

eleventh century. There were mass migrations of Teutonic, Viking, Slav, and Mongol peoples into and within Europe between 375 and 1066.

A. The Spread of the Barbarians

Barbarian Goths first appeared on the Danube frontier of the empire in the latter part of the fourth century; and, pressed by Mongol tribes behind them, they asked permission of the Roman authorities to move into the empire. The battle of Adrianople between them and the Romans in 378 resulted in the death of the emperor Valens and the influx of the Arian Visigoths (West Goths) into the eastern section of the empire. Many crossed the Danube after that battle and started their migrations within the empire. After sacking Rome in 410, they finally founded a kingdom about 426 in Spain. They were followed by the Arian Vandals from east of the Rhine, who finally settled in North Africa. The Arian Ostrogoths, coming later, took over the leadership of the bankrupt Roman Empire under Theodoric. The Arian Lombards and Burgundians and pagan Franks crossed the Rhine and settled during the fifth century in the area of what is now modern France, and Anglo-Saxons settled in England. In the same century the church in the West had also to face the temporary, yet terrible, threat created by the invasion of Europe by the Mongol Huns under the leadership of Attila. The Huns were finally driven back by the victory at Chalons in 451. Just as the church seemed to be winning many of the Teutonic peoples to Christianity, new threats from Muslims and the Arian Lombards became a reality in the sixth century.

The greatness of the civilization that western Europe was to develop was not so much due to the irruption of fresh, vigorous barbarians into the empire as it was to the mass conversions of these barbarians of northwest Europe to Christianity.

B. The Evangelization of the Barbarians

Armenia was won for the gospel by Gregory the Illuminator, when, in about 301, King Tiridates was converted and baptized. The Bible was translated into the Armenian language by 433. Some claim that several million people were won. Armenia was the first state to become officially Christian, and in spite of persecution through the centuries, the Armenians have held tenaciously to the Christian faith.

Frumentius (ca. 300–ca. 380), a Greek of Tyre, came to Ethiopia as a slave but was later freed. He won the Ethiopians to Coptic Christianity. Athanasius of Alexandria made him head of the Ethiopian church under the aegis of Alexandria, a subordination that endured through the centuries until the Ethiopian church became independent in 1957.

The British Isles were also won for Christianity in this period. We do not have much information about the introduction of Christianity to Celtic Britain, but it is more than likely that it was planted there by Roman settlers and merchants. We do know that three Celtic bishops represented the Celtic church at the Council of Arles in 314. Pelagius, Augustine's opponent, also came from the Celtic church and began to teach the heresy known by his name on the continent about 410. This primitive Celtic church in Britain did not recognize either the jurisdiction or the primacy of the Roman bishop. It also followed the practice of the Eastern church in determining the date of Easter. There were other differences of a

minor character. This Celtic church was left defenseless when the Roman armies were withdrawn from Britain at the beginning of the fifth century to meet the threat of the barbarians on the eastern frontier of the empire. The Celtic peoples were exterminated or driven into the western and northern hills by the pagan Angles, Saxons, and Jutes.

Missionary work among the Goths began before the Visigoths poured over the Danube into the Roman Empire. Ulfilas⁴ (ca. 311–ca. 381), an Arian Christian, felt the call to missionary work among these people. Consecrated bishop of the Gothic Christians, he went to live among them. His work was so successful that when the Goths came into the Roman Empire, many of them came as Christians. As the first outstanding missionary translator, he reduced the language of the Goths to writing, after creating an alphabet, and gave them the Scriptures in their own tongue. Because the Goths were so warlike, he felt justified in not translating the books of Kings into their language. The Goths were thus won to the Arian form of Christianity that Ulfilas professed. This fact was later to give the church in the West the difficult task not only of converting many tribes from paganism, but also of converting the Visigoths of Spain and the Lombards from Arianism to orthodox Christianity.

The pagan Teutonic invaders from across the Rhine presented a more immediate and pressing problem for the Western church. Martin of Tours⁵ (ca. 355–ca. 400), now the patron saint of France, felt called to preach to the Burgundians who had settled in southern Gaul. Adopting rather rough and ready pioneering tactics in carrying the gospel to these people, he organized his soldier monks into bands and led them in the destruction of the groves where the people worshiped their pagan gods. His work did not have the impact on subsequent history that the work of Augustine had, because the Burgundians were brought under the sway of their Frankish cousins who also settled in Gaul.

Gregory of Tours (ca. 538–ca. 594) in his interesting *History of the Franks* described the settlement, history, and conversion of the Franks. Near the end of the fifth century, Clovis (ca. 466–511), king of the Franks, married Clotilda, a Christian princess of Burgundy. Clotilda's influence, combined with what Clovis believed was divine aid in battle, led to his conversion in 496.⁶ When he became a Christian, the mass of his people also accepted Christianity.

Whether all conversions were genuine or not, the formal acceptance of Christianity by Clovis was to have far-reaching effects on the history of the church. All the Franks who dominated Gaul, the area of modern France, were now within the Christian church. Gaul became a base from which missionaries could go into Arian Spain to win the Arian Goths who had settled there back to Christianity of the orthodox persuasion. Most important of all, the Frankish monarchy became the ardent supporter of the papacy during the early Middle Ages. Frankish kings crossed the Alps many times to save the Roman bishop from his enemies in Italy.

Patrick (ca. 389–461), who later became the patron saint of Ireland, was taken from Britain to Ireland by pirates at the age of sixteen. He lived there, tending cattle, for six years. Upon his return to his homeland, he felt called to labor among the people of Ireland as a missionary. From 432 to 461 he worked among the Celts of Ireland and, despite the efforts of the priests of the Druid religion,

managed to make the island a strong center of Celtic Christianity. He organized the Christians around monasteries in the tribal areas. During the time of the Dark Ages in Europe, Ireland was a center of culture from which monks as missionaries and scholars were sent to work on the continent. It was from Ireland that Columba set forth to win the Scots to Christianity.

Columba (521–97) was the apostle of Scotland as Patrick had been the apostle of Ireland. In 563, on the island of Iona, he founded a monastery that became a center for the evangelization of Scotland. It was from here that Aidan in 635 set out to carry the gospel to the Anglo-Saxon invaders of Northumbria. The Celtic church in Ireland and Scotland was above all a missionary church.

At the end of the period under discussion, Celtic Christianity had been victorious in Scotland and Ireland. It had been all but exterminated in England. The Celtic Christians and the Roman Christians were to become rivals for the allegiance of the Anglo-Saxons, whom both groups helped to win to Christianity.

By 590 the church had not only been freed from persecution by the Roman state but had also become closely linked with that state. It had also done its part in converting the Teutonic invaders of the empire to Christianity and in passing on to them the elements of Greco-Roman culture. But in the process, masses of pagans had been won to the Christian religion too quickly for the church to train them and to guide them through a period of probation. Many of them brought old patterns of life and customs with them into the church. Saint worship was substituted for the old hero worship. Many ritualistic practices that savored of paganism found an open door into the church. The church, in attempting to meet the need of the barbarians, was itself partially paganized.

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