The History of Christianity: Brief Survey 5. The Rise of Christianity in the Developing World

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1. 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:
     - the Catholic church dominated missionary work outside Europe, led by the Jesuits
     - An evangelical revival in England led to evangelical missionaries in territories of the British empire
   - Early 1800's: most Christians lived in Northern Hemisphere, predominately Europe
   - Today:
     - most Christians live in the Southern Hemisphere
     - the numerical center has shifted to South America, southern Africa, parts of Asia
2. Latin America

2.1. Summary of Christianity's Spread
- The colonial powers in South America were Spain and Portugal
- They developed missions. The Jesuits were particularly active.
- By 1800, South America was extensively Christianized
- In 1970’s 92% of the people nominally Catholic

2.2. Latin America and Liberation Theology

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

2.2.2. Basic themes of Liberation Theology
- 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)
- 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

2.2.3. Criticism of Liberation Theology
Criticism of Liberation Theology has included:
- Marxism used as tool of social analysis
- Scripture read as a narrative of liberation
- Often equates salvation with liberation
  - emphasis is on “structural sin” of society rather than individual redemption

2.3. Rise of the Evangelical and Charismatic Movements
There has been a recent explosion of evangelical and pentecostal groups in Latin America. Reasons:
- Salvation in these groups does not require membership in a specific church
- Involves a “free enterprise, leveling form of ministry:” -- evangelicals fed up with their pastors simply go out and establish their own church
- Pentecostalism often in tune with elements of popular culture: belief in spirits, exorcism of demons, conversion experience
3. South-East Asia
Except for the Philippines, Christianity in South-East Asia is best described as a growing minority presence.

3.1. The Philippines
- 1521: group of 3,141 islands “discovered” by Ferdinand Magellan
- Under Spanish rule, missionary work undertaken by the Franciscans and Dominicans
- 1898: came under American rule
  - Today, the Philippines is the only predominately Christian country in south-east Asia
  - Catholicism is the dominant form for Christianity; Protestant missionary societies were established after end of Spanish rule in 1898

3.2. Japan
3.2.1. Summary of Christian Evangelization Through 19th Century
- 1549: Jesuit missionary Francis Xavier landed at Kagoshima, Japan, began Christian evangelization
- A long period of isolation began under the Tokugawa shogunate
- 1865: Japan again opened its doors to the west. 60,000 believers were still present
  - the greatest pocket of believers (20,000) was found in Nagasaki. They had survived despite intermittent persecution
  - Roman Catholic missionaries initially focused on bringing them back to orthodoxy
- During the Meiji period 1868-1912 Christianity had a growing following

3.2.2. The Non-Church Movement
Uchimura Kanzo: founded the Non-Church Movement
- He felt the traditional church structure was a Western accretion
- The Non-church movement favored loosely organized Bible-study groups based on Asian teacher-pupil relationship

3.2.3. Growing Militarism of the 1930's
The 1930's saw an increasing militarism
- Shintoism and its rites declared patriotic rather than religious

3.2.4. Religious Bodies Law of 1939
- 1939: Religious Bodies Law
  - required formal government recognition of churches; all foreign ties had to be cut
  - Protestants joined forces, formed Nihon Kirisuto Kyodan (Today it is still the largest Protestant body in Japan)
  - Roman Catholic Church also recognized

3.2.5. Atomic Bomb on Nagasaki Destroys the Oldest Center of Christianity
- 1945: atomic bomb on Nagasaki destroyed the oldest center of Christianity in Japan

3.2.6. Christianity Today
- Presently, about 1.5 to 4% population Christian.
Christianity like "butter:" a western import.
The colloquial Japanese term for Christianity: “it tastes of butter”

3.3. China
3.3.1. Summary of Evangelism Through the Early 20th Century:
- 635: Nestorian missionary from the Eastern church may have arrived. They 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
- Western attempts to evangelize of 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

3.3.2. People's Republic of 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

3.3.3. Three Strands in Modern Chinese Christianity
There are three strands in modern Chinese Christianity:
1. The Self Patriotic Movement (Protestant)
   - founded 1951
   - is the “official” church; state has considerable control
     - self-supporting, self-administrating, self-propagating
2. Catholic Church. There are two "Catholic Churches" in China:
   - the government sanctioned Catholic Church which is independent of the pope (“Catholic Patriotic Association”)
   - a Catholic Church that remains loyal to pope (a problem; government requires churches be independent of foreign agencies)
3. House Church Movement
   - strongly charismatic

3.4. 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 is seen as liberating, not oppressive
4. Africa

4.1. First Century
- **1st century**: North Africa (now Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt) was part of Roman Empire
  - The city of Alexandria (Egypt) was a major center of Christian thought

4.2. Seventh Century
- **7th century**: Islamic invasions
  - Coptic church survived in Egypt as a minority religion
  - Small nation of Ethiopia remained Christian

4.3. Sixteenth Century
- In the **16th century**:
  - Islam dominant religion in North.
  - In the South, native religions dominated
  - Portugal began occupying uninhabited island off west coast

4.4. Late Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries

4.4.1 Missionary Societies and Groups Begin Evangelization
- **Late 18th century / Early 19th century**: British missionary societies actively evangelized Africa
  - Baptist Missionary Society (BMS): Congo basin
  - London Missionary Society (LMS): southern Africa including Madagascar
  - Church Missionary Society (CMS): west and east Africa
- In the **middle 19th century**: Catholic missionary groups arrived

4.4.2. Colonialism
- The dominant feature of missionary work in the late 19th century was colonialism
  - Belgium
  - Britain
  - France
  - Germany

Several forms of Christianity therefore were established:
- Anglicanism
- Catholicism
- Lutheranism

4.4.3. Two Type of Christians
- Two Types of African Christians in the late 19th century:
  - Expatriate Europeans. They maintained Christian life of homeland
  - Indigenous Africans. They tended to be those on the margins of traditional African society: slaves, women, the poor
4.4.4. Problems
Problems faced by Christianity in the 19th Century:
- It was difficult to communicate the distinctive ideas of Christianity
- Christianity created tensions with traditional African society
  - for example, the issue of monogamy vs. polygamy. Lead to the establishment of the United African Methodist Church, which allowed polygamy
- was a threat to the traditional tribal power structures and loyalties
  - 1886 massacre of Christians by Baganda king Mwanga (region of modern Uganda)

4.5. Christian Church in Africa Today
4.5.1. Christian Population
Overall, about 48% of Africans are Christian
Countries in which the population is more than 70% Christian:
- Central African Republic
- Kenya
- Congo
- Lesotho

4.5.2. Christians and Muslims
Christian-Muslim “interface” 48% nominally Christian; 42.5% nominally Muslim

4.5.3. End of Colonialism
20th Century brought an end to colonialism and independence for many African states.

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

5.1. Summary of Christianity's Spread Through the 19th Century

- There is good evidence Christianity was present by the 4th century, spread via overland trading routes.
- 1481: Papal bull gave Portuguese king spiritual authority of Indies. Bishopric of Goa established.
- 1542: Francis Xavier arrives, starting Jesuit missionary work, translations of Christian works.
- Early 18th century: Protestant missions established.
- Late 18th century: Growing political British power and Pope Clement XIV's suppression of Jesuits favored British missionaries.
- The East India Company opposed missionary work (it might create ill will; threatening trade).
- Charter Act 1813: Gave British missionaries protected status, established Anglican bishopric at Calcutta.
- As a result, missionary work expanded markedly (but was restricted to Anglicans).
- The Uprising of 1857 (called the “Indian Mutiny” by contemporary English writers): Engendered a growing resentment of westernization.

5.2. The Problem of Caste

How to deal with Caste was an enduring problem for both Catholic and Protestant.

- 1830s: Anglican bishop Wilson opposed its persistence by converts; policy followed by other Protestants (except Lutherans).
- Roman Catholics missionaries were 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.

5.3. Christianity and Hinduism

5.3.1 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 a moral code acceptable to Hindus.
- His was a Non-orthodox Christianity:
  - 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).

5.3.2 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”
  - Amanda (bliss) -- God the Spirit as “comforter”, “bringer of joy and love”
5.3.3. **Raimundo Panikkar**
- A Roman Catholic
- He wrote *Unknown Christ of Hinduism*
- Argued for a hidden presence of Christ in Hindu practice, esp. justice and compassion
- Believed many aspects of Hindu thought compatible with Christian understanding of Christ
- Christian theologians should draw from Hindu thought rather than attacking it

5.3.4 **Brahmabandhab Upadhyaya (1861-1907)**
Brahmabandhab Upadhyaya was a Roman Catholic; wore robes of a Hindu holy man; thought it possible to be both a Hindu and a Christian. He argued
- Christianity in the past has used non-Christian philosophical systems to explain itself:
  - Thomas Aquinas used the philosophy of Aristotle
- In the same way, Indian Christian theologians should draw upon Indian philosophical systems:
  - *Vedanta* was an expression of Christian theology
  - The *Vedas* was the Indian "Old Testament"

The Roman Catholic Apostolic Delegate forbade Catholics to read his work

5.4. **Independence and the Church of South India**
- Sep. 27, 1947: India granted independence
- Anglicans, Methodists, and several smaller Christian denominations then joined to form the "**Church of South India**"
- Today, about 5% of the population is Christian

6. **The South Pacific**

6.1. **Oceania**
Oceania: the approximately 1500 islands of the Pacific ocean. Includes:
- 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 voyages of Captain Cook first awakened interest
- **1795**: London Missionary Society founded; its primary mission: “the islands of the South Sea”
- The establishment of mission stations impractical; instead they used missionary ships

6.2. **Australia**
- **1788**: a fleet from New South Wales arrived with convicts. Before the ship had sailed William Wilberforce (MP from Yorkshire; known for his campaign against British slave trade) had convinced British Navy at the last minute to allow a chaplain
- **19th century**: large numbers immigrants from Britain
- **1897**: “Bush Brotherhood” founded for the evangelization of the interior of the continent
6.3. New Zealand
1814: first missionaries arrived
1841: Bishop George Selwyn (1809-78) missionary bishop of New Zealand

6.4. Relationship of Christianity with Native People
The relationship of Christianity with native peoples has been an issue in both Australia and New Zealand:
- Australia: Kuri ("Aborigines")
- New Zealand: Maori