures. The greatest secular building type was the castle, a medieval Western fortress. Once the Germanic tribes had absorbed the architectural traditions of the Romans (or rather what remained of those traditions following the collapse of the Western Roman Empire), they dramatically transformed them with **intricacy and verticality** ("Verticality" simply means that a structure is tall relative to its width.) These two qualities in medieval architecture are often referred to collectively as **Germanicism**

### 1) Introduction:-

The term basilica denotes a type of Roman building from which the standard church layouts developed (see *Church Anatomy*). Yet this term also has another, unrelated meaning: in Roman Catholicism, "basilica" is a title granted to churches that are deemed to have **exceptional significance** (e.g. historical importance). This usage has nothing to do with the **physical layout** of the church. The term **cathedral** can also be ambiguous. In the Roman Catholic scheme of administration, the smallest territorial unit is the parish, which contains a **church** (with a priest). The next level up is the diocese, which consists of multiple parishes; a diocese is administered from a **cathedral** (by a bishop). Yet "cathedral" is often used (as it is throughout Essential Humanities) simply to denote any church of **monumental size**. Finally, it should be noted that while churches are the primary sacred architecture of Europe, two **other types** are also prominent: abbeys and minor Christian buildings. An abbey is the residential complex of a religious community (see *Abbey*). The term minor Christian building is used by Essential Humanities to denote several types of

relatively small Christian structures. These structures include the chapel (a place of worship that is relatively small compared to a church; many churches contain chapels, allowing for private worship), baptistry (a building in which the ceremony of baptism is performed), shrine (which honours a holy figure or place, and may contain relics), and mausoleum (an above-ground tomb). Minor Christian buildings tend to feature central-plan designs. (The term "central-plan" denotes rotational symmetry; if the plan is rotated around its central point, it looks the same at multiple points of rotation.)

### 2) Research Methodology-

Researcher has presented this research paper with the title of 'Church Structure History in Europ'. For this research paper Researcher has used historical method and Primary and Secondary sources.

### 3) Church Elements In Society:-

There were two kinds of clergy: secular and regular. Broadly speaking, the *secular clergy* were the priests who served in the churches and cathedrals in towns and villages; the *regular clergy* were the monks, nuns and lay brothers and sisters who lived in

monasteries or belonged to religious orders of wandering friars. Whether secular or regular, from the 11th century onwards all clergy were required to live celibate lives, taking no wives and having no children. It was believed that only in this way could they be free from the cares (and snares) of the world, and able to serve God most effectively. The clergy were the most educated members of society – in the early Middle Ages, well-nigh the only educated members. They could be found in a wide range of roles: parish priests in towns and villages, wandering preachers, school teachers and university lecturers, doctors and nurses, government officials, politicians and courtiers, household chaplains to great men, and so on. Their status varied enormously, from the village priest, barely able to read and write and hardly better-off than his parishioners, to men who lived in palaces, were surrounded by large retinues, and enjoyed the wealth and status on a par with the greatest in the land. Indeed, one of their number, the pope, held an office at least as respected as that kings and emperors.

Another group of people who could be seen in many towns (but seldom in the countryside) across Europe were Jews, who had spread around Europe since Roman times. The reason why they were mostly confined to towns and cities was that in most places they were not allowed to own or rent land. In the urban economy, however, the Jews played a key role. Lending money for profit was forbidden to Christians by the Church; however, Jews were allowed by their own religion to lend on interest to non-Jews. In the early part of the Middle Ages, therefore, moneylending became a near-monopoly for them.

Some Jews became very rich – and as such, of course, attracted widespread envy. In fact, Jews came to be seen as extortionate moneylenders, and this, added to the fact that they were a group of outsiders who had not integrated with the rest of society, led to their being the object of widespread fear and distrust. They were easy targets when things went wrong – in time of plague, for example, Jews were often accused of poisoning wells and other crimes, and anti-Jewish pogroms could all too easily occur. Also, when rulers found themselves in dire need of money (as medieval kings did frequently)

one of their common expedients was to squeeze the Jewish community. The rest of society could mostly be relied on to stand by when this happened. On several occasions all Jews were expelled from various kingdoms – England in 1290, France in 1306 and Spain in 1492. Many of these Jews emigrated to Poland, Hungary, Holland, Italy and Turkey.

Every medieval community had its paupers and beggars. These were often people unable to work through physical or mental disability, or widows and orphans left without any means of support. In villages, they were cared for by the other villagers, by the parish priest and the lord of the manor. In towns this responsibility fell to the monasteries, which not only functioned as places of prayer and worship but as sources of welfare and healthcare.

#### 4) System of feudal:-

Feudalism, or the feudal system, was a social system in medieval Europe. The feudal system gave protection and kept the country safe. Popes for much of the Medieval era, Popes were the last major influence in anything to do with the church. Popes had a heavy influence over political and economic decisions as well for a time. Nobility After the Royals their are Nobility they had the most power of the social classes in the Middle Ages. Nobility included hereditary nobility, which was the power that was bestowed on them through blood relations, and non-hereditary nobility, which included those who rose to power through non-familial means. Knights Knights often served as vassals during the Middle Ages. Their primary duty as a vassal was to aid and protect the lord in his army. Peasants The lowest social rank in the Middle Ages were the peasants. The peasant class included Freemen, who had some rights and land, serfs, who had no rights, and slaves, who were bought and sold. This system made sure that all of the people knew where, and who, they are, what they should be doing, and who to respect. It also created a way to evenly spread the owning of land, and the control of people. The Feudal system was a firm hierarchy or medieval Europe.

The word feudal derives from the word *fief*, which usually denotes an area of land held on certain conditions. A person who granted a fief to someone was that person's *lord*, and the person who received



a fief became the lord's *vassal*. The vassal usually had to provide the lord with military service, and also give him money from time to time, and advice. But the lord also had duties towards the vassal: he had to protect him and see that he received justice in court. Kings granted out much of their kingdoms as large fiefs to their nobles, and these in turn granted smaller fiefs for lesser lords, and so on. In this way a pyramid of mutual support was built up, stretching from the king downwards, to the lord of a single village. The building blocks of fiefs were manors. These usually covered quite small areas of land, for example that attached to a village. The vast majority of peasants who farmed the land in Medieval Europe were attached to manors, and had to provide their lords with labour or rent. They were known as *serfs* – peasants who were practically slaves, in that they were bound for life to the manors in which they were born. They were not allowed to leave this land, nor marry, nor pass on their particular plots to anyone, without their lords' permission. On the other hand, they had the right to look to their lord for protection and justice.

### 5) The Church

All the key moments of life – birth, marriage, death – were under the Church's control. Education was dominated by churchmen, and most medieval scholars in Europe were members of the clergy. The vast majority of art and architecture was religious in nature, either commissioned by churches or abbeys themselves or by wealthy lords and merchants to beautify churches. The largest and most beautiful structures in any medieval town or city were religious buildings, and the towers and spires of cathedrals and churches soared above urban skylines. Churches were also to be found in every village. The Church was the wealthiest landowner in western Europe. It was a hugely powerful international organisation, challenging and constraining the authority of emperors and kings. Senior churchmen were ministers and high officials to secular rulers, and the servants of the Church – priests, monks, nuns and other “clerks” – were tried in their own courts and by their own system of law.

The medieval Church in western Europe looked to the pope, the bishop of Rome, for leadership. For much of the high Middle Ages popes

asserted their complete sovereignty over the Church. They also claimed authority over secular rulers. Although the latter eventually succeeded in resisting this claim, the struggle between the Papacy and monarchs had a profound impact on the history of western Europe. One ubiquitous feature of medieval society was the presence of monks and nuns. Their monasteries came in different shapes and sizes, but typically formed a complex of buildings – cloisters, dormitories, kitchens, store rooms, libraries, workshops, a mill, and so on – all gathered around a church. Monasteries dotted both countryside and towns, and many owned extensive lands and property.

Monastic communities had arisen at the time of the Roman empire, but in the years after its fall monasticism was given a new lease of life by St Benedict of Nursa, in the late 5th and 6th centuries. He developed a code of guidelines to order the community and individual lives of monks and nuns. These were practical and moderate rules which aimed at allowing men and women to live communal lives of worship and study, separate from the rest of society whilst contributing to its welfare. Even today these rules are well regarded for their combination of moderation and spirituality. Monasteries and nunneries spread throughout Europe during the Middle Ages, and monks and nuns provided much of the education, healthcare and practical charity for the population at large, as well as the preaching of the Christian Gospel. They preserved the learning of classical Greece and Rome from generation to generation by copying ancient writings (a major undertaking before the coming of printing). They also contributed their own study and learning, which helped to shape future Western thought. When universities appeared, the first teachers were monks.

### 6) Church Islam Relation

To the south and south east the Mediterranean Sea, which in Greek and Roman times had formed a busy conduit of goods, ideas and settlers between the Middle East, North Africa and Europe, now formed a barrier between Christian Europe and Muslim North Africa and the Middle East.

From the time of the Muslim conquests of the Middle East and North Africa, in the 7th century

CE, and of most of Spain in the early 8th century, there were almost permanent hostilities in the Mediterranean region throughout the medieval period. In the eastern Mediterranean, Muslim armies repeatedly raided Asia Minor, turning much of what had been one of the wealthiest regions of the ancient world into a virtual no-man's land. These culminated in two sieges of Constantinople (674-8, 717-8). After this a kind of peace prevailed for several centuries, but Muslim pirates remained active throughout the Mediterranean Sea.

Then, in the western Mediterranean, the Christian *Reconquista* got under way in Spain in the 10th century. The Christians gradually drove out the Muslims in a sequence of wars endured until the end of the 15th century. At the same time, in the eastern Mediterranean war flared up again. Between the 11th and the 13th centuries, in the Crusades, Christian European armies took and then ultimately failed to hold Jerusalem and parts of the Levant (the lands on the eastern coast of the Mediterranean, modern-day countries of Syria, Lebanon and Israel). Finally, in the later Middle Ages, it was the turn of the Muslim world to go on the attack in the eastern Mediterranean as the Ottoman Turks began their expansion. In the 13th and 14th centuries they expanded to conquer most of Asia Minor at the expense of other small Muslim emirates and the Byzantine empire, and later considerable territory in southeastern Europe at the expense of the Byzantines, Serbs and Bulgarians. Throughout all this time, trade between Christian and Muslim ports continued. Christian traders and travellers ventured inland on only the rarest of occasions, however, and the same was true of Muslim visitors to Europe.

#### **From house church to church:-**

From the first to the early fourth centuries most Christian communities worshipped in private homes, often secretly. Some Roman churches, such as the Basilica of San Clemente in Rome, are built directly over the houses where early Christians worshipped. Other early Roman churches are built on the sites of Christian martyrdom or at the entrance to catacombs where Christians were buried. With the victory of the Roman emperor Constantine at the Battle of Milvian Bridge in 312 AD, Christianity

became a lawful and then the privileged religion of the Roman Empire. The faith, already spread around the Mediterranean, now expressed itself in buildings. Christian architecture was made to correspond to civic and imperial forms, and so the Basilica, a large rectangular meeting hall became general in east and west, as the model for churches, with a nave and aisles and sometimes galleries and clerestories. While civic basilicas had apses at either end, the Christian basilica usually had a single apse where the bishop and presbyters sat in a dais behind the altar. While pagan basilicas had as their focus a statue of the emperor, Christian basilicas focused on the Eucharist as the symbol of the eternal, loving and forgiving God. The first very large Christian churches, notably Santa Maria Maggiore, San Giovanni in Laterano, and Santa Costanza, were built in Rome in the early 4th century.[3]

#### **Atrium:-**

When Early Christian communities began to build churches they drew on one particular feature of the houses that preceded them, the atrium, or courtyard with a colonnade surrounding it. Most of these atriums have disappeared. A fine example remains at the Basilica of San Clemente in Rome and another was built in the Romanesque period at San'Ambrogio, Milan. The descendants of these atria may be seen in the large square cloisters that can be found beside many cathedrals, and in the huge colonnaded squares or piazza at the Basilicas of St Peter's in Rome and St Mark's in Venice and the Camposanto (Holy Field) at the Cathedral of Pisa.

#### **Basilica:-**

Early church architecture did not draw its form from Roman temples, as the latter did not have large internal spaces where worshipping congregations could meet. It was the Roman basilica, used for meetings, markets and courts of law that provided a model for the large Christian church and that gave its name to the Christian basilica.

Both Roman basilicas and Roman bath houses had at their core a large vaulted building with a high roof, braced on either side by a series of lower chambers or a wide arcaded passage. An important feature of the Roman basilica was that at either end it had a projecting exedra, or apse, a semicircular space roofed with a half-dome. This was where the



magistrates sat to hold court. It passed into the church architecture of the Roman world and was adapted in different ways as a feature of cathedral architecture. The earliest large churches, such as the Cathedral of San Giovanni in Laterano in Rome, consisted of a single-ended basilica with one apsidal end and a courtyard, or atrium, at the other end. As Christian liturgy developed, processions became part of the proceedings. The processional door was that which led from the furthest end of the building, while the door most used by the public might be that central to one side of the building, as in a basilica of law. This is the case in many cathedrals and churches.

#### **Bema:-**

As numbers of clergy increased, the small apse which contained the altar, or table upon which the sacramental bread and wine were offered in the rite of Holy Communion, was not sufficient to accommodate them. A raised dais called a bema formed part of many large basilican churches. In the case of St. Peter's Basilica and San Paolo Fuori le Mura (St Paul's outside the Walls) in Rome, this bema extended laterally beyond the main meeting hall, forming two arms so that the building took on the shape of a T with a projecting apse. From this beginning, the plan of the church developed into the so-called Latin Cross which is the shape of most Western Cathedrals and large churches. The arms of the cross are called the transept. [6]

#### **Mausoleum:-**

One of the influences on church architecture was the mausoleum. The mausoleum of a noble Roman was a square or circular domed structure which housed a sarcophagus. The Emperor Constantine built for his daughter Costanza a mausoleum which has a circular central space surrounded by a lower ambulatory or passageway separated by a colonnade. Santa Costanza's burial place became a place of worship as well as a tomb. It is one of the earliest church buildings that was central, rather than longitudinally planned. Constantine was also responsible for the building of the circular, mausoleum-like Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, which in turn influenced the plan of a number of buildings, including that constructed in Rome to house the remains of the

proto-martyr Stephen, San Stefano Rotondo and the Basilica of San Vitale in Ravenna. Ancient circular or polygonal churches are comparatively rare. A small number, such as the Temple Church, London were built during the Crusades in imitation of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre as isolated examples in England, France, and Spain. In Denmark such churches in the Romanesque style are much more numerous. In parts of Eastern Europe, there are also round tower-like churches of the Romanesque period but they are generally vernacular architecture and of small scale. Others, like St Martin's Rotunda at Visegrad, in the Czech Republic, are finely detailed. The circular or polygonal form lent itself to those buildings within church complexes that perform a function in which it is desirable for people to stand, or sit around, with a centralized focus, rather than an axial one. In Italy, the circular or polygonal form was used throughout the medieval period for baptisteries, while in England it was adapted for chapter houses. In France, the aisled polygonal plan was adopted as the eastern terminal and in Spain, the same form is often used as a chapel. Other than Santa Costanza and San Stefano, there was another significant place of worship in Rome that was also circular, the vast Ancient Roman Pantheon, with its numerous statue-filled niches. This too was to become a Christian church and lend its style to the development of Cathedral architecture.

#### **Latin cross and Greek cross:-**

Most cathedrals and great churches have a cruciform groundplan. In churches of Western European tradition, the plan is usually longitudinal, in the form of the so-called Latin Cross, with a long nave crossed by a transept. The transept may be as strongly projecting as at York Minster or not project beyond the aisles as at Amiens Cathedral. Many of the earliest churches of Byzantium have a longitudinal plan. At Hagia Sophia, Istanbul, there is a central dome, the frame on one axis by two high semi-domes and on the other by low rectangular transept arms, the overall plan being square. This large church was to influence the building of many later churches, even into the 21st century. A square plan in which the nave, chancel and transept arms are of equal length forming a Greek cross, the crossing generally surmounted by a dome became the

common form in the Eastern Orthodox Church, with many churches throughout Eastern Europe and Russia being built in this way. Churches of the Greek Cross form often have a narthex or vestibule which stretches across the front of the church. This type of plan was also to later play a part in the development of church architecture in Western Europe, most notably in Bramante's plan for St. Peter's Basilica.

**Conclusion:-**

Christianity is one of many religions that host sacred places for forms of worship. Just as each religion in the world is unique, so, too, are their forms of basic architecture. Christian churches have distinctive elements that will be covered throughout this lesson. You have probably heard the terms church, chapel, and cathedral before, and while we know they are all terms in Christianity, do we know the difference between them? These words are very common in Christianity and for the purpose of this lesson, need to be clearly defined. The words church and chapel as we know them now both came into the English language during the 13th century.

Church refers to the entire religious space where the congregation gathers; in other words, the entire architectural space. The word chapel usually suggests a smaller space such as a room within a church or a non-religious building such as a hospital or university. Chapels and churches can be widely applied throughout Christianity; however, a cathedral is very different in its function when compared to a church or chapel. Architecturally, cathedrals are usually very grand and lofty, with tall ceilings, buttresses, columns, stained glass windows, sculptures, and great attention to detail inside and out. Cathedrals also fulfill the role of being the seat

of the bishop and act as a place where chapters gather, not just for Sunday service, but multiple times daily. They tend to be located in larger cities versus small towns.

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