

## *The Power of the Medieval Church*

- in Europe, the Church ran everything until the Renaissance in 1500 ACE
  
- the clergy (priests etc.) were extremely powerful
  - almost all the people in Europe were Christians
  - was organized to be the center of life
    - services every Sunday
    - the center of education in Medieval Europe
    - ruled all aspects of life: birth, marriage, and death
  - was a high position in feudalism to be a priest
    - equal to a noble
  
- the Church became extremely wealthy from 500 to 1500
  - sold salvation
    - if people donated land or money, the Church promised that their souls would go to heaven
    - people would go to heaven due to being good, not giving gold and land (an out and out lie)
  - peasants had to pay **tithe**
    - 1/10 of all their earnings had to be paid to the Church
    - all the peasants in Europe... millions and millions.. this was a lot of cash
  - owned VAST tracts of land
    - at any random time, the Church owned almost one third of all of Europe
  
- all one had to do was look at the cathedrals of Europe to witness just how rich and powerful they were...

- the Pope was the head of the Church in Europe, and they often influenced kings

- clergy members were highly educated
  - knew how to read and write, when often kings were not all that capable
  - would become their personal advisors
    - as a result, they could greatly influence the will of kings and queens

- the Church held control over the peasants

- peasants couldn't understand Latin
  - both the Bible and sermons were in Latin
  - as a result, peasants were not able to interpret the Bible independently
    - they were told what to think and how to be "good Christians"
  - leads to an intellectual control that peasants don't break until the reformation

