

Chapter 6

Religion

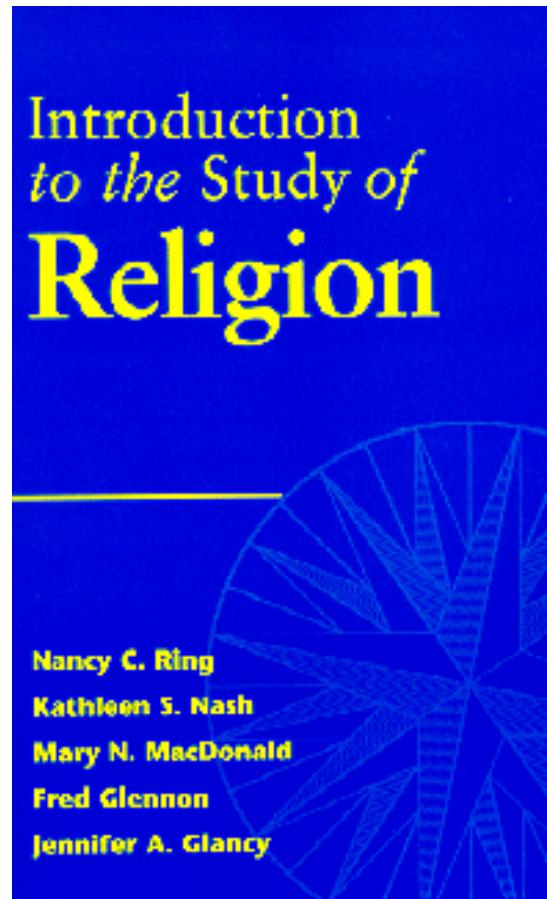
Geography of Religion

- Most religious people pray for peace, but religious groups may not share the same vision of how peace will be achieved.
- Geographers see that the process by which one religion diffuses across the landscape may conflict with the distribution of others.
- Geographers also observe that religions are derived in part from elements of the physical environment, and that religions, in turn, modify the landscape.



Religion

- The Key Issues Are:
 1. Where are religions distributed?
 2. Why do religions have different distributions?
 3. Why do religions organize space in distinctive patterns?
 4. Why do territorial conflicts arise among religious groups?



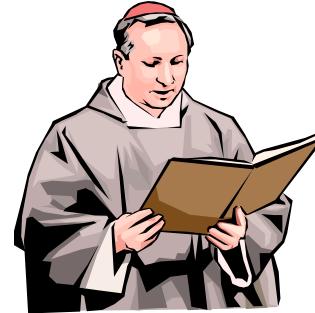
Geographers and Religion

- Religion interests geographers because it is essential for understanding how humans occupy Earth.
- Geographers, though, are not theologians, so they stay focused on those elements of religions that are geographically significant.
- Geographers study spatial connections in religion:
 - the distinctive place of origin
 - the extent of diffusion
 - the processes by which religions diffused
 - practices and beliefs that lead some to have more widespread distributions.



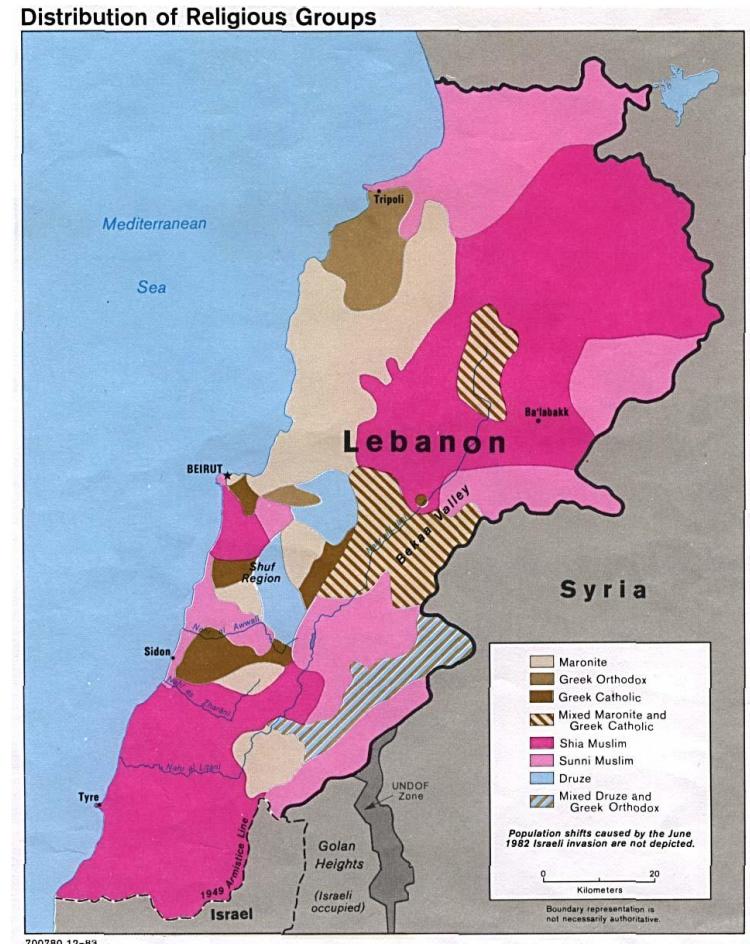
Globalization and Local Diversity of Religion

- Geographers find the tension in scale between globalization and local diversity especially acute in religion for a number of reasons.
- People care deeply about their religion;
 - some religions are designed to appeal to people throughout the world, whereas other religions appeal primarily in geographically limited areas;
 - religious values are important in how people identify themselves, (and) the ways they organize the landscape;
 - adopting a global religion usually requires turning away from a traditional local religion;
 - while migrants typically learn the language of the new location, they retain their religion.

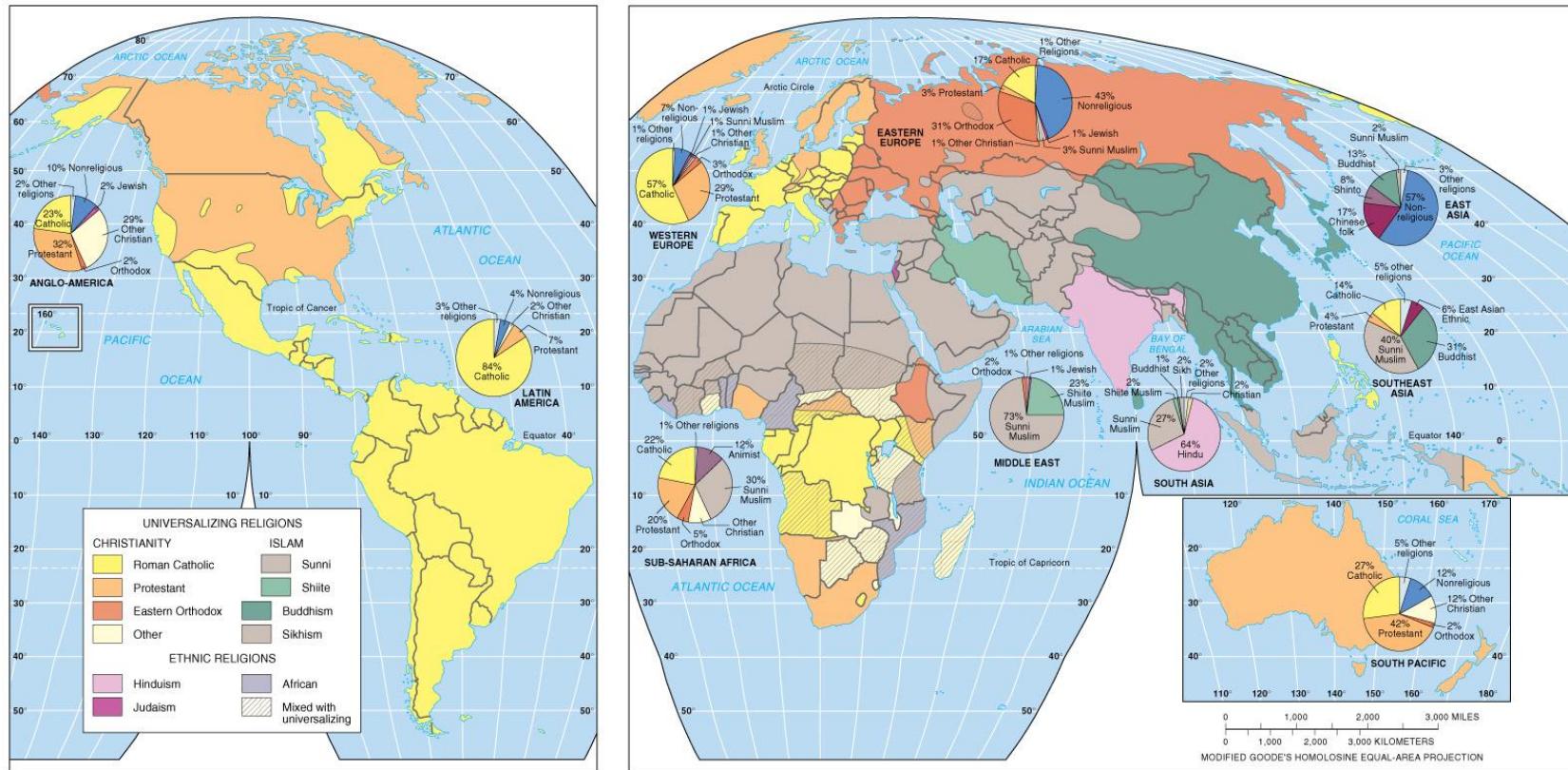


Key Issue 1: Distribution of Religions

- Universalizing religions
 - Christianity
 - Islam
 - Buddhism
- Ethnic religions
 - Hinduism
 - Other ethnic religions



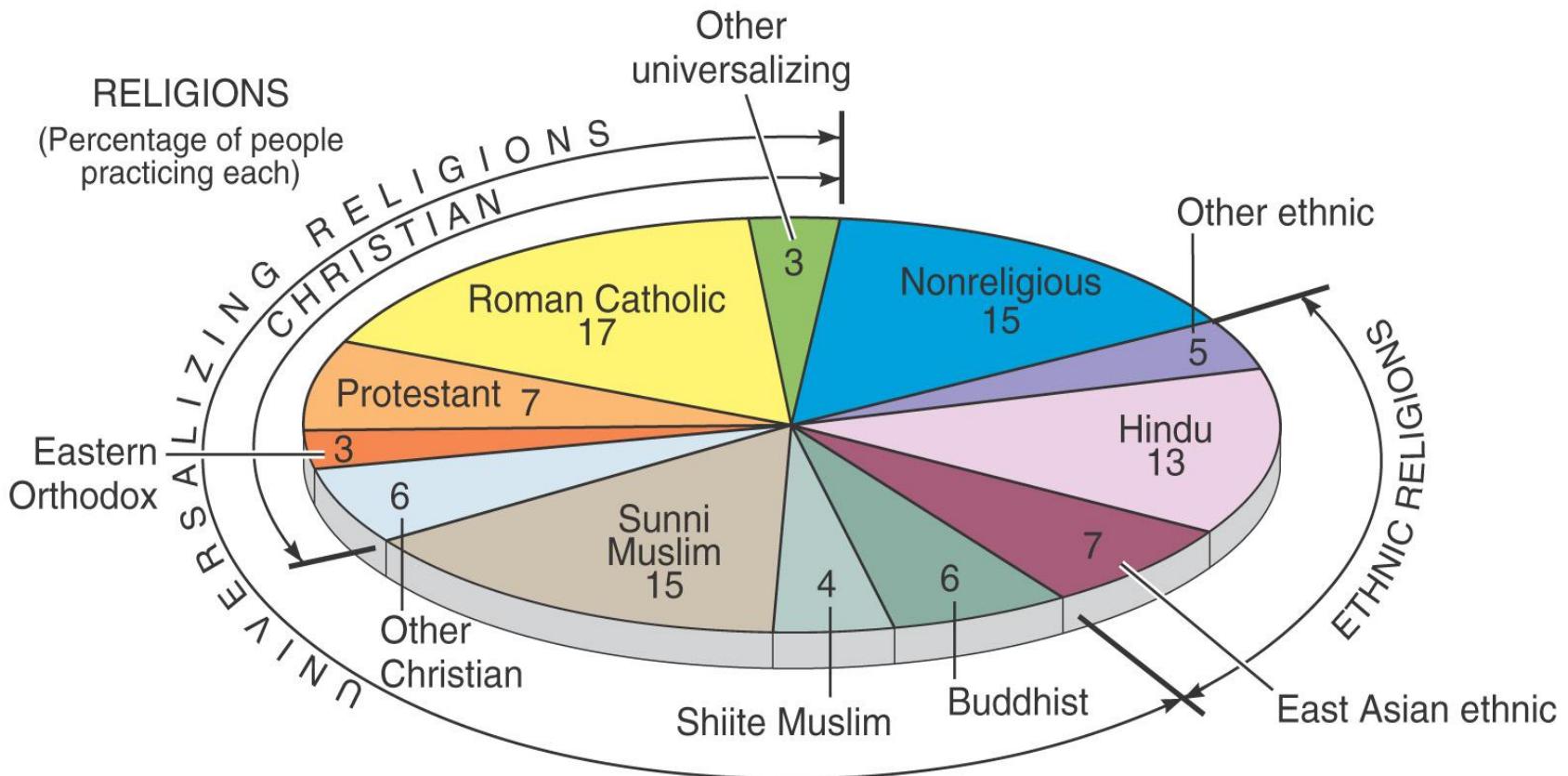
World Distribution of Religions



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Fig. 6-1: World religions by continent.

World Population by Religion



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Fig. 6-1a: Over two-thirds of the world's population belong to Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, or Buddhism. Christianity is the single largest world religion.

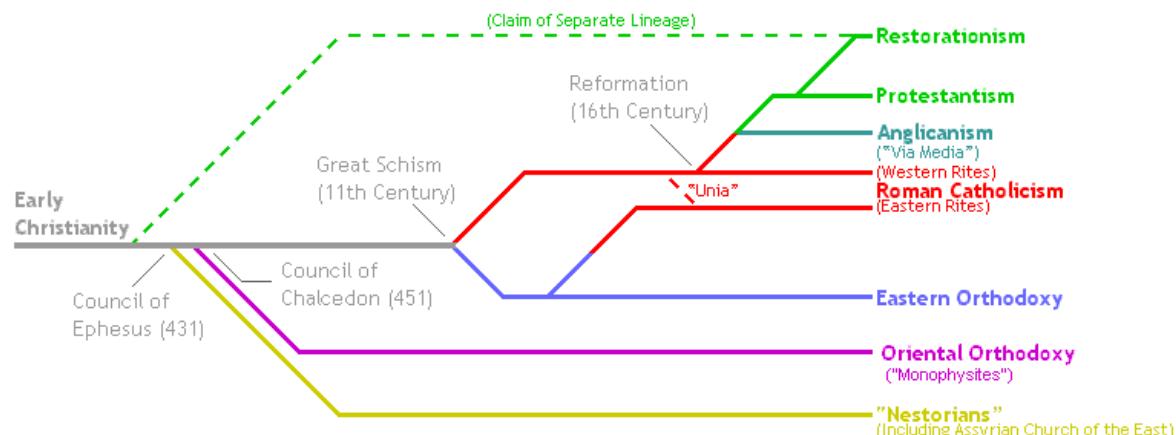
The Three Main Religions

- The three main universalizing religions are Christianity, Islam, and Buddhism.
- Each is divided into branches, denominations, and sects.
 - A branch is a large and fundamental division within a religion.
 - A denomination is a division of a branch that unites a number of local congregations.
 - A sect is a relatively small group that has broken away from an established denomination.

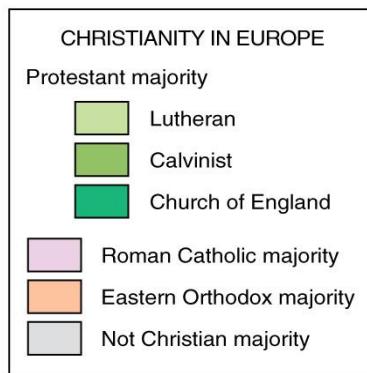


Christianity and its Branches

- Christianity has about 2 billion adherents, far more than any other world religion, and has the most widespread distribution.
- Christianity has three major branches:
 - Roman Catholic
 - Protestant
 - Eastern Orthodox



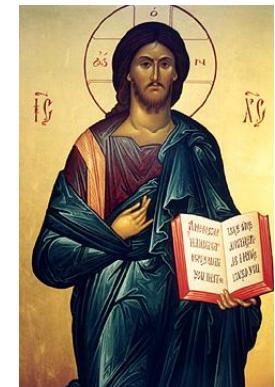
Christian Branches in Europe



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Fig. 6-2: Protestant denominations, Catholicism, and Eastern Orthodoxy are dominant in different regions of Europe—a result of many historic interactions.

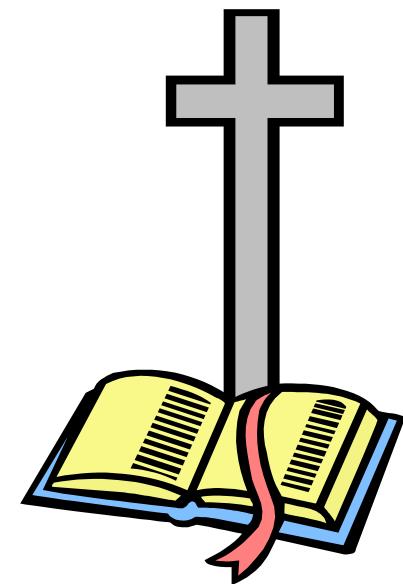
The Eastern Orthodox Church



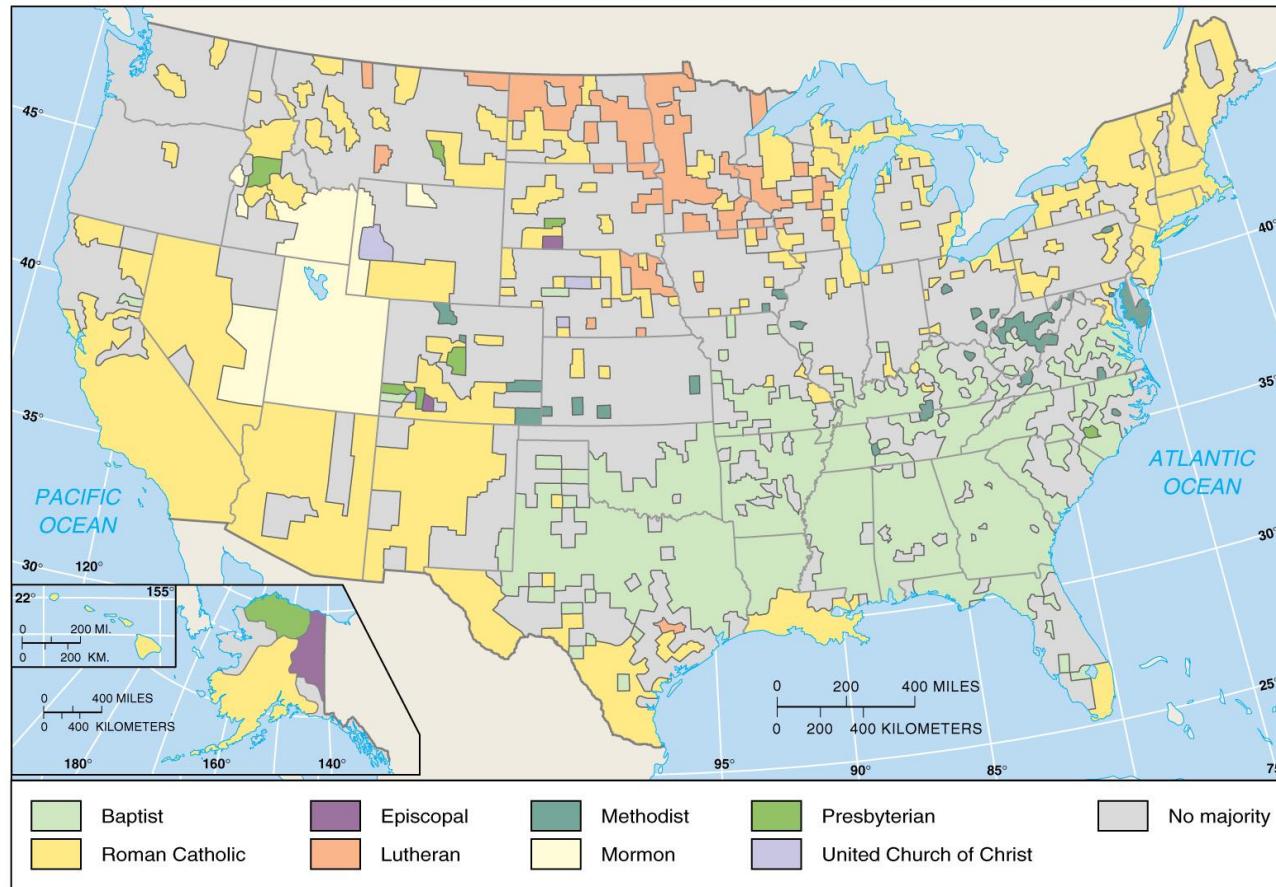
- The Eastern Orthodox branch of Christianity is a collection of 14 self-governing churches in Eastern Europe and the Middle East.
- More than 40 percent of all Eastern Orthodox Christians belong to the Russian Orthodox Church, established in the sixteenth century.
- Nine of the other 13 self-governing churches were established in the nineteenth or twentieth century.
- The largest of these 9, the Romanian church, includes 20 percent of all Eastern Orthodox Christians.
- The remaining 4 of the 14 Eastern Orthodox churches—Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem—trace their origins to the earliest days of Christianity.
- They have a combined membership of about 3 percent of all Eastern Orthodox Christians.

Christianity in the Western Hemisphere

- The overwhelming percentage of people living in the Western Hemisphere—about 90 percent—are Christian.
- About 5 percent belong to other religions.
- Roman Catholics comprise 95 percent of Christians in Latin America, compared with 25 percent in North America.
- Within North America, Roman Catholics are clustered in the southwestern and northeastern United States and the Canadian province of Québec.
- Protestants comprise 40 percent of Christians in North America.
- The three largest Protestant denominations in the United States are Baptist, Methodist, and Pentecostal, followed by Lutheran, Latter-Day Saints, and Churches of Christ.



Christian Branches in the U.S.



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Fig. 6-3: Distribution of Christians in the U.S. Shaded areas are counties with more than 50% of church membership concentrated in Roman Catholicism or one of the Protestant denominations.

Smaller Branches of Christianity

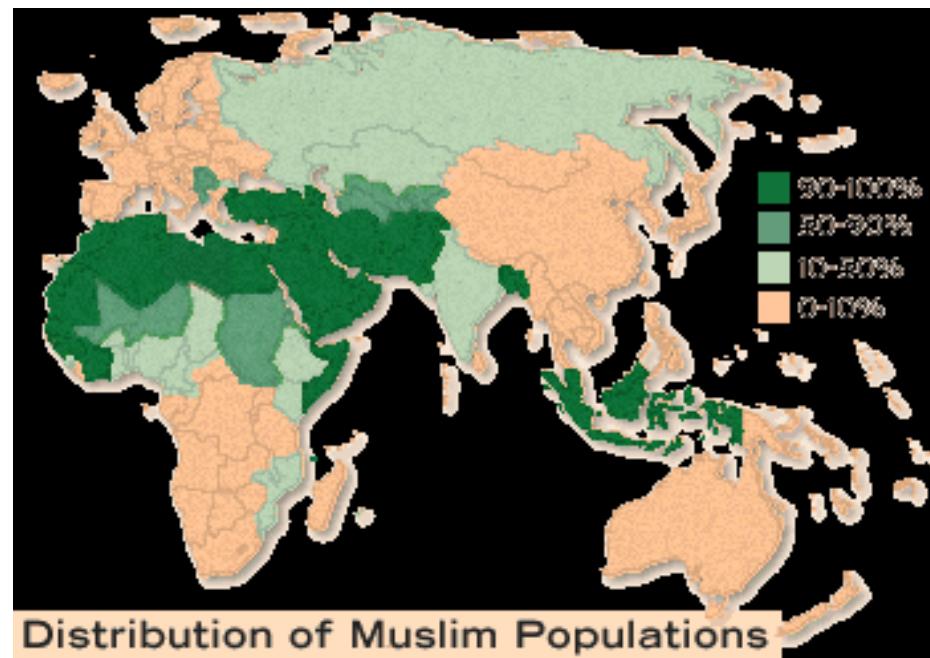
- Two small Christian churches survive in northeast Africa:
 - the Coptic Church of Egypt
 - the Ethiopian Church.
- The Armenian Church originated in Antioch, Syria, and was important in diffusing Christianity to South and East Asia between the seventh and thirteenth centuries.
- The Armenian Church, like other small sects, plays a significant role in regional conflicts.
- The Maronites, (clustered in Lebanon) are another example of a small Christian sect that plays a disproportionately prominent role in political unrest.



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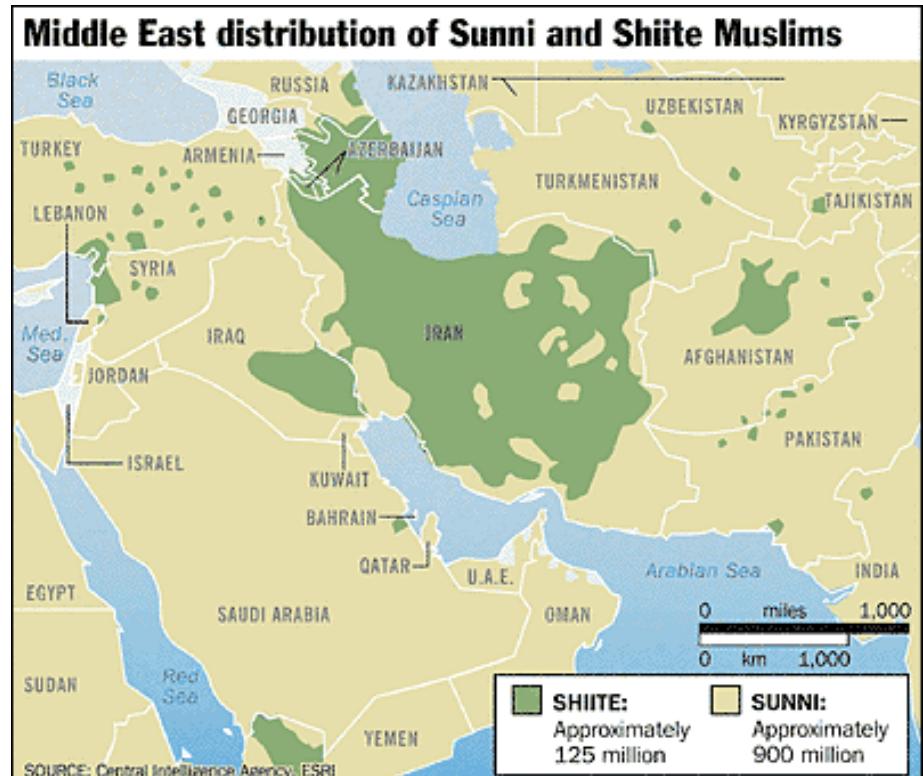
Islam

- Islam, the religion of 1.2 billion people, is the predominant religion of the Middle East from North Africa to Central Asia.
- However, half of the world's Muslims live in four countries outside the Middle East: Indonesia, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and India.



Branches of Islam

- Islam is divided into two important branches:
 - Sunni (from the Arabic word for orthodox)
 - Shiite (from the Arabic word for sectarian, sometimes written Shia in English).
- Sunnis comprise 83 percent of Muslims and are the largest branch in most Muslim countries.
- Sixteen percent of Muslims are Shiites, clustered in a handful of countries.



Islam in North America and Europe

- Islam also has a presence in the United States through the Nation of Islam, also known as Black Muslims, founded in Detroit in 1930 and led for more than 40 years by Elijah Muhammad, who called himself “the messenger of Allah.”
- Since Muhammad’s death, in 1975, his son Wallace D. Muhammad led the Black Muslims closer to the principles of orthodox Islam, and the organizations name was changed to the American Muslim Mission.



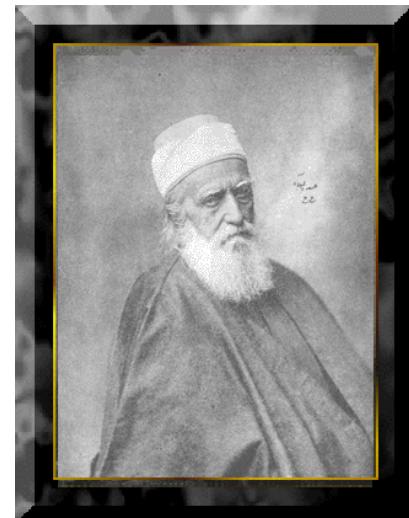
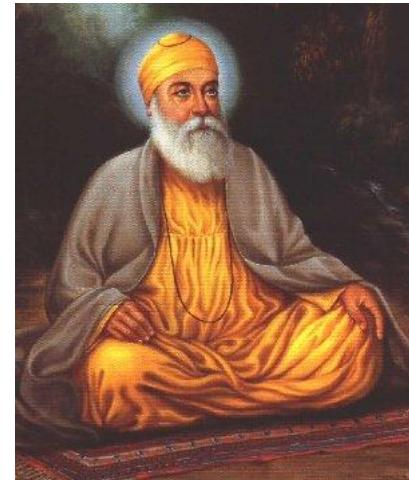
Buddhism

- Buddhism, the third of the world's major universalizing religions, has 350 million adherents, especially in China and Southeast Asia.
- Like the other two universalizing religions, Buddhism split into more than one branch.
- The three main branches are
 - Mahayana,
 - Theravada,
 - Tantrayana.
- An accurate count of Buddhists is especially difficult, because only a few people participate in Buddhist institutions.



Other Universalizing Religions

- Sikhism and Bahá’í are the two universalizing religions other than Christianity, Islam, and Buddhism with the largest numbers of adherents.
- Sikhism’s first guru (religious teacher or enlightener) was Nanak (A.D. 1469—1538), who lived in a village near the city of Lahore, in present-day Pakistan.
- The Bahá’í religion is even more recent than Sikhism.
- It grew out of the Bábí faith, which was founded in Shíráz, Iran, in 1844 by Siyyid ‘Au Muhammad, known as the Báb (Persian for gateway).



Ethnic Religions

- The ethnic religion with by far the largest number of followers is Hinduism. With 900 million adherents, Hinduism is the world's third-largest religion, behind Christianity and Islam.
- Ethnic religions in Asia and Africa comprise most of the remainder.



Hinduism

- Ethnic religions typically have much more clustered distributions than do universalizing religions.
- Ninety-seven percent of Hindus are concentrated in one country, India.
- Two percent are in the neighboring country of Nepal, and the remaining one percent are dispersed around the world.
- The appropriate form of worship for any two individuals may not be the same.
- Hinduism does not have a central authority or a single holy book.
- The largest number of adherents—an estimated 70 percent—worships the god Vishnu, a loving god incarnated as Krishna.
- An estimated 25 percent adhere to... Siva, a protective and destructive god.
- Shaktism is a form of worship dedicated to the female consorts of Vishnu and Siva.



Other Ethnic Religions

- Several hundred million people practice ethnic religions in East Asia, especially in China and Japan.
- Buddhism does not compete for adherents with Confucianism, Daoism, and other ethnic religions in China, because many Chinese accept the teachings of both universalizing and ethnic religions.



Confucianism

- Confucius (551—479 B.C.) was a philosopher and teacher in the Chinese province of Lu.
- Confucianism prescribed a series of ethical principles for the orderly conduct of daily life in China.



Daoism (Taoism)

- Lao-Zi (604—531? B.C., also spelled Lao Tse), a contemporary of Confucius, organized Daoism.
- Daoists seek dao (or tao), which means the way or path.
- Dao cannot be comprehended by reason and knowledge, because not, everything is knowable.
- Daoism split into many sects, some acting like secret societies, and followers embraced elements of magic.



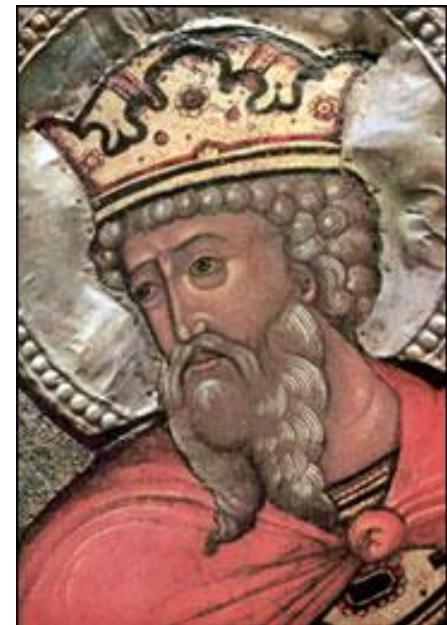
Shintoism

- Since ancient times, Shintoism has been the distinctive ethnic religion of Japan.
- Ancient Shintoists considered forces of nature to be divine, especially the Sun and Moon, as well as rivers, trees, rocks, mountains, and certain animals.
- Gradually, deceased emperors and other ancestors became more important deities for Shintoists than natural features.
- Shintoism still thrives in Japan, although no longer as the official state religion.



Judaism

- About 6 million Jews live in the United States, 4 million in Israel, 2 million in former Soviet Union republics, . . . and 2 million elsewhere.
- The number of Jews living in the former Soviet Union has declined rapidly since the late 1980s, when emigration laws were liberalized.
- Judaism plays a more substantial role in Western civilization than its number of adherents would suggest, because two of the three main universalizing religions—Christianity and Islam—find some of their roots in Judaism.
- The name Judaism derives from Judah, one of the patriarch Jacob's 12 sons; Israel is another biblical name for Jacob.



Ethnic African Religions

- About 10 percent of Africans follow traditional ethnic religions, sometimes called animism.
- African animist religions are apparently based on monotheistic concepts, although below the supreme god there is a hierarchy of divinities, assistants to god or personifications of natural phenomena, such as trees or rivers.
- Some atlases and textbooks persist in classifying Africa as predominantly animist, even though the actual percentage is small and declining.

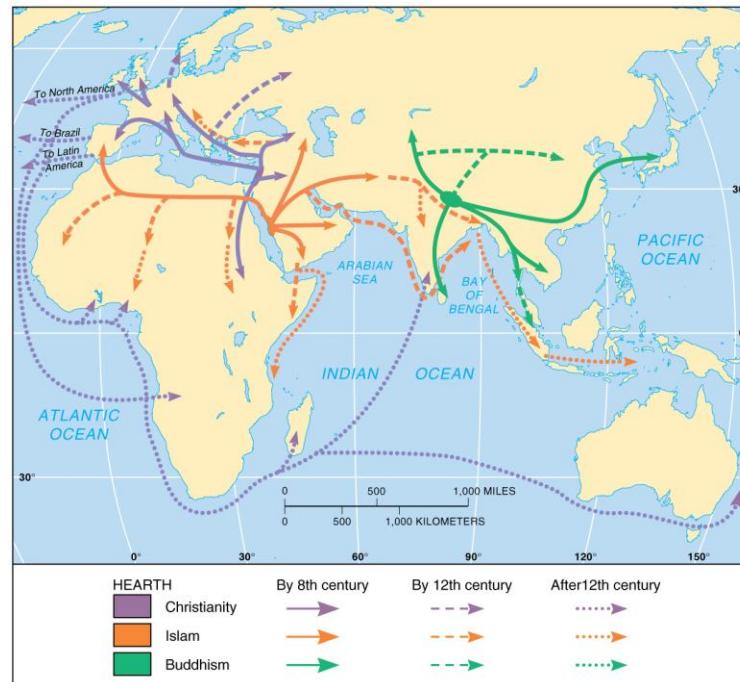


Variations in Distribution of Religions (1)

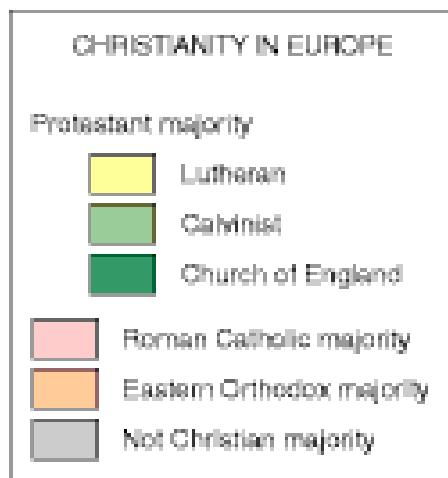
- Origin of religions
 - Origin of universalizing religions
 - Origin of Hinduism
- Diffusion of religions
 - Diffusion of universalizing religions
 - Lack of diffusion of ethnic religions

Origin of Religions

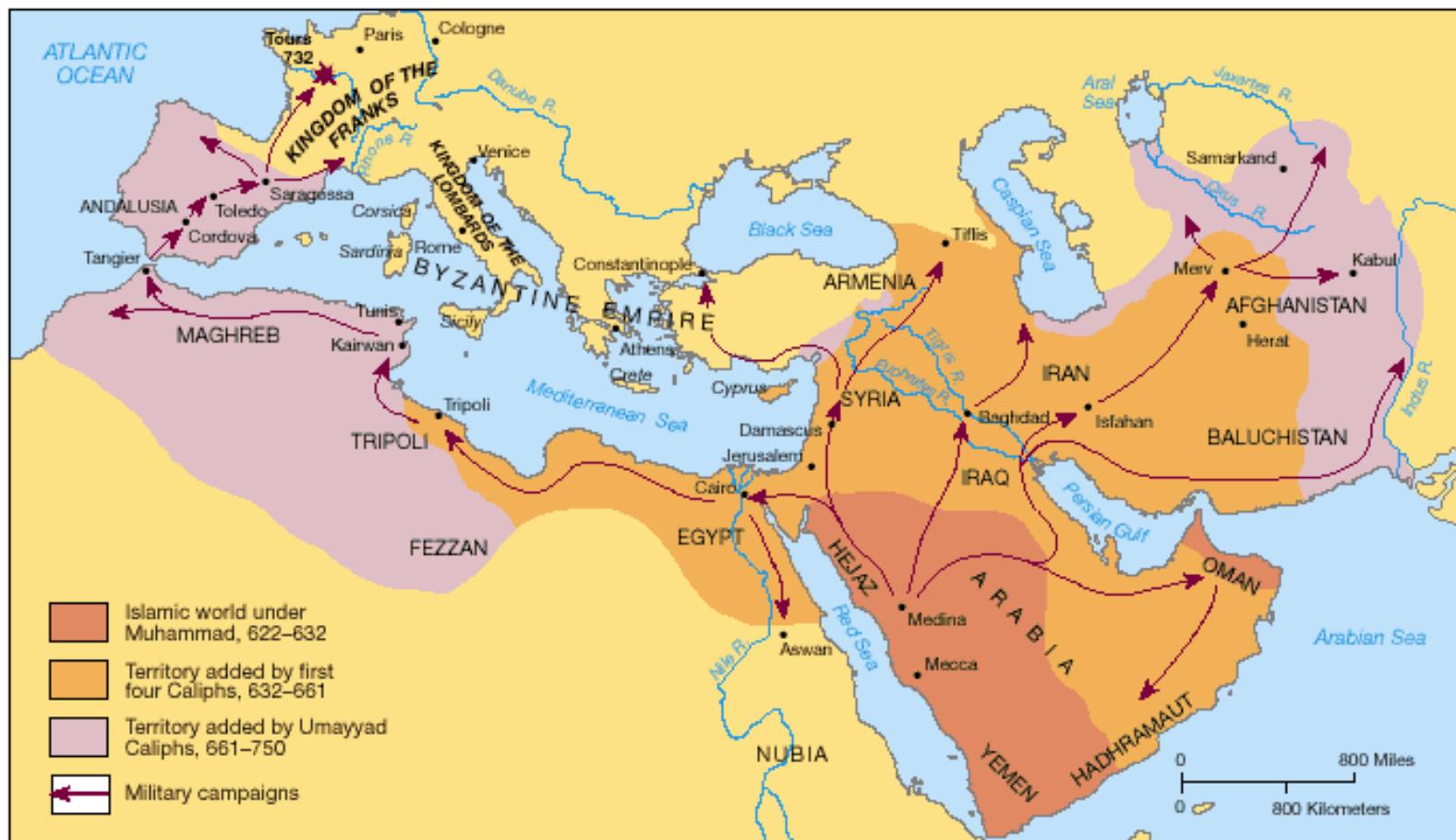
- Universalizing religions have precise places of origin, based on events in the life of a man.
- Ethnic religions have unknown or unclear origins, not tied to single historical individuals.
- Each of the three universalizing religions can be traced to the actions and teachings of a man who lived since the start of recorded history.
- Specific events also led to the division of the universalizing religions into branches.



Origin of Christianity

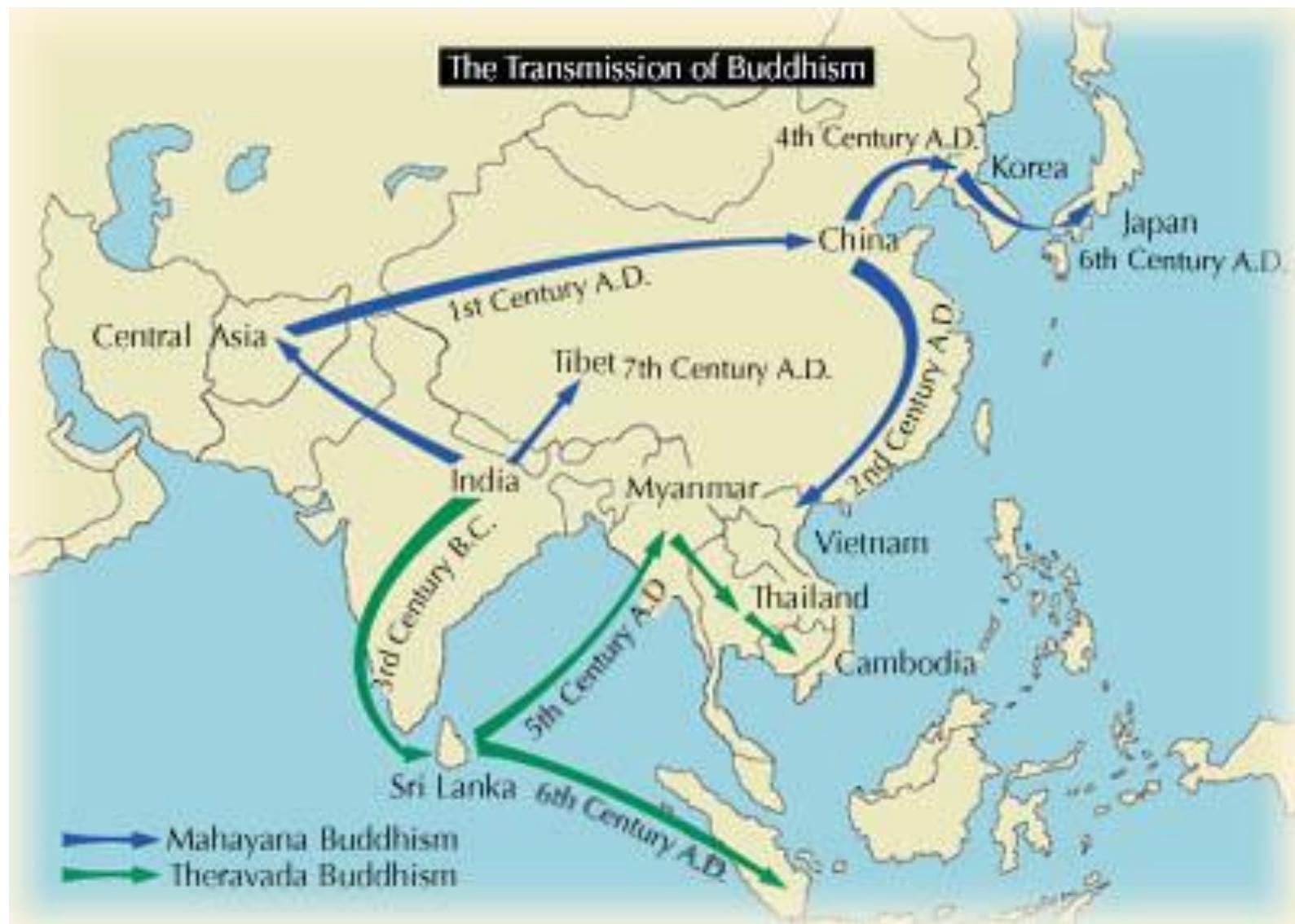


Origin of Islam



The Spread of Islam. The rapid spread of Islam created within a century a unified cultural and economic zone from India to the Atlantic Ocean within.

Origin of Buddhism



Origin of Other Universalizing Religions

- Sikhism and Bahá’I were founded more recently than the three large universalizing religions.
- The founder of Sikhism, Guru Nanak, traveled widely through South Asia around 500 years ago preaching his new faith, and many people became his Sikhs, which is the Hindi word for disciples.
- When it was established in Iran during the nineteenth century, Bahá’I provoked strong opposition from Shiite Muslims.
- The Báb was executed in 1850, as were 20,000 of his followers.

