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
The Rise of Christianity in the Developing World

Introduction

**Latin America**
South-East Asia
Africa
India
The South Pacific
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 shotgunate: 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

1st century: North Africa (now Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt) part of Roman Empire
   - city of Alexandria (Egypt): major centers of Christian thought
7th century: Islamic invasions
   - Coptic church survived in Egypt as minority religion
   - small nation of Ethiopia remained Christian
16th century: Islam dominated in North; native religions in South
   - Portugal then began occupying uninhabited island off west coast
Africa

Late 18th century / Early 19th 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 19th century: Catholic missionary groups
Africa
19th century

dominant feature of missionary work in 19th century was colonialism
- Belgium
- Britain
- France
- Germany
forms of Christianity:
- Anglicanism
- Catholicism
- Lutheranism
Africa
19\textsuperscript{th} century

African Christians
- expatriate Europeans. Maintained Christian life of homeland
- indigenous Africans. Those on margins of traditional African society: slaves, women, the poor
Africa
19th 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)
48% Christian
more than 70% Christian:
- Central African Republic
- Kenya
- Congo
- Lesotho
Africa
20th and 21st 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 18th century: Protestant missions

late 18th 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 worked 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 mispelled 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”
- Amanda (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 Upadhya (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 the population is 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
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
19th 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