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African Roots of Christianity: Christianity is a Religion of Africa

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Recommended Citation

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African Roots of Christianity

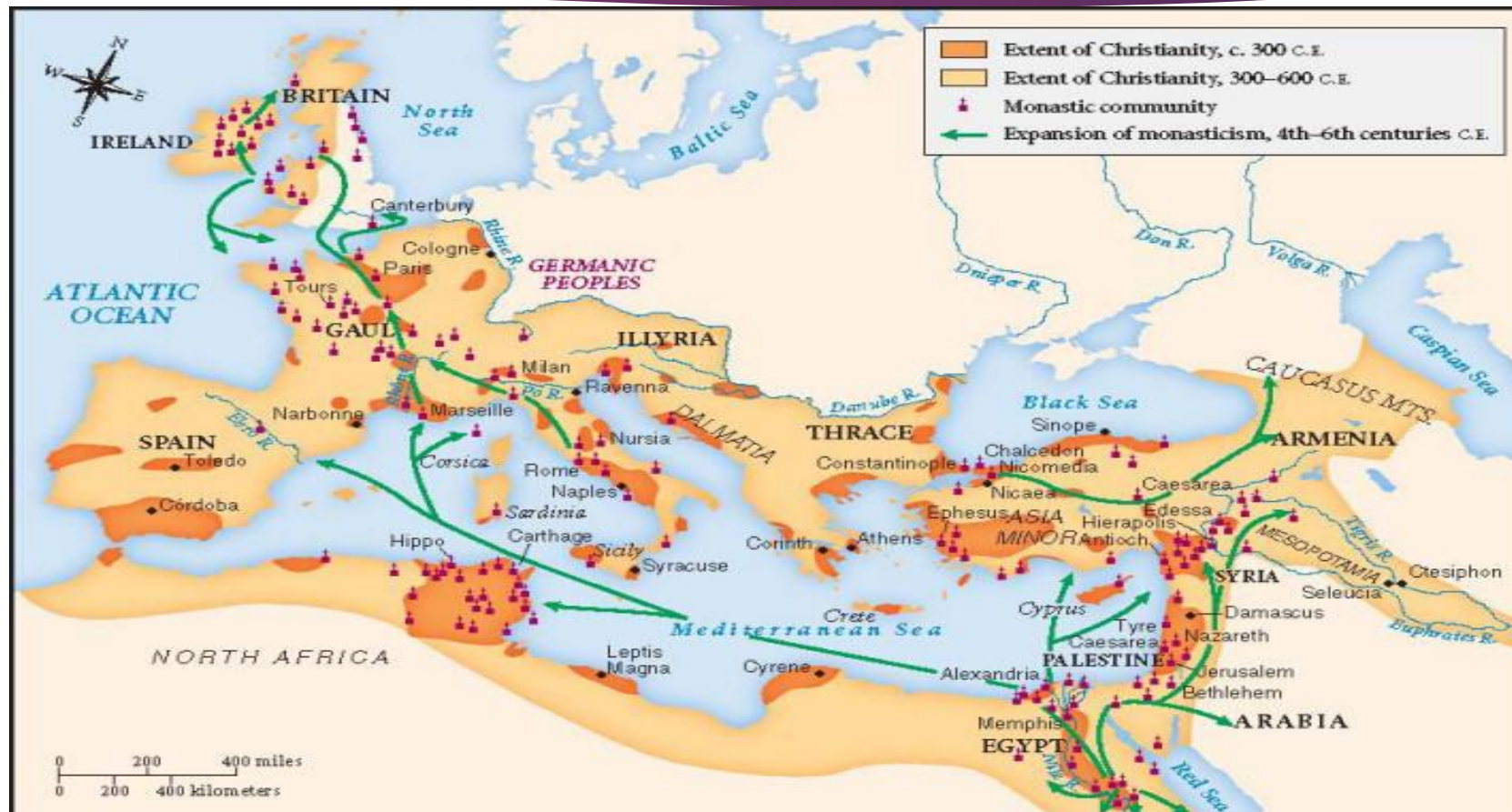
CHRISTIANITY IS A RELIGION OF AFRICA

African Proverb

We must go back and reclaim our past, so that we can move forward, so we can understand why and how we came to be who we are today

Ancient Akan principle of Sankofa

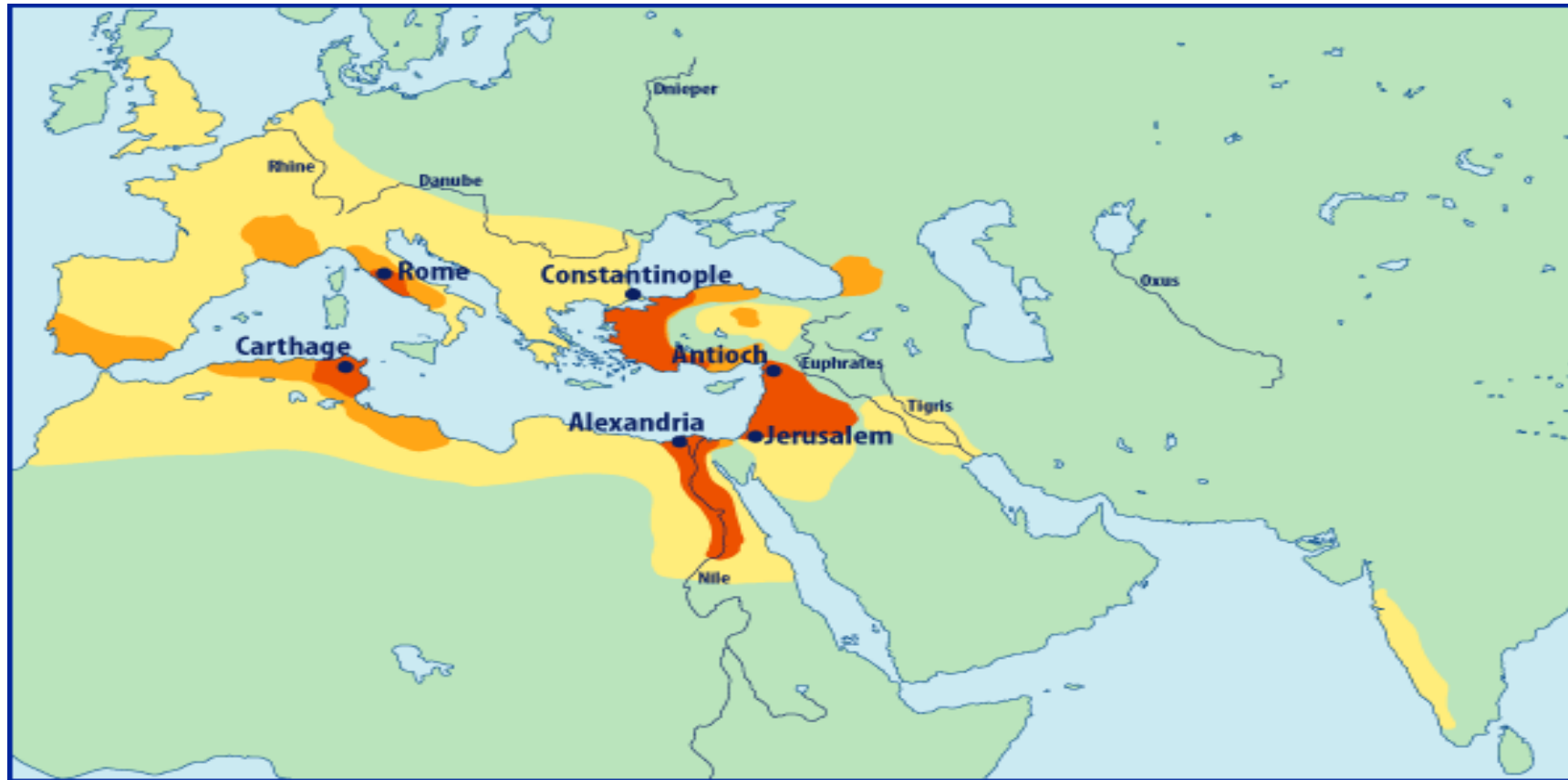
Early Christianity



Christianity in the 3rd.century



Christianity in Africa 250-AD-406-AD



Christianity in Transition

The era of Western Christianity has passed within our lifetime and the day of Southern Christianity is dawning. The fact of change is undeniable; it has happened and will continue to happen.

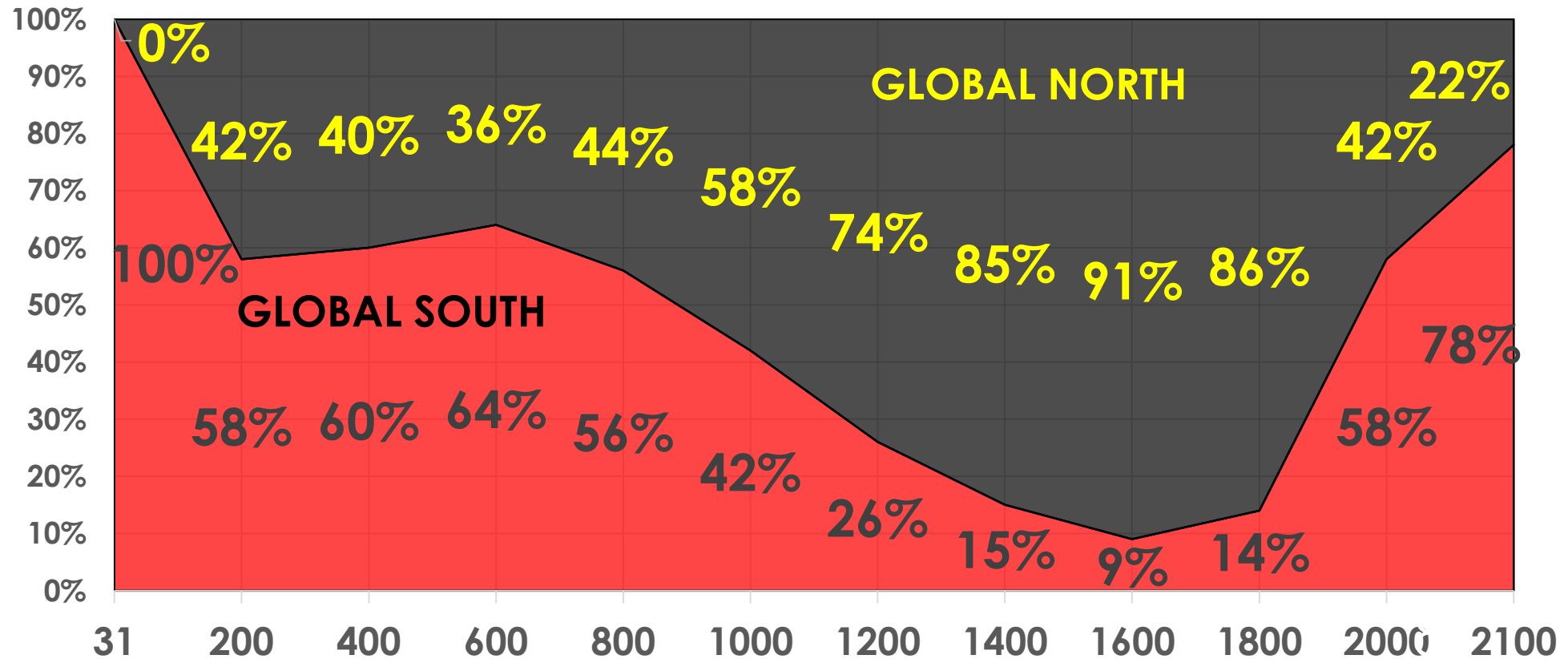
Phillip Jenkins

Shifting Christianity

- ▶ 1500—Era of Luther and Calvin
 - 92% of Christians were in global north
 - Christianity was a “white man’s religion”
- ▶ 1800—William Carey to India
 - 86% of Christians were in global north
- ▶ 1900—82% in north
- ▶ 2000—42% in north, 58% in south
 - Christianity is a world religion
- ▶ 2100—22% in north, 78% in south (proj.)
- ▶ 1900-9m by 2025-633m

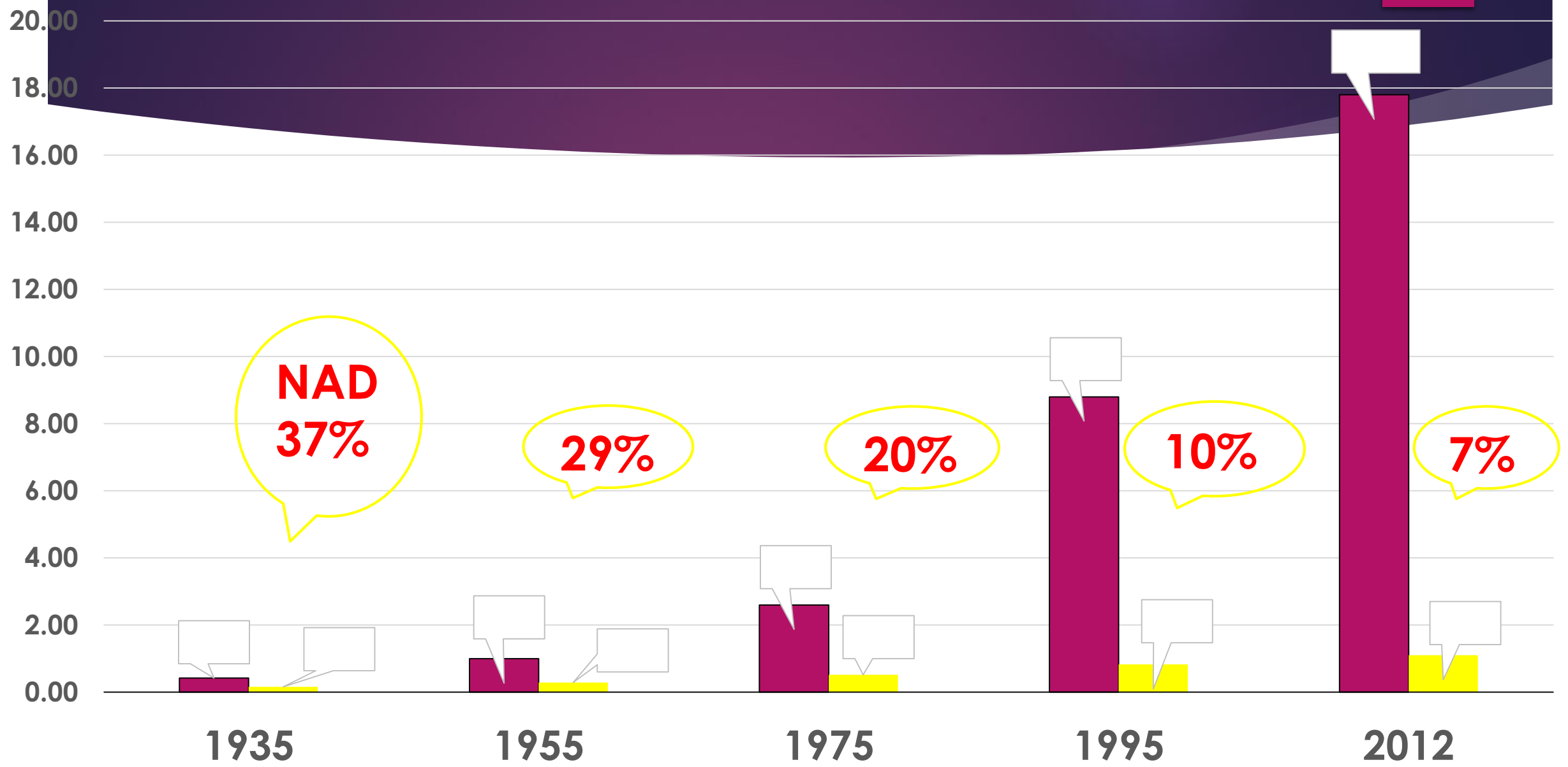
Shifting Christianity

% of Christians



SHIFTING SDA MEMBERSHIP:

WORLD AND NORTH AMERICAN DIVISION (Millions)



Ancient Israel and African connections

- ▶ Story of Nimrod
- ▶ Abraham and Isaac in Egypt
- ▶ Joseph in Egypt
- ▶ Joseph's marriage to Egyptian
- ▶ Ephraim and Manasseh-tribes of Israel
- ▶ Israel 430 years in Egypt
- ▶ Moses's wife
- ▶ Jeremiah's rescuer
- ▶ Psalm 68:31 Ethiopia shall stretch forth her hands

Africa in the NT

- ▶ Christ lived a refugee in Egypt- Matthew 2:13-15
- ▶ Christ helped by Simon of Cyrene during his crucifixion- Mark 15:21
- ▶ On the day of Pentecost, converts from Africa-Acts 2:10
- ▶ Prophets in Africa-Acts 13:1 Niger and Lucius of Cyrene
- ▶ Conversion of Ethiopian Eunuch Acts 9:26-39

Africa in Early Christianity

- ▶ Africa was crucial in Early Christianity, majority of the seminal theologians were born and bred in Africa—three of the greatest early Church fathers—Tertullian, Cyprian and Augustine
- ▶ Early translation of Greek NT—African dialect: Sahidic of the Coptic and North African Latin.
- ▶ Textual criticism, bible commentary and systematic theology all invented in Africa
- ▶ Christianity was indigenous to Africa before the white man.



Africa in Early Christianity-Egypt



- ▶ Nile Valley-pre-Arab, dark-skinned people
- ▶ Coptic tradition-Mark brought gospel to Egypt
- ▶ Alexandria major center of Christianity intellectual center of the world, had the largest library in the world, great universities
- ▶ Hinterland of Egypt came under Christian influence- Coptic Church
- ▶ Saint Antony born 251- Father of monasticism-gave up his wealth and devote himself completely to God.
- ▶ Moved to the desert and inspired a movement devoted to virtue and life of praise to Christ.

Christianity in Africa-Ethiopian

Ethiopian Church

- 2000 year old, independent state
- The spread of Christianity – Jewish community – direct contact with Jerusalem
- The church develops at the III. century - Coptic (Frumentius) and missionaries arriving from West-Asia – ‘Ezana of Axum (330-356)
- Independent national church, doesn't depend on the Greek Orthodox Patriarch of Alexandria!
- It distances itself from Rome after the Council of Chalcedon in 451
- VII-XIV. century: resists the Muslim invasion, the extermination of the neighboring Christian states
- Its structure is similar to the Coptic Orthodox Church of Alexandria and the Syriac Orthodox Church – patriarch, monastic orders, monasteries (the sole institutions of education) – the development of the current Ethiopian identity

Ancient Christian Churches



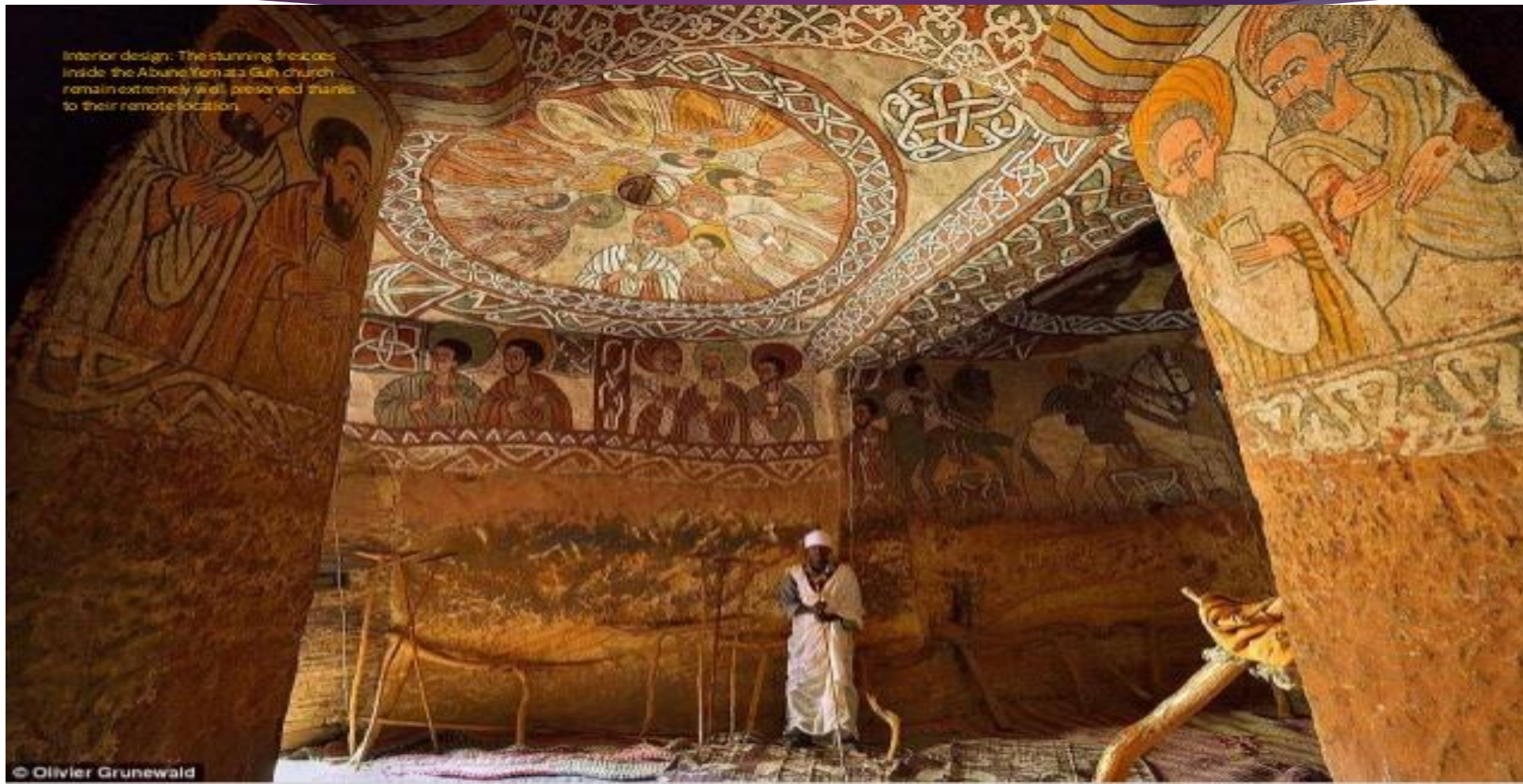
Ancient Christian churches



Ancient Christian churches



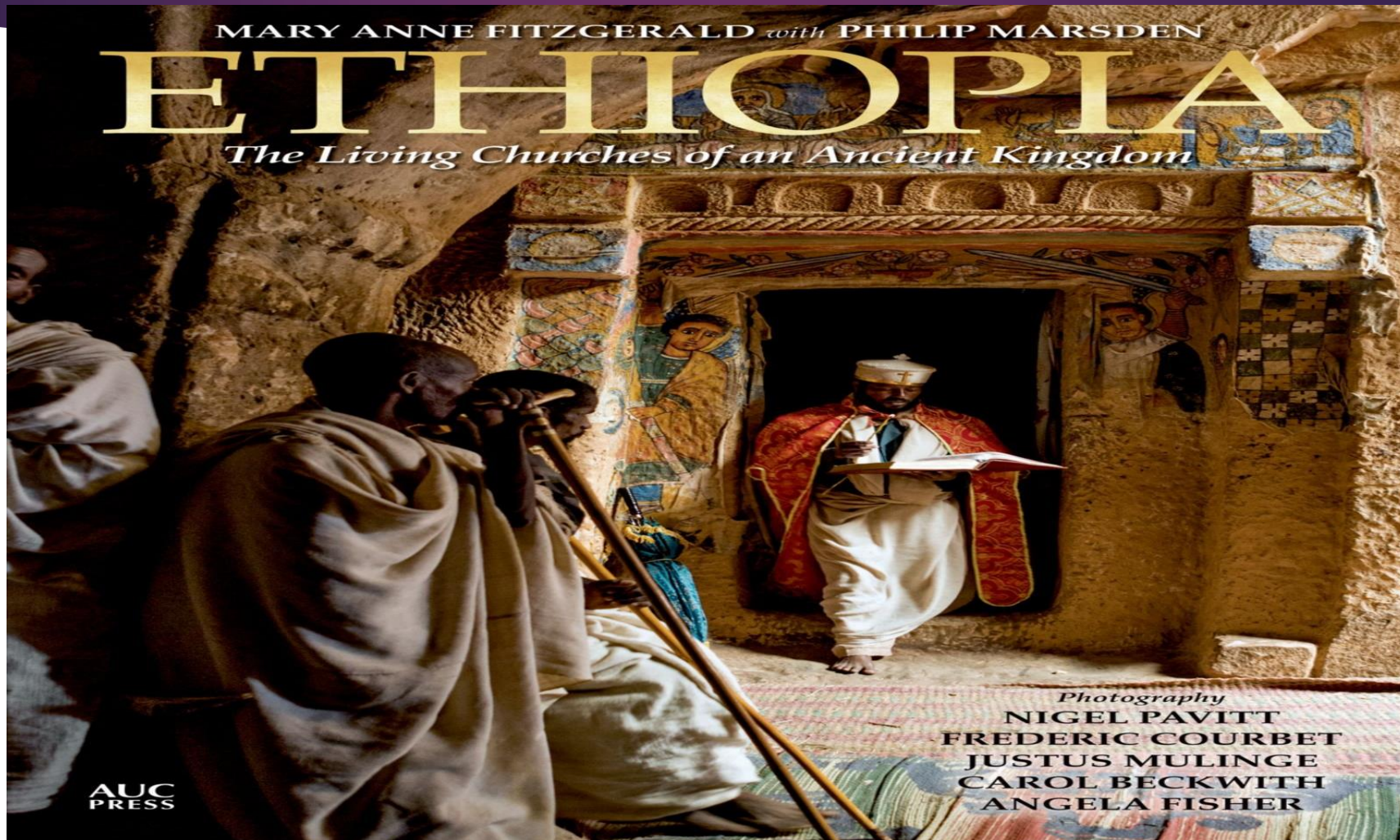
Ancient Christian Churches



The Mother and her Child



Ancient Christian Churches



Ethiopian Coptic Priests



Early Christianity in Africa-Magreb-Northwest Africa

- ▶ Roman Africa-Christianity origins of the faith appears before 180 AD
- ▶ Carthage became major center of Christianity
- ▶ Famous for martyrdom of 12 Christians who refused to compromised their faith-executed in Carthage July 15th, 180AD
- ▶ Death of Tertullian 220 AD 79 bishoprics
- ▶ Time of Cyprian 250 AD 150 bishoprics and rising
- ▶ Major center of Christianity- vigorous spiritual and intellectual life, well organized and disciplined
- ▶ Latin-official language of correspondence, liturgy and worship

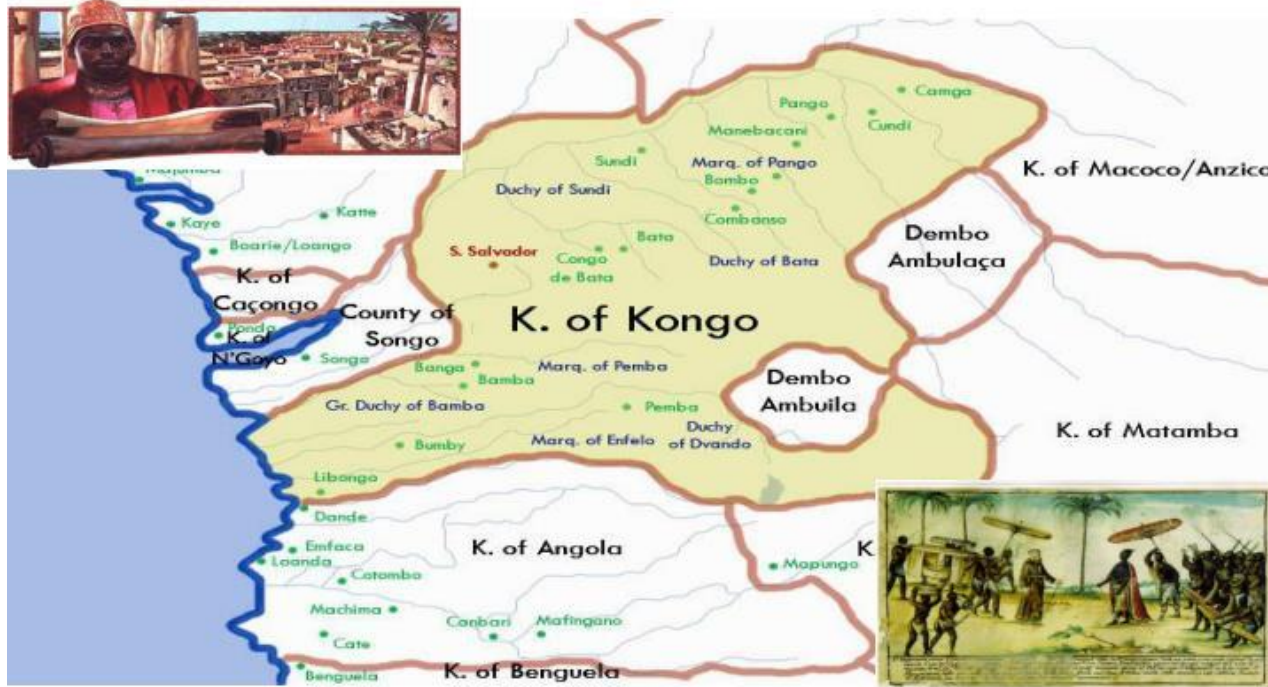


Christianity in Africa-Nubia/Sudan



- ▶ Christianity entered in the 6th. Century during reign of Justinian 527-569 AD
- ▶ Longinus from Alexandria 508 AD
- ▶ Monophysite from Egypt 543 AD
- ▶ Christianity took strong roots and Flourished
- ▶ Became a major Christian kingdom

Christianity in Western Africa



Christianity Reappears in Africa

Congo Free State and Christianity

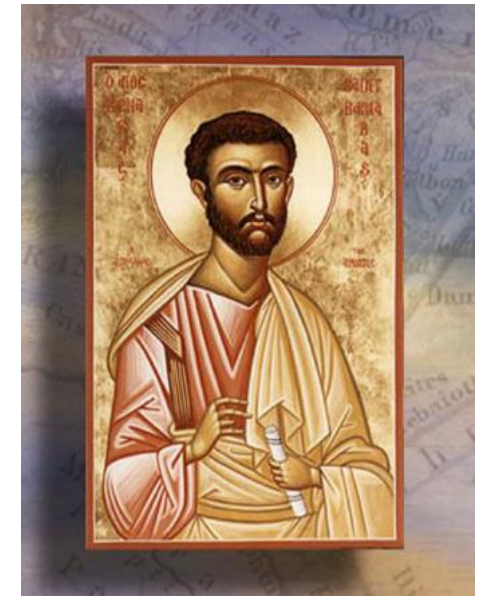
- The reappearance of Christianity on the continent in the XVI. century (Spanish, Portuguese, Dutch, British, etc.)
- Portuguese – trade, missionary work – Cape Verde, Gulf of Guinea, Angola, Mozambique, Kenya
- Catholic missions vs. Muslim missionary work – gaining the trust of the local elite
- Angola: 1491 – Nzinga a Nkuwu converts to Christianity, his son, Alfonso I of Kongo (1506-1543) – Christian state, Christian community with significant number – tight commercial and cultural relations with Portugal
- The strengthening of slave-trade – deterioration of Angolan-Portuguese relations – Antonian movement of Beatrice Kimpa Vita

Great African Church Fathers

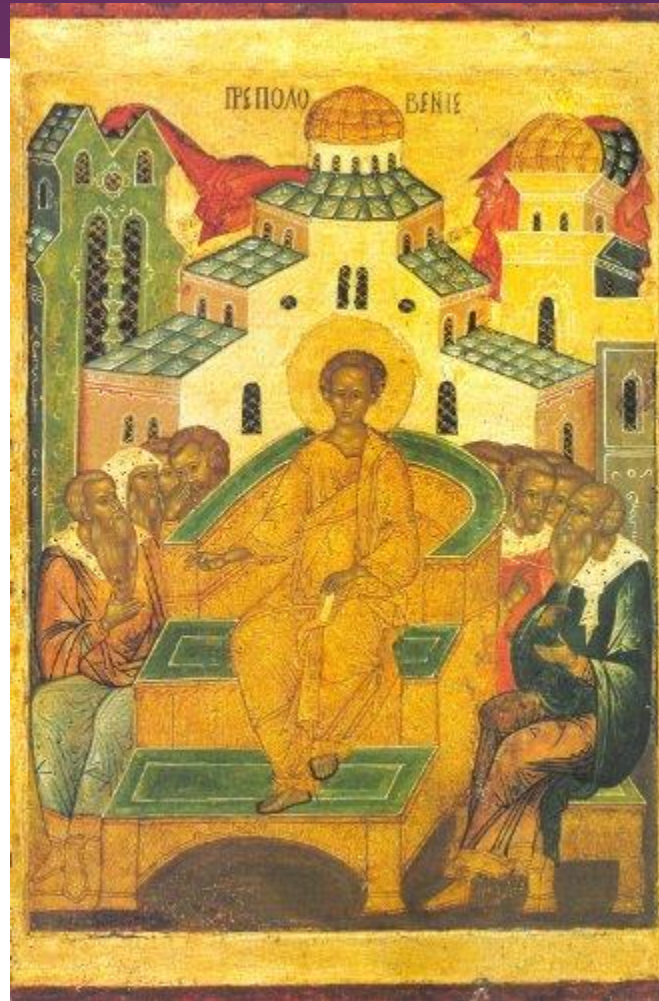
- ▶ Augustine of Hippo
- ▶ Tertullian of Carthage
- ▶ Cyprian of Carthage
- ▶ Origen of Alexandria
- ▶ Athanasius of Alexandria
- ▶ Clement of Alexandria
- ▶ St Antony of Egypt
- ▶ Pachomius of Egypt
- ▶ Lactantius of North Africa
- ▶ Cyril of Alexandria
- ▶ Barnabas of Alexandria

The Apostolic Fathers

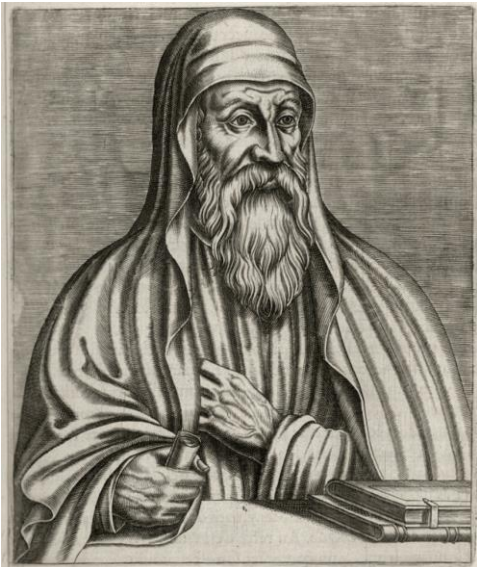
Name	Dates	Places of Ministry	Writings	Notable Facts
Barnabas of Alexandria	Late 1 st to early 2 nd century	Alexandria	Epistle of Barnabas	Was probably an Alexandrian Jew. Was familiar with allegorical methods of Philo.



Clement of Alexandria-160-225 AD

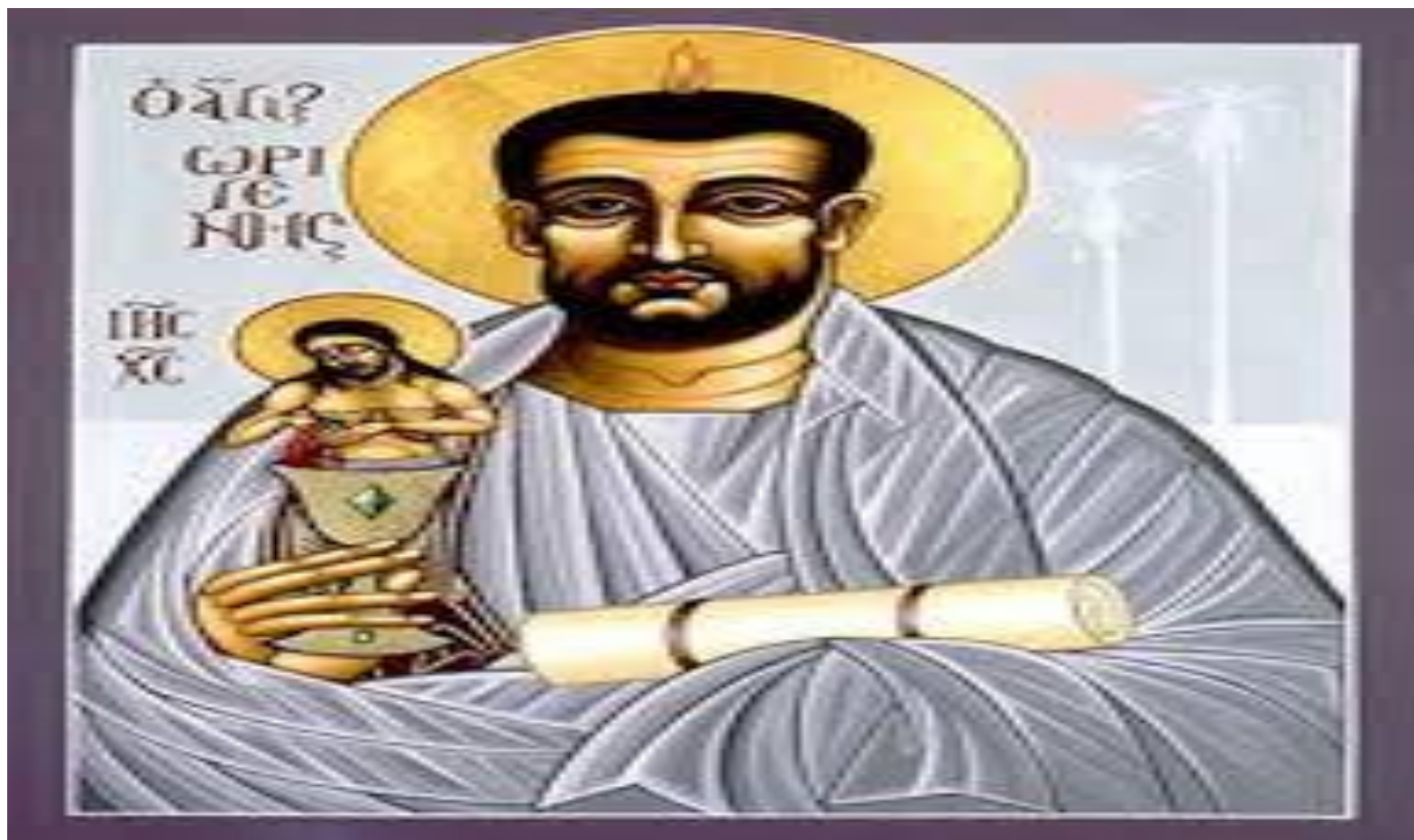


The Third-Century Apologists



Name	Dates	Places of Ministry	Representative Writings (*= Lost)	Notable Facts
Origen	c.185- c.254	Alexandria Caesarea	Hexapla Against Celsus De Principiis	His father Leonidas was martyred in 202. studied under Clement. Succeeded Clement as catechist in 203. was a notable advocate of allegorical interpretation of Scripture. Was extremely ascetic. Was exiled by his enemies in church. Died after torture at hands of Romans

Origin of Alexandria

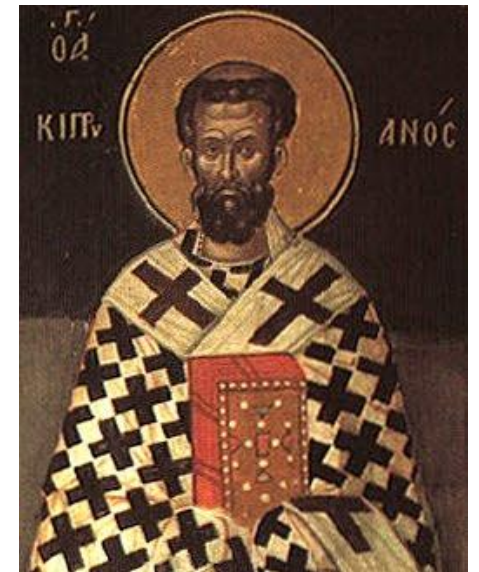


Athanasius of Alexandria 296-373

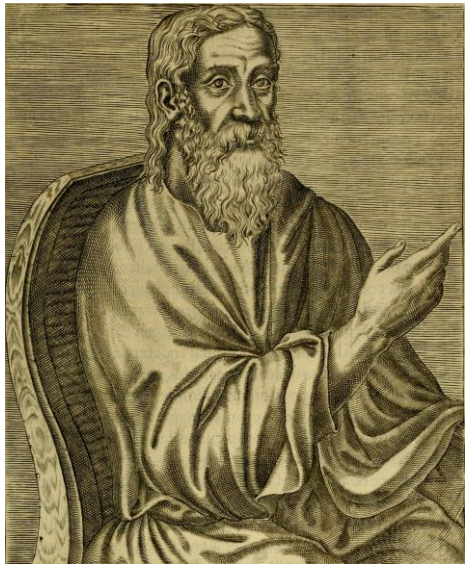


The Third-Century Apologists

Name	Dates	Places of Ministry	Representative Writings (*= Lost)	Notable Facts
Cyprian	c.200-258	Carthage	Unity of the Church De Lapsis	Was trained in rhetoric. Was converted in 245. was bishop of Carthage from 247. was influenced by Tertullian. Emphasized authority of episcopate. Took strict stand against those who faltered under persecution. Was martyred under Valerian.



The Third-Century Apologists



Name	Dates	Places of Ministry	Representative Writings (*= Lost)	Notable Facts
Clement	c.150- c.215	Alexandria Antioch Jerusalem	Exhortation to the Greeks The Pedagogue Stromata	Was trained in philosophy. Was converted as an adult. Emphasized Logos. Approached scripture allegorically. Wrote oldest extant Christian hymn, "Shepherd of Tender Youth."

Contributions of North African Church

- ▶ THE PLACE AND CONTRIBUTION OF THE EARLY NORTH-AFRICAN CHURCH IN THE HISTORY OF
- ▶ CHRISTIANITY- The Church in North Africa occupied a central place in the history of the Christian Church as such owing to the immense contributions it had made to the development of the faith. Included among these are
- ▶ the following:
 - ▶ 1 The composition of hymns and regulations for church worship and organization of this region was readily adopted elsewhere.
 - ▶ 2 Great leaders, teachers, bishops, apologists and Church Fathers came from North Africa including Tertullian, Cyprian, Augustine, Origin, Clement, and others – all of whom had an influence on the subsequent developments in the Church.

Contributions continued

- ▶ The early Church in North Africa also featured greatly in
- ▶ Christian education and both eastern (Alexandria) and western traditions subsequently played a determinative role in the development of both Eastern and Western Christian spirituality and theology
- ▶ Fundamental Belief structure, Exegetical methodology
- ▶ Monasticism, Conciliar Pattern, Christian Leadership, Rhetorical and Dialectical Skills