

Africa taught Baby Jesus. Maryam guided His Egyptian education. The Ancient African Liturgical Church (Universal) shows 56,000 plus saints to 599 A.D., including Desert Fathers, Saints Macarius, Augustine, Maura, Athanasius, Catherine, Maurice, Cyprian, Antonia, Talida, Spera, Valeria, Clement of Alexandria.

Black Saints, Mystics, and Holy Folk (The Ancient African Liturgical Church Vol. I)

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**BLACK
SAINTS,
MYSTICS
AND HOLY FOLK**

(The Ancient African Liturgical Church)

Vol. I

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African Ethiopian Church

Reportedly the 12 apostles of Christ drew straws to divide the then known world among them to determine who would preach where. They would follow the Roman Empire's civil divisions.

Tradition says Matthew preached to Ethiopia, "tempering the Ethiopian heat and made...rivers to flow in the parched desert of the south..."

Another tradition reports that the apostle Thomas, "through baptism whitens Ethiopians." (*Remember: Queen Candace's reported remark to Alexander the Great about **souls***).

Another tradition says John Marcus was the apostle to Alexandria. It is said that Philip, "by baptizing the Ethiopian Eunuch, claimed race no significance in church membership."

Of course, that is the European tradition, in that Jesus Himself grew up in Kemet, Heliopolis (Old Cairo area) until about six or seven years of age—"when Herod was no more".

Tradition further grew that the Black Eunuch of Queen Candace became himself an apostle to not only Ethiopia, but also to Arabia Felix and Taprobane (what was called **Ceylon**).

Other traditions say Christianity spread through Carthage no later than the second half of the 2d century (*though really much earlier*). Records show that on July 17, 180 A.D. **12 African Christians of Scilli** were martyred there.

Large-scale conversions in Ethiopia were not unexpected. St. Luke himself places Ethiopia, Africa among the first to receive and believe the Gospel (Acts 8:26-39). Why?

Probably because around 7 B.C. or 4 B.C.-- Yusef and Maryam (Joseph and Mary) introduced Yeshua physically into Africa. The story is well known.

Born as prophesied in King David's hometown, Bethlehem, Jesus was rushed to this traditional place of refuge since the Maccabees (see Kings 40, and Jeroboam). King Herod--one of the rulers *Herod*, for the name was a *title*--sought His life, having been told of a strange star by visiting astrologers or Magi.

Archangel Gabriel sent them to Kemet. Some traditions say Baby Yeshua was around 2 years of age--which would account for the slaughter of infants from about that age downward.

Other traditions hold that Mother Maryam and Yusef had distant relatives in Kemet (Egypt). And that the branch of Judaism to which Blessed Mother Maryam, and Yusef belonged (they would be *Hasidim*, today)--the *Essenes and Therapeutae* had settlements in African area.

One of Maryam's ancestors was of the *Mauri in the Desert*. And Blessed Mother Maryam and Yusef were distant cousins--both of the royal house of David.

The legends--which do not mean fiction-- indicate one of the visiting Magi was *African*, or Black. One magi was Mongolian. Another Magi was Persian type--see *Anne Catherine Emmerich*).

The Black Magi would account for the two gifts of African resins of *Myrrh*, and the oblihanum gum found in Somaliland known as *Frankincense*. Then, as now, the richest deposits of gold—another gift to the Christ child-- was to be found in Africa.

Learn the Eastern Churches account of how that myrrh was used to anoint Yeshua in His brief burial.

According to modern psychology, the Holy Infant's early and critical years were spent on African soil. His first playmates and friends were African. Yeshua inculcated African thought in his African schooling.

More traditions say that the Holy Family stopped briefly at the fountain of *El Matariya*. The town is now in Dagaliya province of lower Kemet, a northeast Cairo suburb near the ruins of Heliopolis.

It is thought they spent more time at *Al-Fustat*, near the Roman city of Babylon (*Abu-Sargah*), Old Cairo. (Remember from above, tradition indicates that Cephas, the Apostle Simon Peter set up a church in Babylon, *before* going to Antioch, and Rome.

Through the same African learned example and wisdom shown later in the temple at age 12, the Child Yeshua (Jesus) Himself conceivably laid the foundations of Christianity in Africa.

For many of the black saints, mystics, and holy folk, stem from the areas we mention.

We know the Holy Family did not return to Israel until 6 or 7 years later. Documents tell us

that the particular Herod who sought Yeshua's life died around that time.

Later, an African named Simeon (Simon) from Cyrenaica (Tripoli) would help Christ Jesus bear His appointed burden-the cross.

The African bishop and saint, Augustine observed:

"The Catholic Church has been foretold not to be in any particular quarter of the world, as certain schisms are, but in the very universe, by bearing fruit and growing unto the very Ethiopians indeed, the remotest and blackest of men."

Early Church Fathers contrasted blackness of the skin and that of the soul. Through imagery about blackness, they often commented on the inseparability of an Ethiopian from his skin. And to "wash an Ethiopian white" was allegorically used to cease futile efforts or actions."

The Church frequently called herself black, in her early history. An early theologian offered one explanation through biblical verses.

Numbers 12:1-16. Moses marries a black Cushite woman. (Remember, many scholars say Moses himself might have been a Kemetian priest, irrespective of the Habiru bloodline).

Matthew 12, 42; 1 Kings 10:1-10. Visit to Solomon by the Queen of Sheba.

Psalms 63:31 (Song of David). Ethiopia shall stretch out her hand to God. The revised Edition reads, "Let Ethiopia stretch out her hands to God. *King James Version* reads: *Princes shall come from Egypt. Ethiopia shall stretch out her hands unto God.*

Sophonias 3:10 (Zephaniah 3:10) From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia will I receive my dispersed ones. *King James Version*: From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia, my supplicants the daughter of my dispersed ones shall bring me sacrifice. (*Supplicant means one who prays beseechingly or asks humbly*).

Jeremiah 39:8-13. Acts 8:27, the Ethiopian Eunuch (Abdmelech)

"Moreover, we ask in what way is she black and in what way fair with out whiteness? She has repented her sins. Conversion has bestowed beauty upon her and hence she is sung as 'beautiful'...but because of your penitence, your soul will have something of what I may call an Ethiopian beauty."

"How do I understand Ethiopian peoples?" Asks St. Augustine, in further clarifying the Church's position. "How else than by them, all nations?" And properly by black men for Ethiopians are black."

Those called to the faith that was before black, just they so that it may be said to them, "Ye

were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord (Ephesians 5:8).

“They are indeed called black, but let them not remain black (*their souls, that is*). For out of these is made the church to which it is said: Who is she that cometh up having been made white? For what has been made out of the black maiden but what is said in I am black and beautiful.”

Continued Augustine:

Whoever born anywhere as a human being, that is, as a rational, mortal creature, however strange he may appear to our senses in bodily form or color, or motion or utterance, or in any faculty, part or quality of his nature whatsoever, let no true believer have any doubt that such an individual is descended from the one who was first created.

Yet, there is a clear distinction between what has by nature persisted in the majority, and what is marvelous by its rarity.”

In using **Black Ethiopians** as a primary symbol, the African St. Augustine included gentiles. The choice was not arbitrary. Blacks were then concededly a moral people, more so than many others, forgiving quickly, and forgetting twice as fast.

Herodotus, Greek historian of 5th century B.C., reports the Nubian Pharaoh Sabacos abolished the death penalty for Kemetian criminals. He

insisted instead on sentencing them to civic improvement projects.

And the Greek Diodorus tells of the then prevailing Ethiopian reputation for piety and justice.

“Certainly, they (*the Ethiopians*) are loved because of justice...for Ethiopians are said to be the most just of men.” Says the 6th century grammarian, Lactantius Placidus.

“The Ethiopians, the blackest of men on earth, living at the ends of the world, became a symbol of the peoples out of whom the church was destined to grow.” The observation was made by Saints Jerome, Cyril of Alexandria, Theodoret, Faustus of Riez, and Gregory of Nyssa.

By 225 A.D. bishops preached and taught in Proconsularis and Numidia alone. In the 3rd century, 200s A.D., Catholicism reached full force into Cyrenaica, Eritrea, now the Northern part of Ethiopia, Libya, Morocco, and the Sudan.

Since society at that time was a trading one, we mention that below Sudan lies Uganda, and below Ethiopia, Kenya. In both areas, we can still find modern day Cushites.

A national revival within the framework of the oldest church in Christendom—the Coptic—took place under St. Shenoute of Atripe in 395 A.D.

The Roman Empire in the west lay in decay. Roman Emperor Diocletian had previously divided his holdings in 295 A.D. into four prefectures, Gaul, Italy, Illyricum, and the Orient, the latter included Africa. Nine years earlier, (286 A.D.) Diocletian had split his empire into East and West regions.

Power changed rapidly to the Eastern Byzantine sector, which included Illyricum and the Orient. An Emperor Constantine transferred the Eastern capital from Nicomedia in Asia Minor, to Byzantium in 330 A.D.

By 395-396 A.D. the Roman Empire under Theodosius I was ruled by two separate emperors. The dividing line extended down the Sana, Drina, and Zeta Rivers to the City of Budva, and on to the Adriatic Sea.

All land west belonged to the western empire and later, the Western Church. All lands east belonged to the eastern empire and the branch of the Church there.

The same arbitrary division would be used again later between Spain and Portugal.

The Roman or Latin Rite of the Church was located in the Western Empire. The Eastern Church, called Orthodox, and the Coptic Rite were located in North and Eastern Africa, under the Patriarchate (leadership or chair) of Alexandria (*Recall the different headquarters, set up by different apostles or disciples*).

Central Ethiopians and Kemetian Christians could be found in both parts of the universal church-- one holy catholic and apostolic, with the latter Orient division.

Notwithstanding horrible persecutions and martyrdoms, more than 470 bishops (Catholic) could be found in Africa in 411 A.D.

By 430 A.D. the number increased to more than 600, more than one fourth of all Christendom. A small diocese proved normal.

Through the territories of modern day Morocco, Tunis, Tripoli (using modern names), the African Church was acclaimed "the most Catholic province in the entire west."

Its six civil sections formed one autonomous (separate) ecclesiastical unit. The African Church was governed for a time from Carthage.

But, as elsewhere, Christianity proved costly, the *Mystical Body of Christ* (all Christianity/churches combined) lists more than 57,000 African saints—many here listed-- and *martyrs (those who died for the faith)* during the Christian persecutions.

(Without diminishing/negating any branches' participation, the European branch conveniently dropped many of the names and Black involvement in the church during the age of enslavement.

The Eastern Church branches assiduously recorded them all, albeit some of the territories were confusingly intertwined).

But the expanse of the church was noted by the African St. Athanasius "None other than Christ, through his disciples had been able to travel so far as to go among the ...Ethiopians." *And remember, the word Ethiopian often stood for all Africa's peoples.*

Reportedly, an entire African Roman Legion (some say 6,600, some say 10,000 with support troops), were martyred for the faith

Recall above we reported that Nubian Cush troops served in the Armies of Kemet, Persian, and later, Greeks. The Ethiopian church Coptic has extensive records of this unit.

The military division was called the *Theban Legion*. And at least two were recruited at Thebes: *Tertia Diocletiana Thebaeorum*, and *Prima Maximiana Thebaeorum*.

Three hundred miles south of Cairo, Thebes was the upper Nile Valley city of Wase (*Wo'se*).

A Greek name was ascribed to it at the time. But the area had been called *Niwt Amun*, and *Libya Suburb*.

Pharaoh Rameses built a temple there, using Jewish slaves in the same area. Its decline began with the Pharaohs of Jewish Oppression.

Thebes became sort of a Kemetian Fort Knox. There, pharaohs stored valuables and spoils of war seized from conquered nations. This is probably a reason Romans sacked it around 29 B.C. The city later became a religious center. Temples became Catholic churches.

St. Eucherius (434 to 450 B.C.) tells the story of the African legion. We list many of its officers and men in these pages.

In the Army of Maximinian Herculeus, the African *Primicerius* of the legion, something like a modern day Major General—now known as St. Maurice— with his men refused to either slaughter innocent victims or offer sacrifice to the Roman gods at Aguanuum, Switzerland, now St. Maurice-en-Valois. St. Ambrose reported the event in verse:

Victor, Nabor, Felix, pious
Martyrs of our Town Milan
Of foreign birth and Moorish
Race they came as

Strangers to our land.

They came from the lands of burning sun,
The scorching desert gave them birth.
Beyond the confines of our Realm,
The very outposts of the earth.

Exacting payment of much blood
The Padus was their cruel host.
The faith of Holy Mother Church
Infused them with the Holy Ghost.

And crowned herself with holy blood
Of three who shared a martyr's fate,
Snatched from the camps of pagan hosts.
Christ's warriors now consecrate.

Proficient in the arts of war
They learn to combat for the faith once for king,
but now, for Christ
They see 'tis meet to suffer death.

Christ's soldiers seek no iron spears,
No flashing arms by them are found:
Sufficient armour hath that man
Whose faith encompasseth him round.

A shield to him is his true faith.
A triumph, death, Malevolent.
The jealous tyrant seeing this,
To Lodi, our fair martyrs sent.

But soon the offer was returned
As on the triumphal car (t) of state

Four-spanned, the martyrs' bodies rode
Back through the imperial city gate.

The major action—there were other repercussions taken—occurred in 286-287 A.D. quite near Lake Geneva.

We know the name of many of St. Maurice's officers, thanks to the Eastern and Coptic sides of the Church: Saints Exuperius, Candidus, and Vitalis.

One St. Victor was among the martyred. A legionnaire Alexander was caught and martyred at Bergamo. St. Adventor and St. Solutor were caught and martyred at Turin, as St. Gereon was at Cologne.

Another St. Victor with Sts. Felix and Nabor were killed at Laus Pompeia, now Lodi, some 20 miles southeast of the Northern Italy city of Milan, on the Adda River.

MINDS AND MARTYRS

The African Church contributed minds as well as martyrs. Of eight original eastern and western doctors of the Church worldwide, Africa claims three, St. Augustine, St. Athanasius, and St. Cyril the Great.

If one counts only the Latin Rite Church—not Alexandria—Africa counts at least three Popes (or Archbishop of Rome). The name Pope or Papas was given to the head of the Church, was originally an Eastern and African title. It applied originally to the bishops of Carthage.

Africa gave not only the name, but also three
Popes as well to guide the early Church:

St. Victor I, 189 A.D. to 199 A.D.

St. Miltiades, 311 A.D. to 314 A.D.

(Aka Melchiades)

St. Gelasius, 492 A.D. to 496 A.D.

(More on them in detail in Volume II).

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