



## IONA SCHOOL FOR MINISTRY

### Pre-Reformation Christianity in England

Second Year

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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? Finally, how do those practices find expression in the art and literature of the period? 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) identify the distinctive qualities of English Christianity and the variables that gave rise to them; 3) identify and contextualize the major theological themes at work in some key medieval texts that still matter to us today

### 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, I also suggest keeping a list of the major names and events you'd like to learn more about and then looking them up as you can. Along with the guiding questions, I've listed some items you might find particularly helpful to explore further. Wikipedia is a perfectly fine resource for this purpose. Once you've made your way through the material and looked up everything you plan to look up, try your hand at a paragraph-long answer to each question. Don't worry about style or getting everything perfect. These are just rough drafts we are going to use as a start for an in-class timeline that will help you keep the essentials straight.

1. What can we know about England's pre-Christian history; and how does this matter for our understanding of early English Christianity?
2. Pay attention to the complexity of the conversion narrative in England. Who converts which areas of England? What are the different cultural and theological emphases of these different missionary communities? How do you think this complex story might have shaped English religious identity on the eve of the Reformation?
3. How is English religion shaped (and not shaped) by war and conquest?
4. What is the role of the monasteries in the development of pre-Reformation English culture? Why do they begin to decline toward the end of our period?
5. What was the significance of the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215 to ordinary Christians?
6. What motivated the Crusades and how did they shape Pre-Reformation culture for good and for ill?
7. Who are some medieval writers or thinkers people in your congregation might benefit from knowing more about?

**Here are some items it might be helpful to look up:**

End of Roman Rule in Britain  
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