**Iona School for Ministry**

**Pre-Reformation Christianity in England**

**Second Year**

**January 14, 2023**

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**Study Guide**

**Description of this Session**

In this session, we will study the movements and figures that shaped Christianity in England prior to the Reformation. What was the relationship of medieval English Christianity to the wider Church? What was its relationship to emerging economic and political structures, both in England and on the Continent? What religious controversies marked the period? How did ordinary Christians practice their faith? These are just a few of the questions we will be focusing on as we move through the material.

**Class Objectives**

By the end of this session, students should be able to: 1) identify key figures, movements, and moments of crisis in pre-Reformation English Christianity; 2) connect current-day opportunities and challenges facing American Christianity to their historical roots; 3) use stories from our shared past as a resource for adaptive leadership.

**Required Reading**

*Not Angels but Anglicans: A History of Christianity in the British Isles*, eds. Henry Chadwick and Allison Ward. Chapters 1-12.

**Guidelines for Reading**

This book is written with a UK audience in mind and therefore presumes a more thorough background in English history than you may have. If you find yourself feeling lost at first, **do not despair**! Use the study questions below to guide your reading. As you read, please also keep a list of unfamiliar terms, names, and events you’d like to learn more about. Then look them up. I’ve prepared a “starter” list. You should be prepared to discuss the items on it at the beginning of class. In addition to your textbook, Wikipedia is an excellent resource for this purpose. Once you’ve made your way through the material and looked up everything you need to look up, try your hand at a paragraph-long answer to each question. Don’t worry about style or getting everything perfect. These paragraphs are just rough drafts we are going to use as a start for our in-class work.

1. How would you describe the Church’s relationship to “secular” culture and “secular” power throughout our period? (Pay attention to who is driving that relationship at key moments in the story. Note when and how violence breaks out. Note when and why tensions give rise to missional creativity, structural breakdowns, or productive compromises.)
2. What does “good” or “good enough” lay Christian piety look like prior to the Reformation and how do those standards change throughout our period? (Pay attention to changing ideas of what people need to do, believe, or know in order to count as a good Christian or as a Christian at all. Note behaviors and beliefs that create conflict with Church authorities. Note the ways gender and ethnicity complicate this question.)
3. What remedies or strategies does Christianity offer in our period to address the harsh realities of sin, suffering, and death? How do these remedies or strategies evolve over time?

**Please be able to discuss the importance of the following people, events, or terms**

Columba

Gregory the Great

Augustine of Canterbury

Synod of Whitby

Bede

Lindisfarne

Viking Expansion

Alfred the Great

Anselm of Canterbury

Thomas Becket

Crusades

John Wycliffe

Lollards

Lateran IV

Monasticism

Friars