

Anglo-Saxon Christianity

Beginnings

- Christians were still in England, descendants of British Christians.
- In 597, Augustine—a Roman monk sent to England by Pope Gregory—converted King Ethelburt of Kent.
- Ethelburt allowed Augustine to build an abbey in Canterbury, the major city in Kent.
- Augustine’s abbey was built on the site of an older Roman church.

Meanwhile, In Ireland

- The Irish Church developed with different customs from Roman Church:
 - Irish monks wore a different tonsure.
 - Irish monks were hermits rather than pastors.
 - The Irish church celebrated Easter at a different time of the year.
- Irish missionaries were working in northeastern England.

Resolution of Conflict

- Differences between Roman customs and Irish customs threaten the Church in England.
- The Pope calls for a Synod, a church meeting, in the Northumbrian town of Whitby in 664.
- Church leaders decide that the Church in England will follow Roman customs.
- Although the decision was biased, it was the better choice because it kept England connected to Europe.

Important Anglo-Saxon Church Locations

- All located in Northumbria
- All on the seashore or on rivers
 - Lindisfarne
 - Jarrow
 - Wearmouth
 - York

Important Anglo-Saxon Church Leaders

- Bede—an early eighth century monk from Jarrow.
 - He translated parts of the New Testament from Latin into Old English.
 - He wrote *The History of the English Church and People*, the first written history of England. He wrote it in Latin.
 - He began the A.D. dating system.
 - He is known in Church history as “The Venerable Bede.”
- Alcuin—a late eighth century monk from York.
 - He was head of the cathedral in York.
 - He was chosen by Charlemagne to be his minister of education.
 - He set up scriptoria, dedicated to copying and preserving manuscripts.
 - He is credited with the invention of cursive script.