

**The History of  
Christianity 5:  
The Rise of  
Christianity in the  
Developing World**

# **The Rise of Christianity in the Developing World**

Introduction

Latin America

South-East Asia

Africa

India

The South Pacific

# Introduction

16th century: Christianity largely a European religion

second half of 16th century: Catholic church established

Commission for the Spreading of the Faith

next 2 centuries: Catholic church dominated missionary

work outside Europe, led by the Jesuits

evangelical revival England: led to evangelical

missionary in territories of the British empire

# Introduction

early 1800's: most Christians in Northern Hemisphere,  
predominately Europe

Now:

- most Christians in Southern Hemisphere
- numerical center shifted to South America, southern Africa, parts of Asia

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# Latin America

colonial powers in South America: Spain and Portugal  
missions developed, particularly by Jesuits  
South America extensively Christianized by 1800  
92% nominally Catholic in 1970's

# Latin America and Liberation Theology

1968: Catholic bishops of Latin America gathered at Medellin, Columbia. CELAM II acknowledged that church had often sided with oppressive governments in the region; in the future it would be on the side of the poor

# Liberation Theology

## Basic Themes

1. emphasis on the poor and oppressed
  - Christian theology must begin with the “view from below”
  - “the poor are the authentic theological source for understanding Christian truth and practice” (Juan Luis Segundo)
  - “God is clearly and unequivocally on the side of the poor” (Jose Miguel Bonion)

# Liberation Theology

## Basic Themes

2. theology cannot be detached from social involvement or political action
  - “Theology has to stop explaining the world, and start transforming it” (Bonion)
  - true knowledge of God comes in and through commitment to the poor

# Liberation Theology Criticism

Marxism used as tool of social analysis

Scripture read as a narrative of liberation

often equates salvation with liberation

- emphasis on “structural sin” of society rather than individual redemption

# Latin America

## Rise of the evangelical and charismatic movements

recent explosion of evangelical and pentecostal groups

reasons:

- salvation does not require membership in a specific church
- “free enterprise, leveling form of ministry:” -- evangelicals fed up with their pastors simply go out and establish their own church
- Pentecostalism in tune with elements of popular culture: belief in spirits, exorcism of demons, conversion experience

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# South-East Asia

except for Philippines, Christianity best described as a growing minority presence

# South-East Asia: The Philippines

1521: group of 3,141 islands “discovered” by Ferdinand Magellan

under Spanish rule, missionary work undertaken by the Franciscans and Dominicans

the only predominately Christian country in south-east Asia

1898: came under American rule

Catholicism dominant form; Protestant missionary societies established after end of Spanish rule

# South East Asia: Japan

1549: Jesuit missionary Francis Xavier landed at Kagoshima, Japan

Tokugawa shogunate: long period of isolation

1865: Japan again opened its doors to the west. 60,000 believers still present

-- greatest pocket of believers (20,000) found in Nagasaki despite intermittent persecution

-- Roman Catholic missionaries initialized focused on bringing them back to orthodoxy

Meiji period 1868-1912: Christianity growing following

# Japan

Uchimura Kanzo: founded the Non-Church movement

- traditional church structure Western accretion
- favored loosely organized Bible-study groups based on Asian teacher-pupil relationship

1930's: increasing militarism

- Shintoism and its rites declared patriotic rather than religious

# Japan

1939: Religious Bodies Law

- formal recognition required; foreign ties cut
- Protestants joined forces, formed Nihon Kirisuto Kyodan (still largest Protestant body)
- Roman Catholic Church also recognized

1945: atomic bomb on Nagasaki destroyed the oldest center of Christianity

presently 1.5 to 4% population Christian. Christianity like butter: a western import. Colloquial Japanese term for Christianity: “it tastes of butter”

# South East Asia: China

## History of Evangelism

635: Nestorian missionary from the Eastern church may have arrived. Never achieved any success in conversions

1294: Franciscan missionaries first reached China

Opium wars of 1840's: opened up the Middle Kingdom to some western attitudes

# China

western attempts to evangelize limited success.

- Christianity was western, un-Chinese
- foreigners blamed for defeat of China by Japan in war of 1894-95
- I Ho Ch'uan crusade of 1899-1900: fanatical opposition to foreign investment and religious activity

1911: republic of China. Christianity officially tolerated

# China

1949: People's Republic of China

all western missionaries ejected

"cultural revolution" 1960's: Christianity suppressed by  
force

1979: cultural revolution ended; some Christians had  
survived

# Three strands in modern Chinese Christianity:

1. Three Self Patriotic Movement (Protestant)  
founded 1951

“official” church; state has considerable control

- self-supporting, self-administrating, self-propagating

2. Catholic Church

- independent of pope (“Catholic Patriotic Association”)

- loyal to pope (a problem; government requires churches be independent of foreign agencies)

# Three strands in modern Chinese Christianity:

3. house Church Movement
  - strongly charismatic

# South East Asia: Korea

1883: ended a long period of international isolation with  
Korean-American treaty

1884: American Presbyterian missions established

1910: Japan annexed Korea as colony, imposed  
Shintoism

After WWII: massive growth Christianity

30-40% Koreans now Christians, predominately  
Presbyterians

western culture seen as liberating, not oppressive

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# Africa

1<sup>st</sup> century: North Africa (now Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt) part of Roman Empire

- city of Alexandria (Egypt): major centers of Christian thought

7<sup>th</sup> century: Islamic invasions

- Coptic church survived in Egypt as minority religion
- small nation of Ethiopia remained Christian

16<sup>th</sup> century: Islam dominated in North; native religions in South

- Portugal then began occupying uninhabited island off west coast

# Africa

Late 18<sup>th</sup> century / Early 19<sup>th</sup> century: British missionary societies

- Baptist Missionary Society (BMS): Congo basin
- London Missionary Society (LMS): southern Africa including Madagascar
- Church Missionary Society (CMS): west and east Africa

Middle 19<sup>th</sup> century: Catholic missionary groups

# Africa

## 19<sup>th</sup> century

dominant feature of missionary work in 19<sup>th</sup> century was colonialism

- Belgium
- Britain
- France
- Germany

forms of Christianity:

- Anglicanism
- Catholicism
- Lutheranism

# Africa 19<sup>th</sup> century

## African Christians

- expatriate Europeans. Maintained Christian life of homeland
- indigenous Africans. Those on margins of traditional African society: slaves, women, the poor

# Africa 19<sup>th</sup> century

problems

- communication of distinctive ideas of Christianity
- tensions with traditional African society
  - monogamy vs. polygamy: United African Methodist Church
- threat to traditional tribal power structures and loyalties
  - 1886 massacre by Baganda king Mwanga (region of modern Uganda)

# Africa 20<sup>th</sup> century

48% Christian

more than 70% Christian:

- Central African Republic
- Kenya
- Congo
- Lesotho

# Africa

## 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> Century

Christian-Muslim “interface” 48% nominally Christian;  
42.5% nominally Muslim

end of colonialism; independence

rise of “African Independent Churches”

- emphasis on retaining traditional African heritage within context of Christian faith
- reaction against racism of some white European churches
- often charismatic (healing, exorcisms, interpretation dreams)

# Africa

## African Independent Churches

- emphasis on experience, symbolism rather than word
- strict discipline over members
- delight in hierarchical titles
- conservative in bible interpretation
- most small and local; largest have branches in Western capitals:
  - The Church of The Lord (Aladura)
  - Kimbanguists. Founded by Simon Kimbangu, a young Baptist

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# India

Tradition: apostle Thomas founded Indian Mar Thoma church in 1st century

good evidence Christianity present by the 4th century via overland trading routes

1481: papal bull gave Portuguese king spiritual authority of Indies. Bishopric of Goa established

May 6, 1542: Francis Xavier arrives, starting Jesuit missionary work, translations of Christian works

early 18<sup>th</sup> century: Protestant missions

late 18<sup>th</sup> century: growing political British power and Pope Clement XIV's suppression of Jesuits favored British missionaries

# India

East India Company opposed missionary work (might create ill will; threatening trade)

Charter Act 1813: gave British missionaries protected status, established Anglican bishopric at Calcutta  
- missionary work expanded markedly (restricted to Anglicans)

uprising 1857 (“Indian Mutiny” by contemporary English): growing resentment at westernization

# India

## problem of Caste

enduring problem for both Catholic and Protestant  
1830's: Anglican bishop Wilson opposed its persistence  
by converts; policy followed by other Protestants  
(except Lutherans)

Roman Catholics missionaries divided: Irish opposed  
caste; French respected caste; Italians mixed

- 1744: Pope Benedict XIV ruled Catholics of high  
and low birth should go to Mass at same church
  - Jesuits made 2 entrances and erected little  
walls in their churches

# India: Christianity and Hinduism

Ram Mohun Roy 1772-1833

concluded orthodox Hinduism corrupted

1815: founded *Atmiya Sabha*

advocated abolition of *sati* (often misspelled as suttee)

1820: wrote *Precepts of Jesus*: Christianity embodies  
moral code acceptable to Hindus

non-orthodox:

- Trinitarian concept impossible for Hindus to accept;  
unitarian concept okay
- sins can be forgiven without the atonement of Christ  
(Brahmo theism rejects ideas of revelation and  
atonement)

# Christianity and Hinduism

**Keshub Chunder Sen (1838-84)**

Christ brought to fulfillment all that was best in Indian religion (cf Thomas Aquinas & John Calvin: Christianity brings to fulfillment the aspirations of classic Greece and Rome)

embraced doctrine of Trinity: Brahman indivisible and indescribable. Inner relationships trinitarian:

- *Sat* (being) -- God the Father as “Being”
- *Cit* (reason) -- God the Son as “Word”
- *Amānda* (bliss) -- God the Spirit as “comforter”,  
"bringer of joy and love"

# Christianity and Hinduism

## Raimundo Panikkar

Roman Catholic

wrote *Unknown Christ of Hinduism*

argued for hidden presence of Christ in Hindu practice,  
esp. justice and compassion

many aspects of Hindu thought compatible with  
Christian understanding of Christ

Christian theologians should draw from Hindu thought  
rather than attacking it

# Christianity and Hinduism

## Brahmabandhab Upadhyaya (1861-1907)

Roman Catholic; wore robes of a Hindu holy man;  
thought it possible to be both a Hindu and a Christian  
argued Christianity in the past has used non-Christian  
philosophical systems to explain itself:

- Thomas Aquinas used the philosophy of Aristotle
- Indian Christian theologians should draw upon  
Indian philosophical systems
  - Vedanta expression of Christian theology
  - *Vedas* Indian Old Testament

Apostolic Delegate forbade Catholics to read his work

# India

Sep. 27, 1947: India granted independence  
Anglicans, Methodists, and several smaller Christian  
denominations joined to form "Church of South  
India"  
about 5% of population presently Christian

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# The South Pacific: Oceania

Oceania: the ~1500 islands of the Pacific ocean

- Polynesia (Hawaii to New Zealand, including Tahiti)
- Micronesia (Hawaii to Philippines, including Marshall Islands)
- Melanesia (south of Micronesia, north of Australia, including Fiji, and Solomon Islands)

# The South Pacific: Oceania

voyages of Captain Cook first awakened interest  
1795: London Missionary Society founded; primary  
mission: “the islands of the South Sea”  
mission stations impossible; instead missionary ships  
used

# The South Pacific: Australia

1788: fleet from New South Wales arrived with convicts.

At the last minute William Wilberforce (MP from Yorkshire; known for his campaign against British slave trade) convinced British Navy to allow a chaplain

19<sup>th</sup> century: large numbers immigrants from Britain

1897: “Bush Brotherhood:” evangelization of the interior of the continent

# The South Pacific New Zealand

1814: first missionaries arrived

1841: Bishop George Selwyn 1809-78 missionary bishop  
of New Zealand

# **Australia and New Zealand**

## **Relationship of Christianity with native peoples**

Australia: Kuri (“Aborigines”)

New Zealand: Maori