I. INTRODUCTION

II. MONASTIC REFORM

A. The Cistercians
   1. The Rise of the Cistercians
      
      a) In the twelfth century, another monastic reform takes place that is to have tremendous consequences for both church and state. This monastic reform had its beginnings in Citeaux in Burgundy, France. It took its name from the Latin form of Citeaux – *cistercium* – and developed into the Cistercian order.

      b) In many ways the Cistercians were a continuation of the papal Gregorian reform movement, which had sought separation from the world, particularly by attacking lay appointments of church positions and clerical marriage.

          i. The Cistercians stressed their separation from the world by returning to a stricter and more primitive form of the Benedictine order than any that was being practiced at that time.

          ii. They became a new order with white robes rather than the black robes of the Benedictines.

          iii. The more elaborate liturgical and building styles of Cluny and the rather open relationships, particularly with the nobility were curtailed.

          iv. Wealth, luxury, and laxity, which had crept into the Cluny monasteries, were now replaced with poverty, simplicity, and rigour (see Bainton, pp. 131-133).

          v. The prayers of the monks continued to be the heart of these monasteries, but they were again balanced by hard physical labour and by time for reflection and meditation.

          vi. Vigorous physical labour was a necessity because the Cistercians sought out remote and undeveloped areas; German expansion eastward owed much to them, as did new forms of farming and animal husbandry.

      c) The abbey at Citeaux was founded in 1098, and this monastic movement became one of the great success stories of the twelfth century. [READING: ‘Description of Clairvaux’]

          i. The first daughter house was established in 1112, fourteen years after the founding of the order.

          ii. By the middle of the twelfth century, there were some 350 Cistercian abbeys.
iii. By the end of the century, there were over 500 Cistercian abbeys, stretching from Norway and Ireland down to Portugal and southern Italy.

2. According to the original charter drawn up by the English abbot of Citeaux, Stephen Harding, each monastery was self-governing under its abbot, but there was an annual chapter meeting of all the houses, which legislated for the whole order. There was also a common constitution, which included provision for supervision from the mother house. Thus there was a strong centralizing thrust guaranteeing a common front and creating a true monastic order.

3. An innovation of the Cistercians – which seems to represent a democratization of the largely aristocratic monastic movement – was the presence of members of the peasant or commoner class.
   a) These unlettered men were often lay brothers in the order who knew the meaning of physical labour.
   b) The Cistercians also recruited from adults (not children, like the Benedictine and Cluniac monasteries) who had lived in the world. Many of their recruits came from the new and more prosperous cities and were persons who consciously rejected much of contemporary society: the new wealth in the cities, the emerging universities, the warlike nobility, and the sometimes splendid and triumphalist church.
   c) At a time when medieval art and architecture were flourishing (“the renaissance of the twelfth century”), Cistercian monasteries and their churches were of modest size, plain, and unadorned.
   d) They stood as a witness to the otherness of Christianity and as an attempt to foster the inward meditation that rejected the fascination with the “many things” of the burgeoning European culture.

B. Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153) [READINGS: ‘Bernard of Clairvaux – Critique of Cluniacs,’ and ‘Bernard of Clairvaux – On Loving God’] [possible student presentation on Clairvaux]

1. No one represents the twelfth century Cistercian order better than Bernard of Clairvaux. Indeed, many would argue that he was the key figure for at least the first half of the twelfth century.

2. Certainly Bernard was largely responsible for the external success of the Cistercian order. He arrived at the Benedictine abbey at Citeaux in 1113, a young nobleman with a group of like-minded young men, and this is the point at which events begin to take hold.

3. Within two years he was sent off to found a new house at Clairvaux, the first of 163 abbeys established by him!

4. How are we to understand this man who preached withdrawal and meditation, and yet must have been the busiest man in all of Europe?
   a) He is said to have travelled constantly, protesting the whole time that it was not what he wanted to do.
b) He advised popes and kings, attended (and dominated) councils, preached the Second Crusade, etc.

c) When he was not travelling he was corresponding with the world leaders. No one, certainly no pope, wielded as much influence as Bernard.

5. And yet much of his travelling and writing was done on behalf of his rather counter-cultural and “mystical” vision of the church. See his letter critiquing many of the monasteries he had encountered (Bainton, pp. 131-33).

a) Somehow, as his writings, sermons, and hymns demonstrate, he was able to withdraw into deep devotion and meditation even while surrounded by temporal distractions.

i. Thus, he was able to bring together his many activities with his monastic and mystical calling and personality.

ii. In doing this Bernard both reflected and shaped the piety that was emerging in the twelfth century, particularly in association with the Cistercian Order.

   (a) This piety has been called a more personal piety, a more introspective and affective spirituality, a more subjective religiosity.

   (a) He expressed his intense devotion to the crucified Lord in lyrical hymns written in the first person and to the Virgin Mary, whom he portrayed “as a gracious lady and loving mother.”

1. The Cistercians were known as promoters of devotion to Mary and they were in turn said to enjoy her special favours.

2. Thus among the monks and possibly also among at least some of the lay nobility (note the rise of chivalry!) there is emerging a more gentle and reflective religion that lives in considerable tension with the dominant – and dominating – religiosity of much of the rest of this period (cf. the Crusades).

b) In the twelfth century the crucifix was becoming a prominent feature of church decoration. It was a crucifix in a new style: Christ was no longer dispassionately and majestically reigning from the cross; he was now a dying man, a dying Saviour, calling forth the loyalty and compassion of the believers. See Bernard’s hymn “Jesus, the Very Thought of You”

   Jesus, the very thought of you, Fills us with sweet delight;
   But sweeter far your face to view, And rest within your light.
   No voice can sing, no heart can frame, Nor can the mind recall
   A sweeter sound than your blest name, O Savior of us all!

   Hope of every contrite soul, O Joy of all the meek,
   How kind you are to those who fall! How good to those who seek!
   Jesus be our Joy today, Help us to prize your love;
   Grant us at last to hear you say: “Come, share my home above.

   (Hymn 316 in the Lutheran Book of Worship)
III. THE CRUSADES  [READINGS: ‘Call for Crusade - Gregory VII,’ and ‘Call for Crusade - Urban II’]
A. The Crusades characterize the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The First Crusade is dated 1096; the eighth and last crusade is dated 1270, almost two hundred years later.

B. The early middle ages in Europe were a rough and violent period when barbarians were only gradually being tamed. But there was also the emergence of a kinder, gentler Christianity, with the influence of persons like Bernard and Hildegard of Bingen.

1. But the warrior mode was still visible, as is evident in Pope Urban II’s speech at the Council of Clermont (see Bainton, p. 118). The response of the hearers to this speech, in both French and Latin, was an enthusiastic “Deus vult” – “God wills it!”

C. It is necessary to remind ourselves that in the ninth and tenth centuries Europe had been defending itself against military attacks from the Vikings, the Hungarians, and also the Muslims.

1. In these centuries, the Muslims had captured the Islands of Crete and Sicily and were generally a powerful presence in the Mediterranean. By the eleventh century, however, Europe was once again stronger and even expansionist.

a) In Spain, the rising Christian monarchies were pushing back the Muslims. In Sicily, the French Normans were likewise driving them out. The papacy applauded and supported the recovery of Spain and Sicily from Muslim rule. Indeed, Urban II, the French pope who preached the First Crusade, had close personal links with the war against the Muslims in the Mediterranean.

b) In Europe, these campaigns against both Vikings and Muslims had created a large and increasingly brutal and lawless warrior class.

i. The church had already given these warriors its blessing in their ninth and tenth century campaigns, apparently promising eternal life to those who fell in the battle against the heathen.

c) Now, in the Crusades, the church took over the leadership of the military campaign. Previously “just wars,” the kind the church approved, were fought by secular powers only.

i. The church as institution was supposed to be uninvolved. But in the Crusades the responsibility for the war was removed from the secular powers of Christendom and assumed by the church.

ii. The fighting forces were not simply military forces; they were the militia Christi, the army of Christ, Christian soldiers (see Bainton, pp. 119-20).

iii. When Pope Urban II urged his audience to undertake a “holy war” against the Muslims in defense of Christian churches in the East, he combined the themes of pilgrimage and warfare, a potent combination.
iv. Jerusalem was the sacred goal of both, and for those who fought there was believed to be – was it promised? – the assurance of a place in paradise. There was also the promise that they could keep the lands they conquered.

2. There were a few decades of Western success in the East. Jerusalem was captured in 1099, and by 1153 the whole Syrian coastline was in Latin hands.

3. But by 1187 the Muslims under Turkish leadership had retaken Jerusalem, and in the disastrous Fourth Crusade (1204) the Crusaders, unable to reach their goal in the Holy Land, diverted to Constantinople, which they sacked and desecrated.

   a) Not only did this act intensify the hatred between Eastern and Western churches and civilizations, it also resulted in the destruction of many of the Eastern Empire’s defences and opened the way for the ultimate Muslim conquest of the Balkans, Greece, and Eastern Europe.

4. The only long-term military gain to accrue to Western Christendom from the Crusades was the retention of naval control of the Mediterranean and its Islands. In terms of negative effects, we could cite several:

   a) Although the Crusades never posed a serious military threat to Islam since they were always on the periphery of the Muslim world, they gravely offended Islam and formed a lasting impression of European Christians as warlike barbarians.

   b) The Crusades also reveal how hostile to the stranger or outsider Latin Christendom was. The only way that Europeans could conceive of relating to Muslims with whom they came into contact through the Crusades was through warfare or conversion. There was some effort made to learn something about Islam: the Qur’an was translated in the mid-twelfth century, and in the first half of the thirteenth century, Franciscans and Dominicans both tried to use their limited knowledge of Islam as a tool in conversion, but there was little real encounter or dialogue.

   c) Closer to home, the Crusades and the crusading mentality had an extremely negative effect on Jewish-Christian relations in Europe. The active persecution of Jews in Europe can be dated from the First Crusade. [READING: ‘Bernard of Clairvaux – Apology for 2nd Crusade’]

D. Crusade and Inquisition In the Thirteenth Century

1. The church formed new religious orders, notably the Dominicans and the Franciscans, as a way to combat heresy.

2. Another way that the church responded to heresy was through the use of Crusades and Inquisition. The same pope – Innocent III – who approved the formation of the Dominicans and Franciscans also approved the crusades against the Waldenses and Cathari.

   a) In 1209, a crusade was begun by Innocent III against the Waldenses: In 1211, eighty were burned in Strasbourg and in 1237 (under Pope Gregory IX), fifteen were burned in Spain.
b) In 1209, there was also a much more extensive and devastating attack on the Cathari. Since the locals in Southern France would not attack them, northern French barons and bishops marched on the southern heretics. There was a great massacre, but the crusade was not a success.

3. In 1231, Pope Gregory IX issued a bull condemning heresy, and gave certain orders – often the Dominicans – the authority to investigate possible heretical teaching and teachers. This was the beginning of the Inquisition.

IV. Hildegarde of Bingen [READINGS: ‘Hildegarde of Bingen Bio,’ ‘Hildegarde of Bingen Excerpts,’ and ‘Hildegarde of Bingen Correspondence’]

[possible student presentation on Hildegarde]

A. Hildegarde, besides being a prophet, mystic, abbess, and theologian, with interests in medicine, art, music, also was involved in the political life of the church. She wrote to kings and expressed her opinion about heresies such as the Cathars.