

Church History



Church History

- *Introduction to Church History*
- *The Ancient Church* AD 1st-3rd centuries
- *The Rise of Christendom* AD 4th-5th centuries
- *The Early Middle Ages* AD 6th-10th centuries
- *The Age of Crusades* AD 11th-13th centuries
- *The Renaissance* AD 14th-15th centuries
- *Conquest and Reformation* AD 16th century
- *The Age of Enlightenment* AD 17th-18th centuries
- *The Age of Revolution* AD 19th century
- *The Modern Age* AD 20th century
- *The Postmodern Age* AD 21st century



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- *The Ancient Church* AD 1st-3rd centuries
- *The Rise of Christendom* AD 4th-5th centuries
- *The Early Middle Ages* AD 6th-10th centuries
 - *The “Dark Ages” Overview*
 - *Flagrant Abuses of Authority: Zeno, Theodoric, and Clovis*
 - *Auctoritas Sacrata Pontificum: Gelasius*
 - *The Rise of the Monk: Benedict, Brendan, and Dennis*
 - *The Politics of Death: Justinian and Columba*
 - *Kingdoms of God: The Politics of God's Kingdoms*



The Early Middle Ages

- Monotheism explodes across the map
 - 610 Muhammad began preaching Islam
 - And within a century, Islam had spread (often quite violently) across the Middle East and into Europe
 - Within just a few decades, three of the five major centers for Christianity—Jerusalem, Antioch, and Alexandria—had fallen under totalitarian Islamic control, and the Christians there were being slaughtered



The Early Middle Ages

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 - 610 Muhammad began preaching Islam
 - 634 Alopen shared the Gospel in China
 - A Persian Nestorian escaping persecution, Alopen followed the Silk Road and found that Emperor Taizong of the Tang Dynasty was very open to all religions—including Christianity
 - By 638, Taizong issued an official proclamation protecting Christianity, and he himself had the first church built in the capital city of Xian



The Early Middle Ages

- **Monotheism explodes across the map**
 - 610 Muhammad began preaching Islam
 - 634 Alopen shared the Gospel in China
 - Contextual note: this is one year after the Muslims under Umar slaughtered 80,000 Christians in Jerusalem in 637
 - For that matter, it was around this time that the Vikings suddenly realized that monasteries were basically just undefended castles, and started raiding the coastal monasteries of Scotland



The Early Middle Ages

- **Monotheism explodes across the map**

610 Muhammad began preaching Islam

634 Alopen shared the Gospel in China

664 **Council of Whitby met in Britain**

- NOTE: to show the passage of time (and because the old picture is starting to freak Dawna out), I'll start depicting Church Councils this way—

- (This picture also has the merit of showing that the Councils are beginning to be less of a discussion among peers and more an expression of administrative oversight by the ruling elite)



The Early Middle Ages

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610

Muhammad began preaching Islam

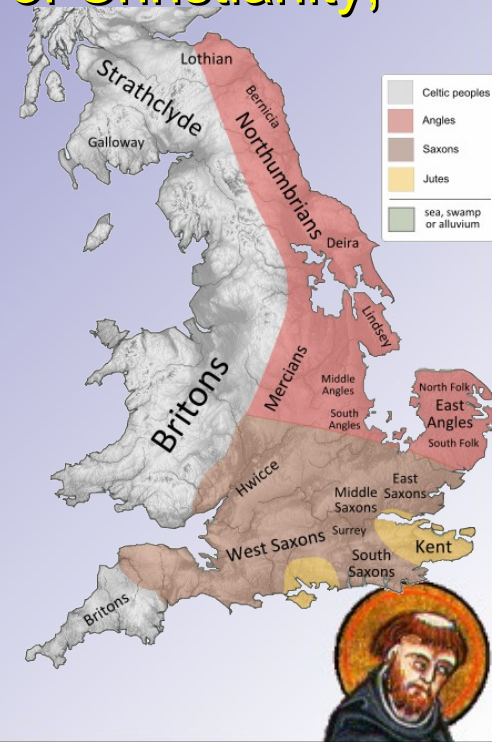
634

Alopen shared the Gospel in China

664

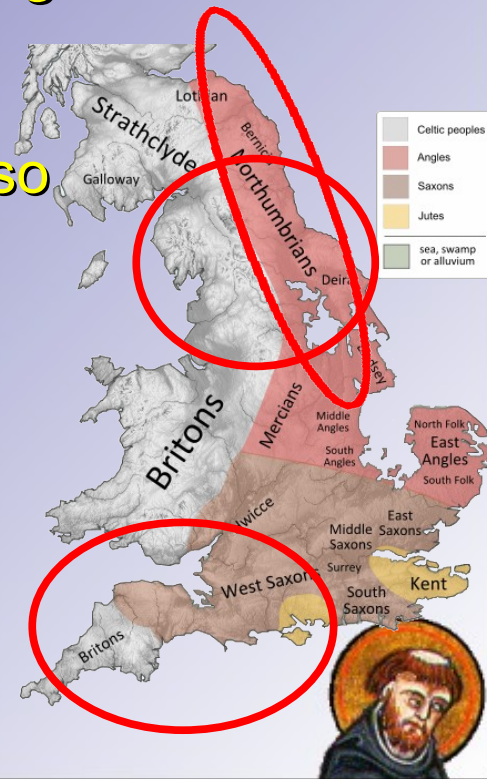
Council of Whitby met in Britain

- If you'll remember, Pope Gregory (the Great) sent a missionary named Augustine to Britain, specifically to convert the pagans (and Celtic Christians) to *Roman Catholicism*
 - Various kings and queens in England had been converted to one or the other form of Christianity, and that had caused chafing



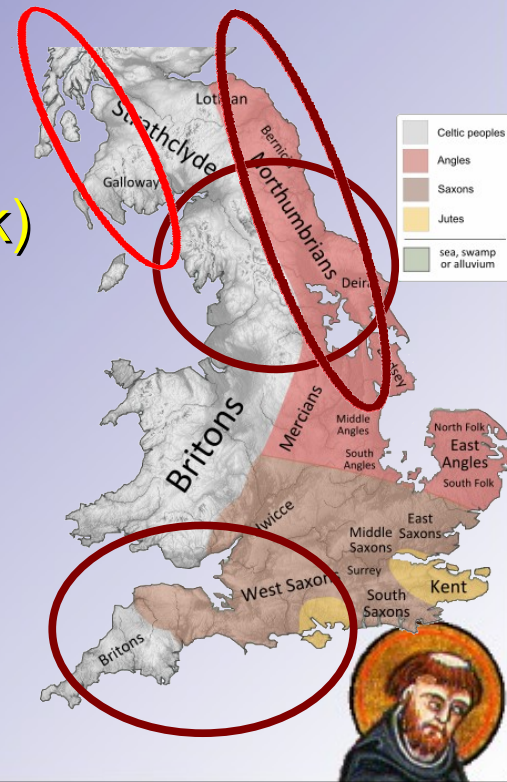
The Early Middle Ages

- Funky little teaching moment—
 - King Edwin of Northumbria was converted to Christianity in 627
 - He decided that he'd be open to the Christian God if He brought about a victory against Wessex... which God apparently did
 - Bishop Paulinus of York explained the Gospel to Him, and he was baptised on Easter Sunday—the *Roman Catholic* Easter Sunday—along with his top men
 - Bishop Paulinus had been sent to Britain by Pope Gregory in 601 as part of his “Romanization” plan, and so Edwin encouraged Roman Catholic missionary efforts



The Early Middle Ages

- Funky little teaching moment—
 - King Edwin of Northumbria was converted to Christianity in 627
 - When Edwin died, he was succeeded by his nephew, King Oswald
 - Oswald had lived among the *Dál Riata* (Columba's kinsmen) in Scotland as a youth
 - There, he'd been converted by Bishop Ségéne of Iona—another kinsman of Columba
 - Thus, Oswald encouraged Celtic Christian missionary efforts... which really torqued off the Roman Catholic missionaries supported by Edwin (as well as the Bishop of York)



The Early Middle Ages

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Alopen converted the Goths in China

Council of Whitby

- If you'll remember, Pope Gregory (the Great) sent a mission named Augustine to Britain, specifically to convert the Britons (and Celtic Christians) to Roman Catholicism
- So they called a Council in Whitby to establish, once and for all, which kind of Christianity was to be practiced in Northumbria in particular—and in Britain in general

- Technically, they debated two things:

1) Tonsure

- The Roman Catholics and the Celtic Church cut their monks' hair in two different styles
- Again, that may not seem like a big deal to you but it wasn't *catholic* (i.e.; uniform), and it wasn't *Catholic* (i.e.; like Rome would do it)



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- 1) Tonsure
- 2) Easter

- The Celts cited John 19:14 and dated Easter on the Jewish 14th day of *Nisan*
- Rome held that Easter is on the first Sunday after the Spring equinox, based on a special ecclesiastical lunar calendar—but *never* to fall on Nisan 14



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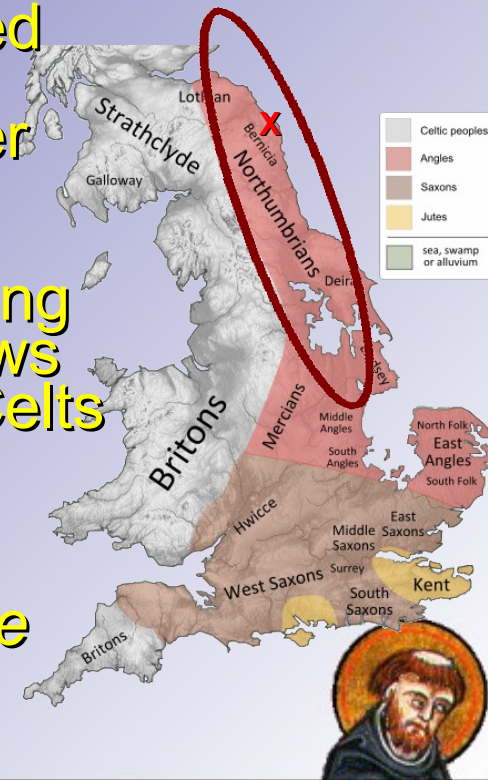
634 Alopen shared the Gospel in China

664 Council of Whitby met in Britain

- Celtic Bishop Colmán of Northumbria argued that the Celtic practices for these were Biblical, and that Saint Columba himself had practiced them this way, following the Apostle John

- Soon-to-be-the-new Bishop of Northumbria Roman Catholic cleric Wilfrið argued

- 1) the Catholic way is the way of *Rome*, where Peter and Paul were martyred and are now enshrined
- 2) everyone else (not including the Eastern Church) follows Rome's practice, so the Celts are not being "catholic"
- 3) John was trying to reach Jews, but the medieval Church is trying to *exclude* Jews, so John's methods are irrelevant to us today



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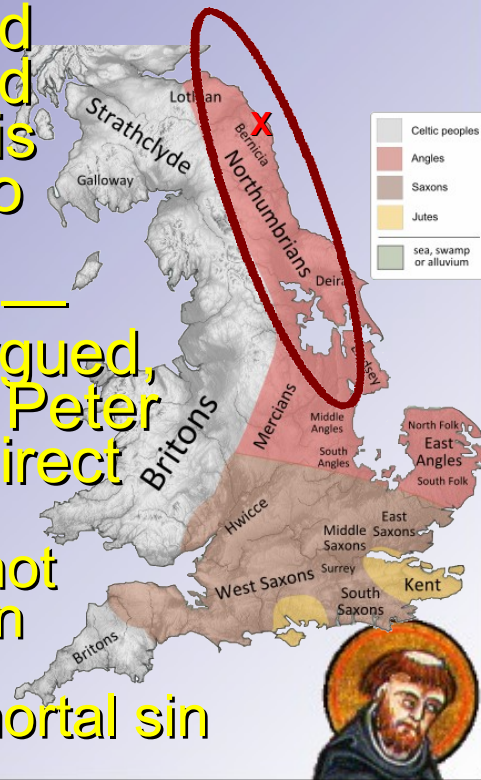
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- 4) Columba was right-hearted but ultimately ignorant—his example is therefore *not* to be followed
- 5) and finally, the trump card—*no one* has authority over Peter (and the Pope is Peter's direct successor)

- Thus, anyone who does not hold to Rome's position on things like Easter or tonsure is committing a mortal sin



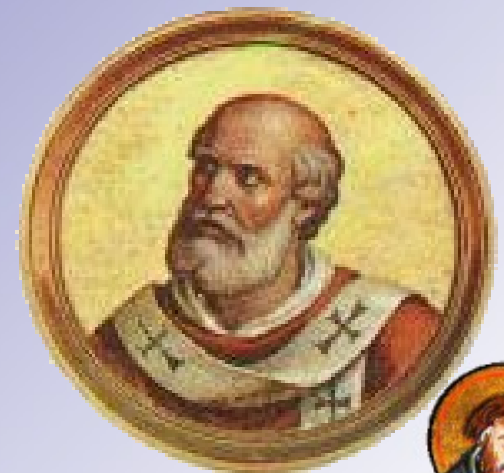
The Early Middle Ages

- Funky little teaching moment—
 - By the way, Wilfrid was so pro-Rome that he ended up being *against* Rome
 - He eventually had become so anti-Celt that even the *Roman Catholic* bishops in Britain removed him from his post
 - Ultimately, when he continued to press the issue and demanded his bishopric back, the devoutly Roman Catholic Archbishop Berhtwald of Canterbury excommunicated him



The Early Middle Ages

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 - By the way, Wilfrið was so pro-Rome that he ended up being *against* Rome
 - He eventually had become so anti-Celt that even the *Roman Catholic* bishops in Britain removed him from his post
 - Wilfrið travelled to Rome in 704 to appeal to the new Pope, John VI
 - John was originally from Ephesus, and stocked his council with Eastern bishops
 - So when Wilfrið made his impassioned appeal in Latin, he was *mortified* to hear the Pope lean over to talk with his advisors in Greek rather than Latin, later referring to the Pope as a “foreign barbarian” sitting on Peter’s throne in Rome
 - NOTE: Peter himself spoke Greek, not Latin
 - Nonetheless, the Pope reinstalled Wilfrið to his bishopric



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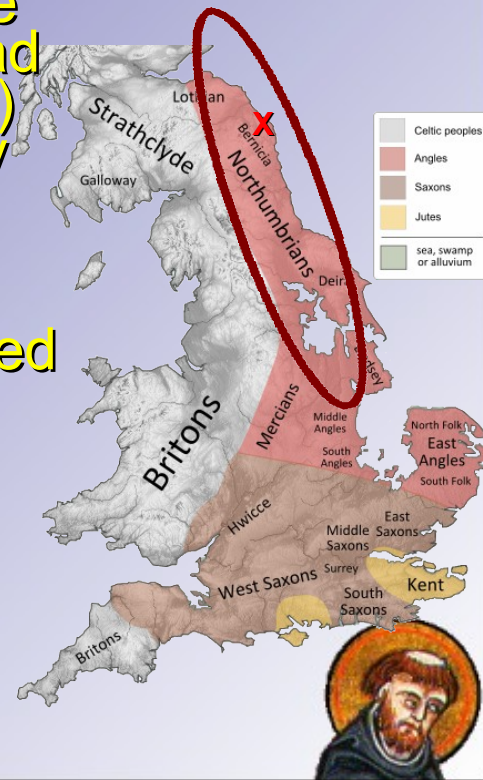
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664 Council of Whitby met in Britain

- As a result of the Council of Whitby, all of the bishops of Britain were forced to adhere to the Roman Catholic dating of Easter and the Roman Catholic tonsure

- In addition, all church services were now to be held in Latin instead of in the native tongues of the local peoples (as had been the case in the Celtic Church) and the Celtic Church was officially repressed

- In fact, until recently, Scottish divinity schools, when teaching Church History, regularly skipped from 664 to 1560 (i.e.; the establishment of the Church of Scotland)...



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- The Third Council of Constantinople condemned monophysitism (again)

649 The Lateran Council was convened by Pope Martin I and a monk named Maximus to condemn the monophysites

- In fact, they felt so strongly about this that they supported a violent coup against the monophysite-neutral Emperor Constans II, in the hopes of getting a more *Roman*-friendly emperor as his successor

- NOTE: the coup never happened



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662 **A council in Constantinople officially excommunicated and condemned Martin and Maximus, driving a wedge between Rome and Constantinople**

- But when Constans II's son, Constantine IV became emperor, he tried to rebuild a relationship with Rome

- So he pushed the new Pope, Agatho, to hold a new Council to condemn the monophysites (again)

- Ironically, this condemnation thus condemned the former Pope, Honorius I, and four previous Patriarchs of Constantinople



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- **The Muslims fought the Battle of Karbala**

- At its core, the battle was a political fight between Hussein ibn Ali (the grandson of Muhammad) and 'Yazīd ibn Mu'āwiya (the caliph over the "kingdom" of Islam) to decide who should govern the Islamic world

- Battle lines were drawn between those who thought it should be a line of elected caliphs and those who thought it should be the *family* line of Muhammad



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- Long story short, Hussein lost the battle and was beheaded by 'Yazīd, seen by the victors as the defender of the traditions of Islam

- According to their accounts, he gave Hussein a quick, clean death, publicly honoring him as a great man of god

- The victors came to refer to themselves as 'Ahlu-s-Sunnati wa-l-Jamā'ah (essentially, "the people of the traditions and united community of Islam"), or "Sunni" for short

- NOTE¹: roughly 90% of all Muslims today are Sunnis, who follow the caliphate, or succession of leaders

- NOTE²: that last bit about the "united community" is the Muslim way of saying, "Catholic"



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- The losers saw 'Yazīd as the chief opponent of the holy line of Muhammad itself

- According to *their* accounts, he beheaded Hussein slowly with a dull knife, then ran his daughters off barefoot and un-veiled

- The losers came to refer to themselves as *Shī'atul 'Alī* ("the followers of [the house of] Ali," the father of Hussein), or "*Shī'ah*" or "*Shī'ites*" for short

- NOTE¹: modern Shī'ites follow *imams* ("leaders") who rule through theocracy

- NOTE²: roughly 99.999% of all Muslim extremists today are Shī'ites



The Early Middle Ages

- Funky little teaching moment—
 - In addition to the Sunnis and the Shī'ites, there is a *third* branch of Islam known as the Sūfīs
 - This name could come from the Arabic word, *ṣafā* (صفا), meaning “purity,” or from the Greek word, *sofia* (σοφία), meaning “wisdom”
 - Either way makes sense, because the Sūfīs focus on the gaining of wisdom through transcending the things of this world and purifying themselves through ecstatic rituals that “pull them out of themselves,” so to speak
 - This plays out both in deep-thinking mystics who preach a very otherworldly philosophy *and* in what are commonly known as the “whirling dervishes,” whose wild, spinning dance literally makes them so dizzy that they can't think strait (i.e.; the dancing equivalent to peyote)



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- 689 **The Dowager Empress outlawed Jǐng Jiào**
 - Since Alopen's first ministry back in 634, the Church in China had continued to grow, until it had become known as *Jǐng Jiào*—the “luminous religion”
 - Churches were being planted all over the place, and a strong Christian publishing industry was beginning



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689 The Dowager Empress outlawed Jǐng Jiào

- But Wu Tse-tien—the Dowager Empress, who rose to power at the end of the 7th century—was a staunch Buddhist

- She saw the growth of Christianity--Jǐng Jiào—as a threat to Buddhism, and so she began systematically persecuting the Church and marginalizing them in Chinese society

- In a little over a century, the Church would be officially outlawed in China by Emperor Wuzong, who slaughtered thousands and destroyed all churches and monasteries

- And about century after that, a very lonely monk wrote to the Eastern Patriarch,

“Christianity is extinct in China; the native Christians have perished in one way or another; the church has been destroyed and there is only one Christian left in the land...”

