

18. North Africa in the times of the Early Church to 600 A.D.

ALEXANDRIA;

Alexandria was in the first centuries A.D. the most important city in the world, the undisputed intellectual and commercial center of the Greco-Roman world. It boasted a great university, an immense library, a museum, scientific study, a medical school, and was known as a center of philosophy. It was home to all kinds of religious groups including pagan temples and Jewish synagogues as well as Christian churches but was dedicated to its patron god Serapis. It had many wealthy citizens.

Alexander had seized Egypt from the Persians and established the city to which he gave his own name, Alexandria, on the site of a small fishing village called Rhacotis. It had been further built up under Ptolemy I Soter. In 323 A.D., he moved his capitol from Memphis to Alexandria. Alexandria, Egypt rapidly became one of the most outstanding centers of Christianity in the world so that Eusebius alternately lists the bishops of the church at Alexandria and the bishops of the church at Rome. His list for Alexandria begins with the Apostle Mark in 62 A.D. In 100 A.D., Alexandria was the world's third largest city with a population of 400,000, with Rome being the largest with a population of 1,100,000. Alexandria was a target for persecution, as were all the centers of Christianity in North Africa. In about 248 A.D. there was an anti-Christian program throughout the city. Many great secular figures lived in Alexandria, including Ptolemy, the great Egyptian astronomer --mathematician (ca 100-150 A.D.)

THE ALEXANDRIAN BIBLE SCHOOL

Pantaenus:

One of the outstanding developments at Alexandria was its missionary training center, founded in 180 A.D. by Pantaenus as a Catechetical school to instruct for Christian baptism and candidates who were of higher intellectual ability than ordinary converts, these usually being taught by catechists. The aim of the school was to instruct educated converts about Christianity in terms and concepts familiar to them. Pantaenus had also been an author, making a careful analysis of the way prophetic books were written and publishing these studies, although they are no longer extant. Ten years later Pantaenus himself went to India as a missionary from Africa, and later, others trained at the school went to northwest and east Africa, Arabia, India and Ceylon.

Clement

Clement succeeded Pantaenus as head of the school and directed it for twelve years until in 202 A.D. he was forced to flee in the persecution under Severus. He talked of a conversion experience by which his salvation was assured, a conversion which he saw as a personal choice between Christianity and pagan Greek worship. Clement wrote several books, some of which were missionary in character.

His work *Protrepticus* was some of the first important missionary documents. In it he attacked pagan religion and urged pagans to convert to Christianity. Apologetic in nature, it was a scathing denunciation of mystery cults, etc. Clement was the first well known Christian apologist. His writings show him as very practical and evangelistic. Although he dreamed of many literary projects and collected voluminous notes, he was always too busy to bring his projected dreams to fruition. Clement faced a critical situation in the Alexandrian Bible School because of the gnostics, who had brought theology into general disrepute and had caused many to fear contamination of the Christian faith by pagan philosophy. Yet it was hard at Alexandria to distrust philosophy when it was so dominant in the surrounding culture. He saw the Christian as the true gnostic, the one who had the true hidden knowledge. Clement felt that the church's appeal to the intellectual classes depended on its relation to philosophy, which was regarded almost universally as established truth at that time. Without an appeal to philosophy, Clement felt that the church would always be restricted to the uneducated.

His *STROMATIS* was written to show the importance of philosophy, thus he hoped removing the common prejudice against theology. Clement said that God gave the Greeks philosophy as a schoolmaster to bring them to Christ, even as He gave the Jews His laws for the same purpose. Christians of his day commonly said that Greek philosophy originated from the devil, (for instance Tertullien of Carthage said that philosophy was the parent of heresy) in contrast to others, while Tertullian wrote against heretics, Clement wrote in a positive vein for the educated in philosophy.

Thus, Clement began to appeal to and relate to pagan philosophy, and his successors carried this tendency farther and farther. Yet Clement himself criticized even his favorite philosophers (the Platonists) and denounced the philosophy of others in comparison with Biblical values. He often talked about "true" gnostics in opposition to "false" ones so prevalent then. Thus, although Clement had missionary interests himself, he introduced tendencies into the church that ultimately detracted from the missionary enterprise because he promoted the Greek opposition between the learned few and the ignorant multitude. This must have influenced missionary thought because the concern lay more with perfecting the few than with reaching the multitude.

Clement fell into a weakness of theology, too, that affected his student and follower Origen. He made so much of divine philanthropy that he could not accept the Biblical statement about God's justice and punishment. He believed that justice melted into mercy and that punishment must always be seen as remedial. This opened the door to many unbiblical teachings and practices.

Origen

Origen succeeded Clement at the school in 203 A.D., taking this responsibility when he was only 18 years of age. He had been a pupil of Clement while still a boy and had been reared in a Christian home. He was made head of the school when Clement fled the city under the persecution of Severus which began in 202 A.D..

Origen was by far the most prolific writer of early Christianity, writing over 6,000 books and articles. At one point in his life a break with Demetrius, bishop of Alexandria, led him to

Caesarea, where he kept a whole company of copyists busy with his literary projects. He accepted the 27 books of the New Testament as we now have them.

Origen figures so prominently in church history that one Roman Catholic author writing about his life found it necessary in his preface to explain why Origen is venerated neither as a doctor nor as a saint of the church. Although he was loyal to the church his whole life and devoted his brilliant mind to her service, Origen went too far in some of his speculations and teachings, and was therefore condemned by several church councils. Origen was somewhat of a paradox. It held the Scripture in such high esteem that he would quote it extensively, yet he indulged in speculations for which only minimal support could be found in the Scripture. The truth is that Origen in practice used the Scripture and church tradition as a starting point for human logic. He adhered to Christian doctrine officially, yet the conclusions of his many speculations frequently were not nearly as orthodox as his basic views. After Origen's death, controversy over his influential views engrossed the Eastern church almost to the exclusion of all else, thus weakening the church. He was against Greek paganism, partly because he could see that the philosophers had severely opposed the church, yet he fell prey to many pagan errors himself.

It was in Alexandria that the system of allegorical interpretation of the Scriptures became highly developed, Origen adding greatly to that development. In fact, literal systems of interpretation were held responsible there for most of the sins of the world.

Philip the Jew had first applied allegorical interpretation to the Old Testament Scriptures in Alexandria, chiefly to rid the Scriptures of what he considered offensive matters as well as to get Biblical authority for his own teachings. Clement had begun to lean toward allegorical interpretation with his system of typology. He used it to discover hidden truths and to appeal to the gnostics who liked to find hidden truth. Clement defended it in *Stromatis* and illustrated it in detail in his sixth book, but Origen went much, much farther than he. Origen employed allegory, especially in his Biblical commentaries, on a grand scale.

It was the Marcionite heresy and its misuse of the Old Testament that first forced Origen to study allegorical interpretation seriously. Marcion had put the religion of Jesus in opposition to the God of Israel, depicting the God of Israel as a mean, ruthless tyrant. He had published a verse by verse criticism of parts of the Old Testament, as well as *HERACLEON*, a study of the Gospel of John setting forth many heretical ideas. His writings embarrassed Christians and made a great stir amongst educated Christians. Origen, reacting to Marcion's views, said that many of the Old Testament laws were worse than the heathen's unless viewed allegorically.

Origen began by questioning things like whether it's really a sin to have two garments and whether it is literally necessary to gird oneself with a sword for the day of tribulation. Origen sought food for the soul, and was probably influenced by the gnostic tendencies of the day, in which many were teaching that special, hard-to-find knowledge gave assurance of salvation.

Origen himself called his interpretation "analogical," but his opponents at Antioch called it "allegorical." Yet his system demanded first of all a thorough knowledge of the literal meaning, and Origen himself frequently consulted Jewish leaders at Alexandria for help in defining the literal meaning of the Old Testament, as he felt his allegorical interpretation should be based on a

solid understanding. Origen himself was extremely serious in his Bible study, trying to go directly to original sources. He was certainly well ahead of his time in this. He also learned Hebrew to enhance his study, although he was not an expert in it. He studied from the Greek Septuagint and from several other Greek versions of the Scripture. From the Jews he borrowed the custom of comparing Scripture with Scripture. His method of teaching shows his extreme care in considering and teaching the Scripture. He would begin by slowly reading the passage, then continue with a grammatical commentary on the words. Then he would compare other available translations, explain the exact meanings of the words, the sense or the entire phrase, compare other similar texts from elsewhere in Scripture, and only then explain possible allegorical meanings. His teaching was so thorough that he wrote one whole commentary of the first six words of the Gospel of John. In fact, the first five books of his commentary on John explained less than ten verses in all!

The unfortunate truth is that what Origen taught carefully in moderation and in consideration of the basic literal interpretation, his pupils taught without moderation and in disregard of the literal interpretation. Thus the allegorical system of interpretation introduced many fanciful ideas and serious errors into the church.

Allegorism in particular was utilized in dealing with issues related to the destiny of the human soul. Like Clement, Origen could not accept the literal Biblical interpretation of this point and introduced teachings of universal salvation into the church in Alexandria, even teaching that Christ would eventually save demons as well as men and hoped for the eventual restoration of even Satan himself. He taught that the pains of hell were temporary and disciplinary in nature, paving the way for the gross error of the idea of purgatory. He also was weak on assurance of salvation, and the reality and influence of sin and evil, and he came to believe in the preexistence of human spirits before birth, in second chances after death, and even in the souls of the stars! He spiritualized the resurrection, saying that we would rise with a spiritual, not a physical body, and spiritualized the future life. His first commentaries were not as allegorical, but as time went on he began to employ the allegorical method without reserve.

Origen was an ascetic. His father had died a martyr for Christ, and the family property had been confiscated by the state. Young Origen slept on the bare ground, fasted, gave up wine, and wearing sandals, and even voluntarily castrated himself because he felt it would help him to serve Christ more wholeheartedly. He never, however, required these things for his students, although it is evident he hoped they would voluntarily emulate him.

In one of his writings, Origen recognized the need to take the Gospel further, to “the Ethiopians beyond the river” and more completely to “the more remote and barbarous tribes.” Yet on the whole he was far more concerned with Christian perfection than with evangelism. One must balance this, however, with the recognition that all his works are directed to appealing to the educated heathen of the Roman empire of his day and so in a sense are all evangelistic in purpose. In general, however, Origen was not all that interested in the evangelism of the masses. He, like most North African Christians of his time, was extremely ethno-centric in favor of the Greco-Roman culture. In addition, his and other theological errors of universalism certainly must have undermined missionary motivation that had previously been present. Influenced by forces of his day, he denied the creation of the world, accepting instead the idea of the eternity of

the universe. He lived in a day when it was hard to think of regions beyond because of imminent persecution, the surrounding predominant pagan culture of his own people, and the challenging of central Christian doctrines such as the Trinity and the deity of Christ by those close by. Origen did defend these key doctrines, and under his influence several heretics did renounce their heresies and return to the church.

Persecution broke out when Origen was 17 years old, one year before he took responsibility for the catechetical school. He began his work as a catechist knowing that every person he instructed was a candidate for imminent death. Several of his pupils were martyred. Origen visited them in prison and kissed them as they went to their deaths. The policy of the Roman governors in Egypt was to spare the leaders of the Christian community, therefore Origen himself escaped the fate of his students. Alexandria had many martyrs because the rulers had tried to develop there an official pagan worship, attempting to bring spiritual unity to a religiously diversified city. It was for this reason and purpose that Ptolemy Soter erected a temple to the pagan goddess Serapis. The persecution was a problem to Origen on many fronts. At one time a mob came against Origen, believing him responsible for the deaths of his converts. For several years his life was in danger every time he walked in the street. Pressed to develop a theology adequate to sustain the martyrs, Origen reached the point where he saw persecution as a blessing from God, enabling one to come closer to God through suffering. The persecution came very close – Origen's own father was martyred and all the family property seized.

When Origen's large family of brothers and sisters was left destitute, he was helped by a wealthy Christian lady who supported his studies so that he became a teacher of "grammar." This meant that he taught a group of pagan subjects, including the stories was semantics, which he later used in developing his commentaries. The Christian leaders of the day agreed to his work as a grammarian, but insisted that he must help his students see that the pagan morals taught in the stories were sometimes evil and the Greek gods were in reality demons.

Bishop Demetrius, who had just succeeded Julian, made Origen the head of the Catechetical school one year after his father's martyrdom. Origen then revived the classes Clement had conducted that had been disbanded. It was his desire to make the Catechetical school an outstanding school of Christian philosophy where students would learn not only by lecture, but by modeling after their teacher. This probably influenced and intensified Origen's ascetic tendencies.

About 215 to 219 Origen withdrew from Alexandria and visited Rome. He died as a martyr himself in Tyre in 254 during the sixth imperial Roman persecution under Maximinus after suffering imprisonment and severe tortures which undermined his health in the Decian persecution of 249.

It was likely the over-flaming zeal for martyrdom displayed by Origen that give rise to many abuses soon after his time, such as the veneration of bones and remains of martyrs, prayers to the dead, "sainting" people, praying at graves, the idea of patron saints, etc. We know that it was the followers of Origen who first began to ask the intercession of the martyrs. Martyrs were greatly extolled by Christian poets of the time as well, so that in a short time prayers to the dead became more common than prayers to God!

Athanasius

Another outstanding personage from Alexandria was Athanasius, 295-373 A.D. He is often called the “Father of Orthodoxy” because of his key role in the Council of Nicea in 325 A.D. and because of his vital role in defending the church against the Arian fallacy which taught Christ was less than God., a created being himself. Athanasius served as bishop of Alexandria from 328 to 373 A.D., which gave him authority over all of Egypt and Libya for 46 years, during which time he was exiled (a total of twenty years). He turned his exile time into profitable use, however, doing much of his writing during these times. Athanasius relied on the persuasion of the written word, and was masterful at arguing his case. His opponent Arius, however, composed catchy, easy to sing songs, and soon half the sailors of the Mediterranean were spreading his teachings (p. 35:11)

OTHERS

All

who followed were not equally orthodox. Dioscorus, patriarch of Alexandria, was excommunicated by the Council of Chalcedon in 451. Proterius, the Melkite or anti-Monophysite, replaced Dioscorus, but six years later he was assassinated by Copts. After Chalcedon, the Coptic church was divided, most becoming monophysites. By 567 the Patriarchate of Alexandria was definitely split into two rival camps – the Coptic (monophysite) and the Greek (Byzantine). The Byzantines severely persecuted the Copts. In 631 the Melkites (anti-monophysites) persecuted the Copts for ten years, killing hermits, ascetics, pastors, and thousands of lay Christians.

EGYPT

In addition to the well-known school at Alexandria, several other Christian schools flourished and were highly esteemed in Egypt during the early years of Christianity. In 340 A.D. there were 100 Coptic Orthodox bishoprics in Egypt. In 550 there were 168 Coptic bishops in the four ecclesiastical provinces of Egypt in Egypt and all of North Africa, however, was politically unstable. Civil War erupted in 238 and again in 260-262 A.D.

CHURCH GROWTH IN NORTH AFRICA

The first known Christians in Tunisia, then termed the Roman province of Africa) dates to about 80 A.D. Believers from Pentecost (consult map)

The first Christians (Latin speaking) in the Roman province of Mauretania (today Algeria) were noted about 100 A.D., in Morocco (then a part of Mauretania) sometime before 200, for four bishoprics were noted at that time. The Spanish cities Ceuta and Melilla were then part of the massive Roman Province of Mauretania. The first Christians were converted in those cities in about 400 A.D. from amongst the Roman population.

About 190 there was a widespread turning to Christ in vast numbers throughout North Africa. Around 200 the first Christians in the motherland Sahara were found.

What is now called Algeria was part of what was then called the Roman province of Mauretania. The first Christians, Latin speaking, were found there about 100 A.D.

Modern Morocco was also part of the Roman province of Mauretania. The first Christians were converted there about A.D. 150. There developed four bishoprics in the Tangier-Rabat-Fez area before A.D. 200.

Records show that by 230 A.D., there were about 900 Christian churches in North Africa. By 410 there were 768 bishoprics in Numidia and Mauretania and a total of 1,200 in North Africa (including Egypt, both Orthodox and Donatist).

Martyrs

Africa gave many martyrs to the Christian faith as well, beginning in 180 in Carthage. Among these were Vibia Perpetua, a young mother about 22 years of age. Christians from Rome had brought the Gospel to Carthage, the town in northern Africa where she lived. In fact the presence of the first known Christians in Tunisia, the area where Carthage was located, dates back to about 80 B.C.. Perpetua died with the teacher who had brought her the Gospel, her handmaiden Felicity, whom she had led to the Lord, and two others also died under the persecution edict of Septimus Severus (193-211 A.D.). She died because as a believer in Christ, she refused to sacrifice to the Roman gods, boldly confessing her faith in Christ alone. Her father pleaded with her to change her mind, but she refused. As she nursed her baby boy in prison, she knew she would be among those who would be thrown to the wild beasts as a part of the Emperor's birthday celebration. The day before, she calmly celebrated the Agape feast with other believers, prayed and sang. On the day of her death she walked into the arena smiling. She watched as the men were torn apart by a leopard, a bear and a wild boar, listening to the crowds ridicule them as being "well baptized in blood." From the arena she sent a message to her brother, urging him to stand fast in the faith, then she calmly walked into the arena to be attacked by a steer. The crowds were beginning to get tired of watching, behead Perpetua. But he was unskilled, and did not kill her on the first try, so she herself guided his sword to her throat, and she went home to be with her Savior. Perpetua and her group were amongst one hundred and one Christians martyred at that day's "games."

In the same year Christians were also persecuted in Egypt, and in Thebes a hundred were executed every day, from 193 to 211 A.D. The year 245 brought local persecution in Alexandria. In 253 A.D., the Roman emperor Valerian persecuted Christians more viciously, even, than had Decius. Among his victims were Cyprian, bishop of Carthage. In 308 A.D. Christians were hunted all over Egypt and when found, were often crippled by cutting the tendon just above their heels, and blinded in one eye. Thus incapacitated and humiliated, they were sent to work in the mines of the Sudanese desert as slaves./

It was not until the Edict of Toleration issued by Gallienus in 260 that Christianity became a legal religion. This lasted until the Emperor Diocletian issued a death penalty for all Christian believers in A.D. 304. Over 500,000 Christians were then killed between 304 and 314, until the time of Constantine, who legalized Christianity throughout the Roman Empire (313 in the Edict of Toleration)

Monasticism

Egypt was also the home of the first monasteries. Pachomius, 292-346, is known as the great organizer of Egyptian monasticism, founding Egypt's first Christian monastery on an island in the Nile. He required those who lived in his monasteries to study the Scriptures diligently. By the time of his death, over 500,000 monks (7% of the population of Egypt) lived in numerous monasteries. Three large ones were Tabennesis (7,000), Mount Nitrea (5,000), and Arsinoe (over 10,000).

Anthony, 251-356 A.D., was born in Egypt. Impressed with Christ's command to the rich young ruler to sell all that he had and give to the poor, Anthony, fled to a group of Christians who were living in the desert to escape persecution. Later he visited suffering Christians in Alexandria and the mines of the Sudan, where Christians from Alexandria were being enslaved in hard labor. From about 350 on, monasticism became very popular in Egypt, but Egyptian monks did live unto themselves and the Lord alone. They traveled extensively on missionary journeys, evangelizing in Europe, Britain and Ireland. The ascetic Egyptian monk Hilarion of Gaza (191-371) became a missionary to the idolatrous pagans of Palestine.

The end of official Roman persecution did not mean the end of all troubles for Christians. In 399 pagans in what is now Tunisia massacred sixty Christians to express their disgust that the Christians had toppled the statue of the god Hercules.

Early Bible Translation in Africa

Africa also was the site of much of the earliest Bible translation. Four out of five of the earliest Bible translations were done in Africa (only the old Syriac antedates the African translations). The old Latin North African manuscript was completed about 150 A.D. and is the oldest Latin version. Probably several translators collaborated on it. It is quoted frequently by Cyprian, 200-258 A.D., and Tertullian, 150-220 A.D. Portions of the Bible were translated into Coptic beginning about 170 A.D. and about 250 A.D. The Bible was beginning to be translated into two Egyptian dialects, Sahidic, the language of upper (southern) Egypt around Thebes, and into Bohairic, the languages of lower (northern) Egypt around Alexandria and the Delta region. It was Bohairic which, because of the prominence of Alexandria, became the basic dialect of the Egyptian church.

Later, in the fourth century, the Bible was also translated into Fayumic and Achmimic, languages of middle Egypt around Memphis. All three Egyptian translations were referred to as "Coptic." The Bible was also translated into Ethiopic beginning in the fourth century (Old Testament) by Egyptian monks and in the seventh century (New Testament).

Carthage

In addition to Alexandria, Carthage was also a major center of Christianity. It was a town built by Phoenician traders. They called it Kirjath Hadesath, meaning "new city," which the Romans latinized to "Carthage." It had been capital of Phoenicia's colonies in North Africa, but was won

by Rome in the Punic wars. When the Romans were victorious in 146 B.C., they destroyed Carthage. It was rebuilt a hundred years later by Caesar as the Roman capital of the Roman Province of Africa, and was known as an important agricultural area.

Tertullian, 150-220, was born in Carthage, the son of a Roman consul. Converted at age 40, he became presbyter of Carthage. Later (202) he became convinced by the arguments of the Monastists and championed that doctrine in North Africa. Tertullian is among the first to speak of the Christian Scriptures as the "New Testament." He used Latin widely and is credited with giving the church most of its Latin theological vocabulary. He wrote against the pagans who worshipped many gods or spirits, the gnostics who claimed secret knowledge, and the Marcionites. Although often regarded as the Father of Latin theology who contributed much to the development of Catholic thinking, Tertullian, along with Hippolytus, attacked an edict of Bishop Callistus of Rome, who later came to be regarded as one of the Cyprian, 200-259, was converted to Christ at age 45 and made bishop of Carthage two years later against his will. He wrote many books (8) letters, and 12 long treatises in Latin and quoted Scripture the most carefully and accurately of anyone in his age. Although Cyprian fled Carthage in 250 A.D. he was condemned and beheaded under the emperor Valerian by the Governor Galerius Maximus for refusing to acknowledge the godhead of the emperor.

Carthage was a center of controversy over Christian teaching from 200 to 220. One of the subjects under discussion was the nature of baptism and who should receive it. Cyprian insisted on the rebaptism of all baptized in heretical churches.

In 397 the Council of Carthage gave formal ratification or approval to the canon of the 27 books of the New Testament as we have them today. A synod meeting at Carthage in 416-418 condemned the erroneous doctrine called Pelagianism, which held that man was not depraved and that he was saved by his own good works, not by faith.

Plague

A catastrophic plague struck the Mediterranean world in 252 A.D., killing 25% of the population died. Devaluation of the Roman coinage and financial disaster followed. In Carthage, Cyprian organized medical aid to relieve the stricken city.

Catacombs in Tunisia

A huge maze of catacombs was built under ancient Hadrumetum in Tunisia, made as burial and hiding places by the early Christians of Roman Africa.

Constantine and the Unification of Church and State (312)

Soon after Constantine's professed conversion to Christianity, he undertook to remodel the government of the church so as to make it conform as closely as possible to the Roman government then in control of the state. Thus immense forces of Romanization, syncretization, and paganization began to flood into the church. The church began to become power-oriented, and that power was increasingly centered in the political capitol, Rome. At the same time,

pagans flooded into the church on the basis of token baptism en masse, bringing their heathen gods, idols, festivals and practices with them, in many cases virtually unchanged. Many churches became filled with pagans whose “Christianity” was a thin veneer at best, and many of these eventually rose to positions of leadership and power, with disastrous results for the church. Thus it was that in the fourth century it was widely held acceptable and even virtuous to lie when by that means the interest of the church might be promoted! The Council of Chalcedon in 451 decided that ecclesiastical dioceses would be considered the equivalent of Roman political dioceses.

Liturgy Developed

Liturgy began to be developed in part due to criticism leveled at Christians by Jewish and pagan priests because of the simplicity of their worship and the fact that they had no great temples, altars, victims, priests, or ceremonies. Christians wanted to appeal to pagans and Jews who had elaborate rites. Then too, the churches were becoming filled with nominally converted pagans who were accustomed to such rites. Soon the pagan ceremonies had been christened with new names, and catholic-type rites with priests offering sacrifices were developed. Gregory the Great brought the church far into paganism with his idolatrous reverence for relics, his exaltation of the merit of pilgrimages, his encouragement for the use of images (though the church still did not worship them as it did later), his imposition of a more ceremonious way of giving communion (which contributed to the development of the later idea of transubstantiation), his serious belief in purgatory and his ordering of missionaries not to abolish but rather to “christianize” pagan practices.

Augustine

Augustine, bishop of Hippo in northern Africa was another great figure produced by early Christianity in Africa. His mother, Monica, 331-287 A.D., was born to Christian parents in Tagaste, an old Roman town not far from Carthage. By her prayers and godly life, she won her pagan husband to Christ, and later her wayward son Augustine. Augustine was baptized by Ambrose in Milan in 387 A.D. Living from 354 to 430 he served as bishop of Hippo beginning in 395, for 35 years until his death. He wrote his famed “Confessions” and “City of God” and made his town an intellectual center of Christendom. In Augustine’s time the theory of the cessation of the gifts and miracles of the Apostolic age was beginning to emerge. He opposed this view, dismissing it as an overreaction to the excesses of Montanism and others. He documented many recent miracles.

The Gospel in North Africa

The end of official Roman persecution did not mean the end of all troubles for Christians. In 399 persecution did not mean the end of all troubles for Christians. In 399 pagans in what is now Tunisia massacred sixty Christians to express their disgust that the Christians had toppled the statue of Hercules, Ceuta and Melilla, included what Spanish cities were then part of the massive Roman province of Mauretania. The first Christians were converted there in about 400 A.D. from amongst the Roman population.

Carthaginian Colonies

Hanno of Carthage “discovered” Cameroun in the fifth century B.C.. Carthage established colonies as far as Cerne, south of Gibralter.