

Religion and Cultural Ecology: Sacred Cattle in India

- *Ahimsa* is the Hindu doctrine of nonviolence that forbids the killing of animals.
- Western economic development experts often use this principle as an example of how religion can stand in the way of development.
 - Hindus seem to irrationally ignore a valuable food source (beef).
 - Hindus also raise scraggly and thin cows, unlike the bigger cattle of Europe and the U.S.
- These views are ethnocentric and wrong as cattle play an important adaptive role in an Indian ecosystem that has evolved over thousands of years
 - Hindus use cattle for transportation, traction, and manure.
 - Bigger cattle eat more, making them more expensive to keep.

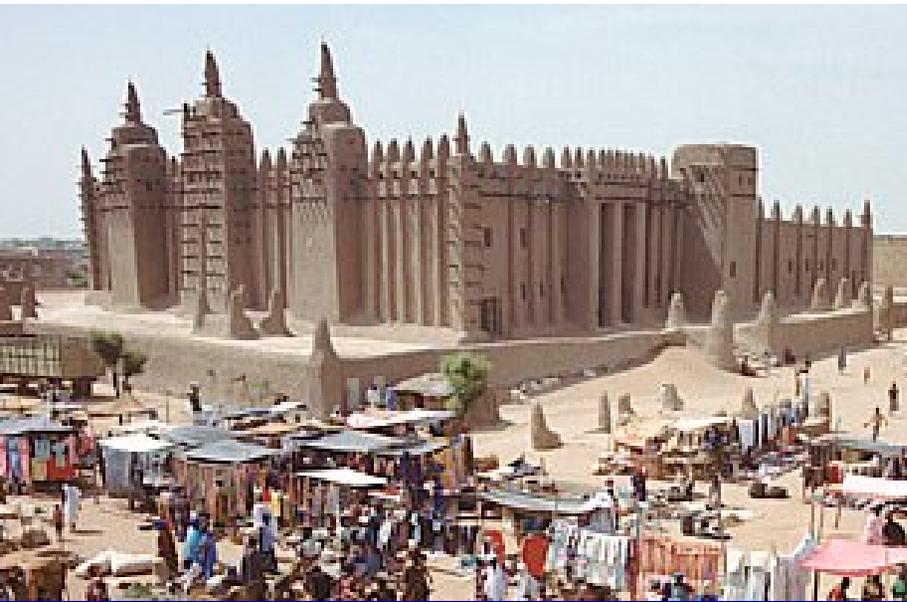
Religion and Social Control in Afghanistan

- This article describes the social conditions in Afghanistan under Taliban rule.
- The Taliban are invoking a very strict interpretation of the Koran as the basis for social behavior.
- Women are required to wear veils, remain indoors, and are not allowed to be with males who are not blood relatives.
- Men are required to grow bushy beards and are barred from playing cards, flying kites, and keeping pigeons.

A Pilgrimage to Walt Disney World

- Walt Disney World functions much like a sacred shrine that is a major pilgrimage destination
 - It has an inner, sacred center surrounded by an outer more secular domain.
 - Parking lot designations are distinguished with totem-like images of the Disney cast of characters.
- The monorail provides travelers with a brief liminal / transitional period as they cross between the outer, secular world into the inner, sacred center of the Magic Kingdom.
- Within the Magic Kingdom
 - Spending time in the Magic Kingdom reaffirms, maintains, and solidifies the world of Disney as all of the pilgrims share a common status as visitors while experiencing the same adventures.
 - Most of the structures and attractions at the Magic Kingdom are designed to reaffirm and recall a traditional set of American values.

The Geography / Globalization of Religion



- Origins and Distributions of the Major Religions
- Key Terms
- Religious Ecology
- Secularism, Fundamentalism, and Conflict

The Roots of Religion

Animism (Shamanism) - the belief that all objects, animals, and beings are "animated" or possess a spirit and a conscious life. Also called shamanism because of the prominence of a Shaman.

- Such beliefs are common among hunter-gatherers.
- 10% of Africans follow such traditional ethnic religions.
- These beliefs are losing ground to Christianity and Islam throughout Africa.



Nigerian Shaman



Native American Animism

Humankind has not woven the web of life. We are but one thread within it. Whatever we do to the web, we do to ourselves. All things are bound together. All things connect.

~ Chief Seattle



Bear Dance

How do Universalizing and Ethnic Religions Differ?

Universalizing

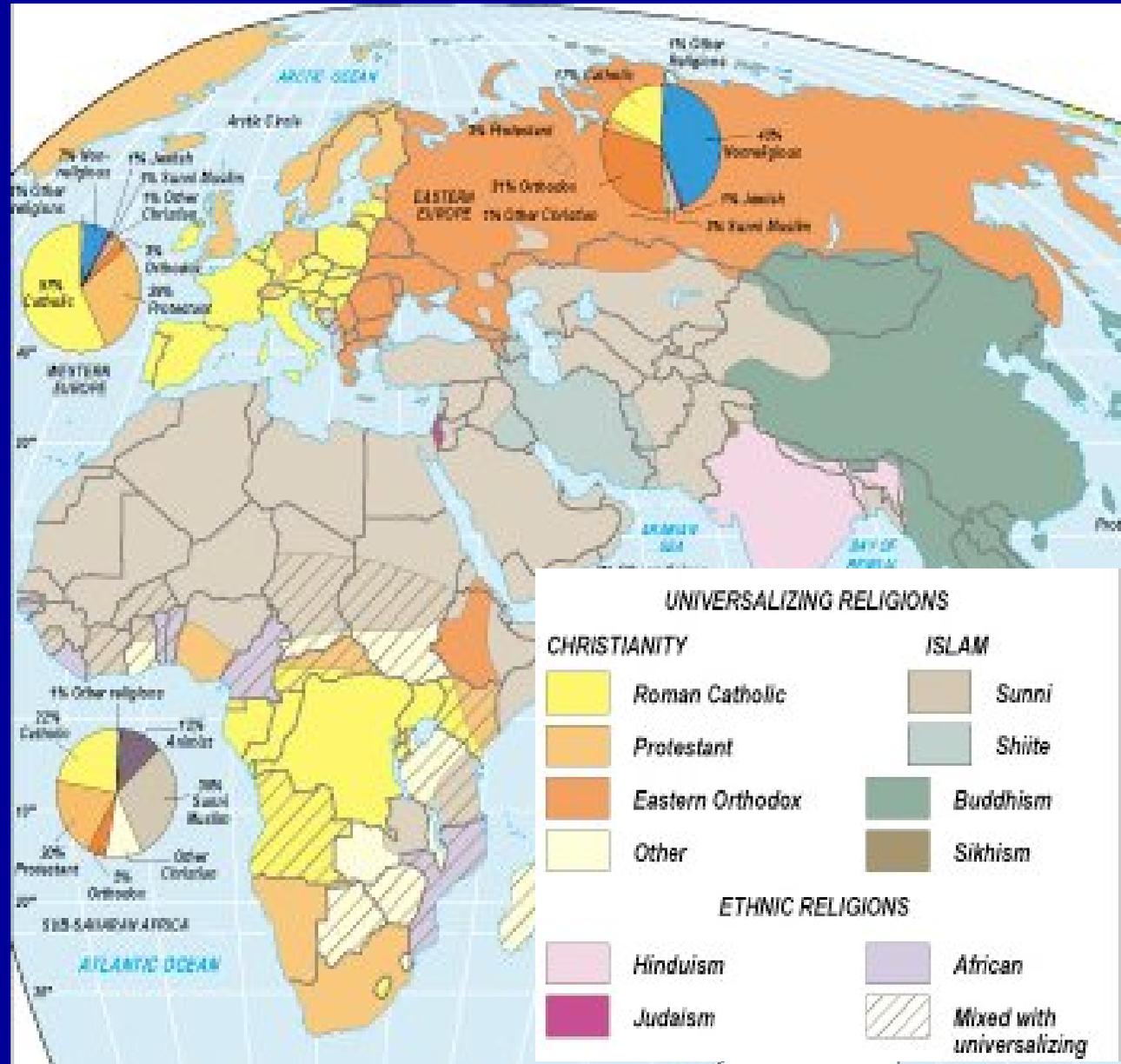
- Appeal to people everywhere
- Individual founder (prophet)
- Message diffused widely (missionaries)
- Followers distributed widely.
- Holidays based on events in founder's life.

Ethnic

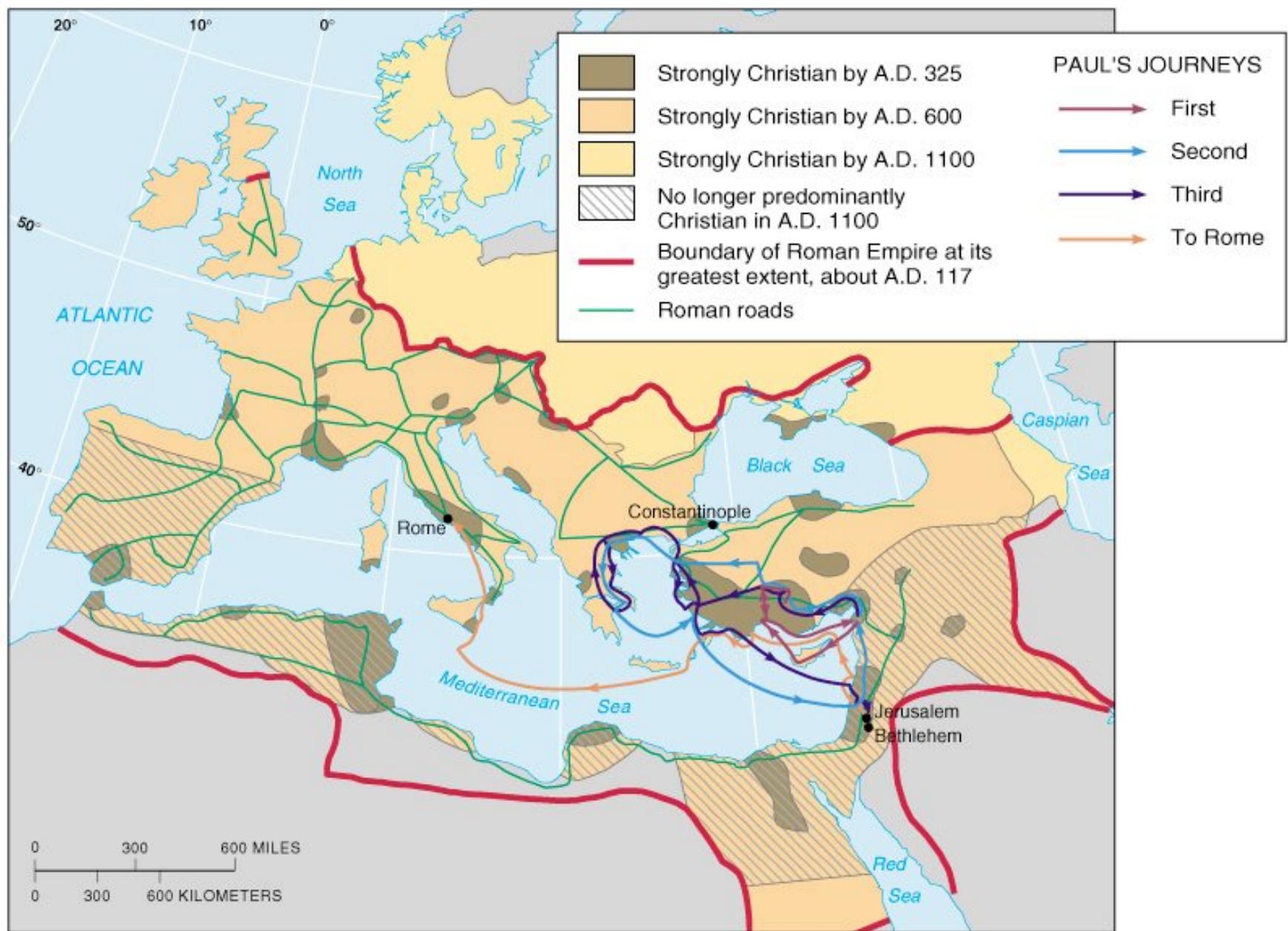
- Has meaning in particular place only.
- Unknown source.
- Content focused on place and landscape of origin.
- Followers highly clustered.
- Holidays based on local climate and agricultural practice.

Christianity

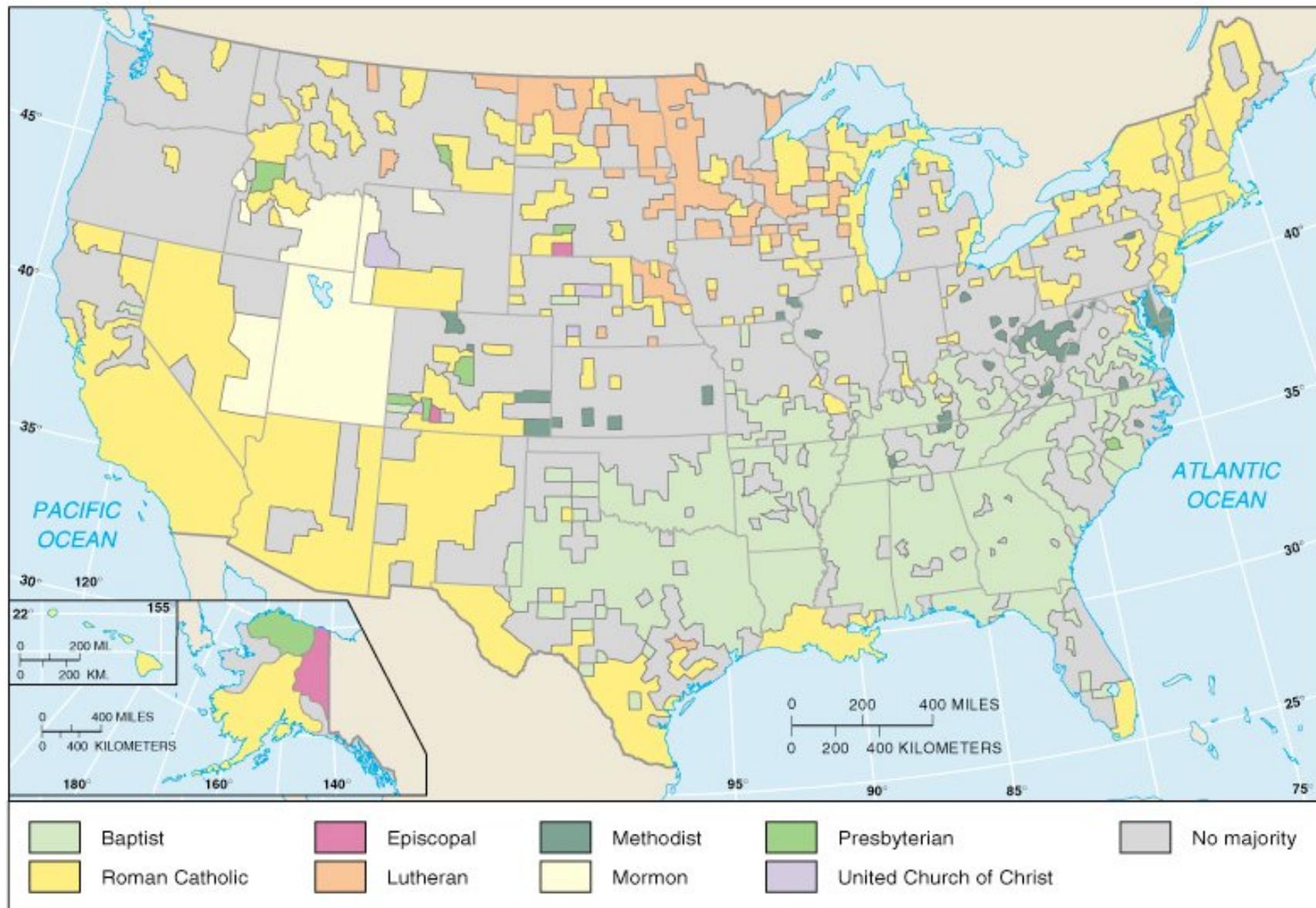
- 2 billion adherents make it most practiced in the world.
- Originated in Bethlehem (8-4 BCE) and Jerusalem (CE 30) with Jesus Christ.
- Spread by missionaries and the Roman Empire (Constantine 313).
- It is the most practiced religion in Africa today.



Diffusion of Christianity

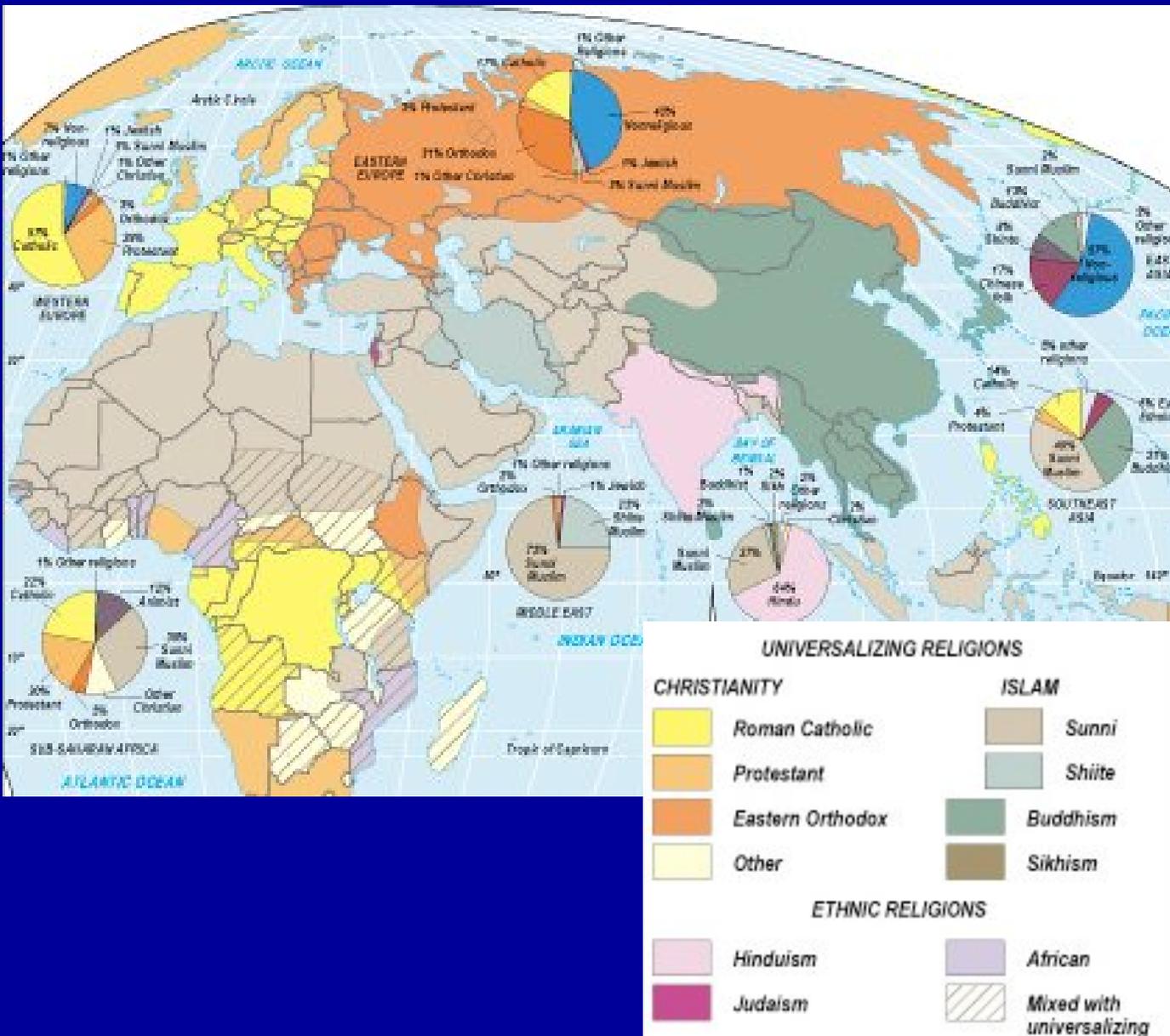


Christianity in the U.S.



Islam

- 1 billion + adherents
- Originated in Saudi Arabia (Mecca and Medina) around 600.
- Spread originally by Muslim armies to N. Africa, and the Near East.
- Sunni (83%) - throughout the Muslim world.
- Shiite - Iran (40%), Pakistan (15%), Iraq (10%)



Prophet: Muhammad

Holy Text: Koran



Islam

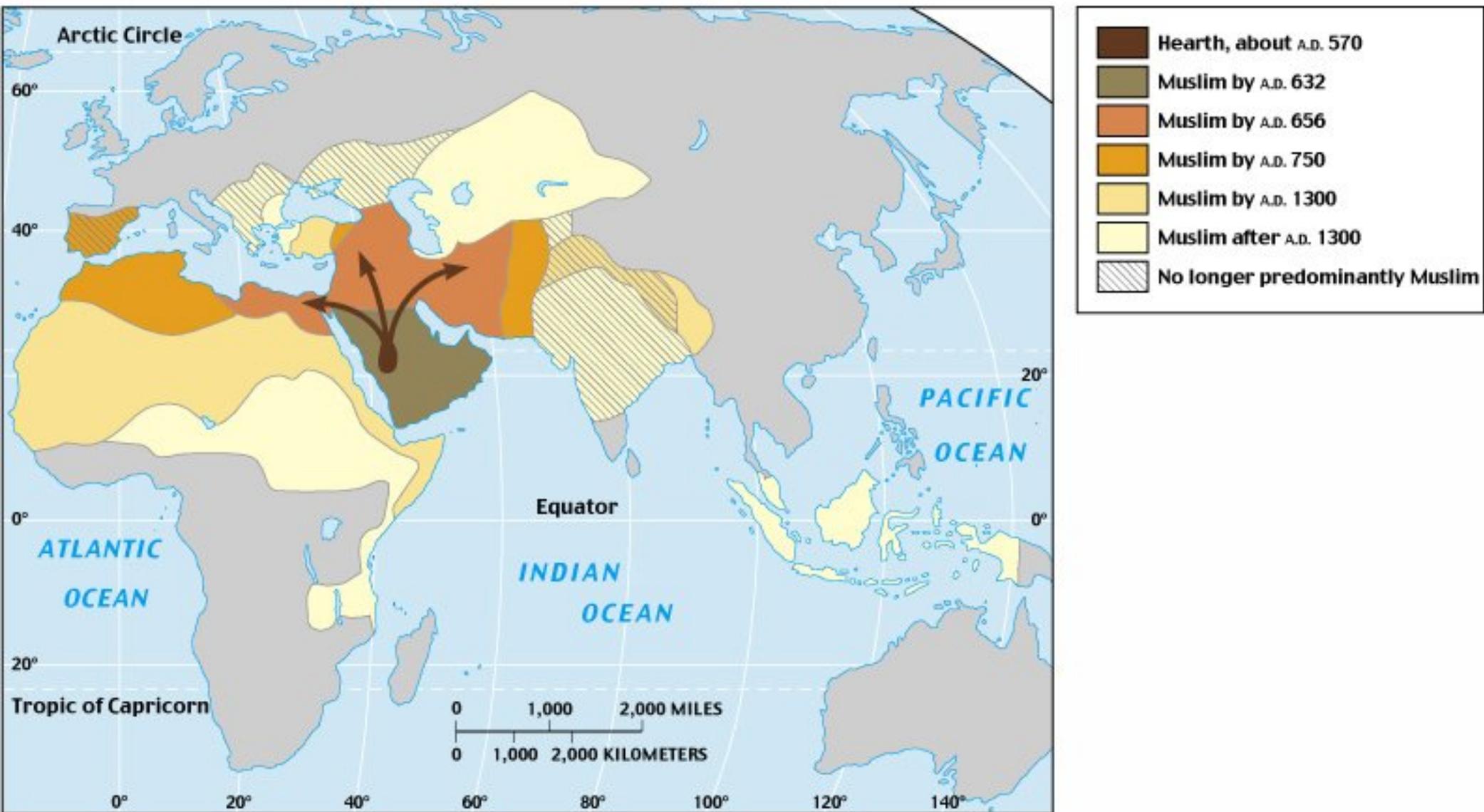
Five Pillars of Islam

- There is one God and Muhammad is his messenger.
- Prayer five times daily, facing Mecca.
- The giving of alms(charity) to the poor.
- Fasting during Ramadan for purification and submission.
- If body and income allow, a Muslim must make a pilgrimage (hajj) to Mecca in his lifetime.

Islamic Calender

- Begins in 622 when Muhammad was commanded to Mecca from Medina (Hijra).
- Lunar calendar makes Ramadan move through the seasons (30 year cycle - 19 years with 354 days and 11 with 355).

Diffusion of Islam



Islam is considered the fastest growing religion in America. Only a small part of this growth is from black Muslims and the *Nation of Islam*.

Buddhism

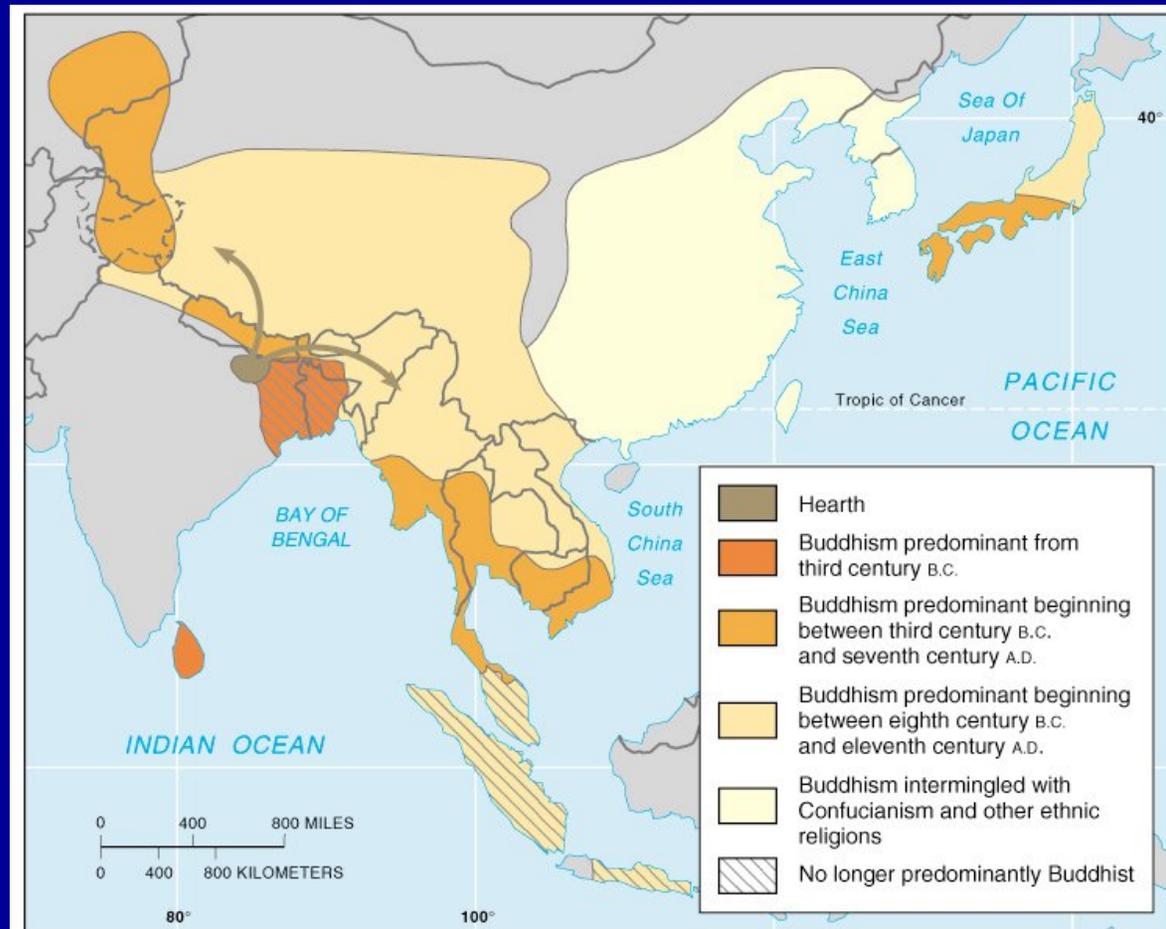
- 300 million + adherents primarily in China and S.E. Asia

- Originated near modern Nepal around 530 BCE by prince Siddhartha Guatama.

- Spread originally in India and Sri Lanka by Magadhan Empire (250 BCE).

- Indian traders brought it to China in 1st century CE.

- By 6th century it had lost its hold on India, but was now in Korea and Japan.



Four Noble Truths:

1. All living beings must endure suffering.
2. Suffering, which is caused by desires (for life), leads to reincarnation.
3. The goal of existence is an escape from suffering and the endless cycle of reincarnation by means of Nirvana.
4. Nirvana is achieved by the Eightfold Path, which includes rightness of understanding, mindfulness, speech, action, livelihood, effort, thought, and concentration.

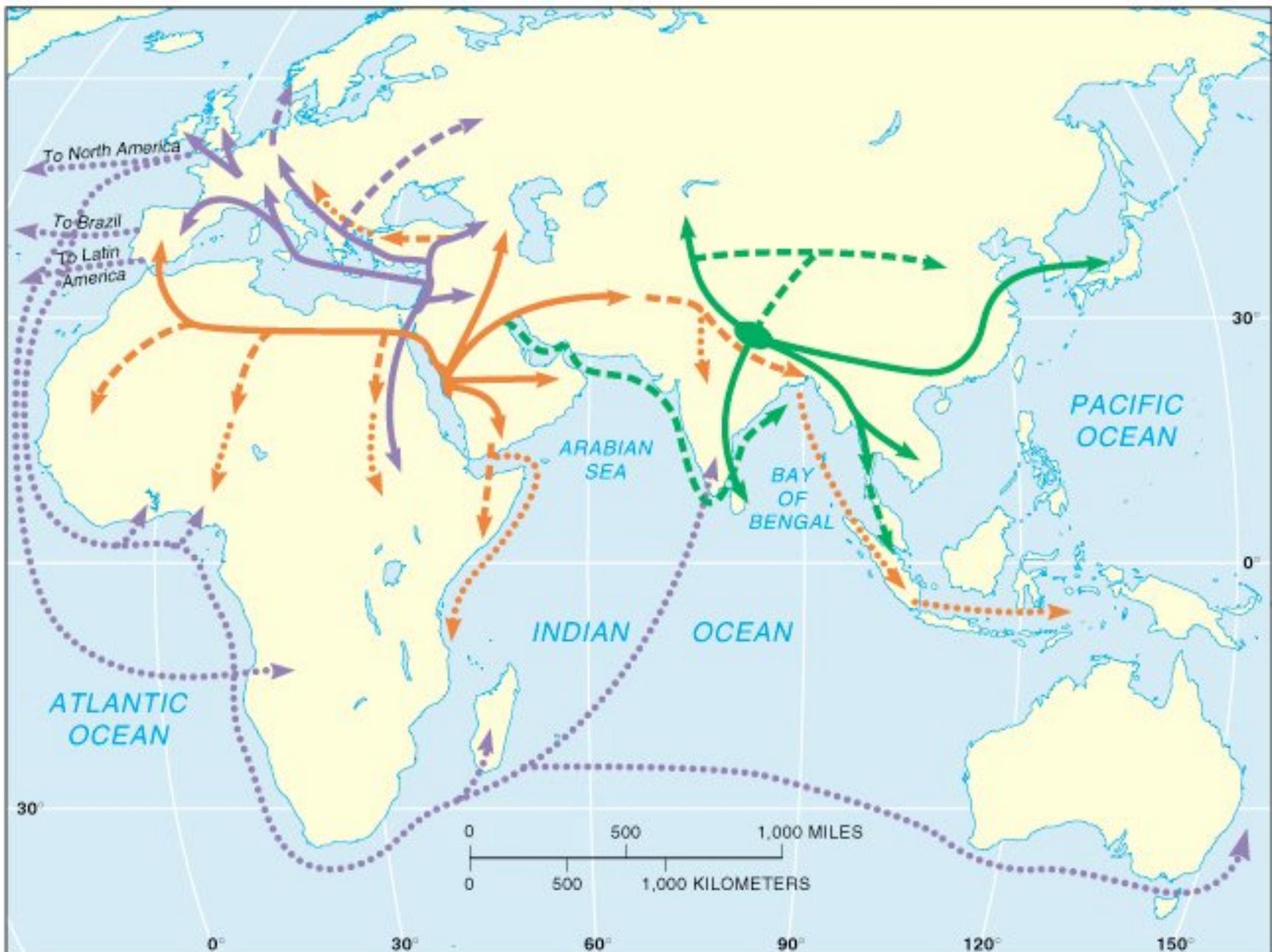
Karma - your past bad or good actions determine your progress toward Nirvana through reincarnation. You are your own God.

Buddhism



Theravada - the older, more severe form which requires the renouncing of all worldly goods and desires.

Mahayana - focuses on Buddha's teachings and compassion.



HEARTH	By 8th century	By 12th century	After 12th century
 Christianity			
 Islam			
 Buddhism			

Hinduism

- 900 million + adherents primarily in India
- Hinduism is an ancient term for the complex and diverse set of religious beliefs practiced around the Indus River.
- Reincarnation - endless cycles. Karma and Yoga.
- Coastlines and river banks most sacred sites.
- Vishnu and Shiva most common of hundreds of deities.



Hinduism



Dancing Shiva/Nataraj



Ganesh



Lord Vishnu

Key Terms

Syncretism - the mixing of two or more religions that creates unique rituals, artwork, and beliefs.

Examples include syncretism of Christianity and indigenous beliefs in the Americas, Africa, and Asia.

- Caribbean Voodoo (Haiti, Louisiana)
- Christianity in Indigenous Latin American

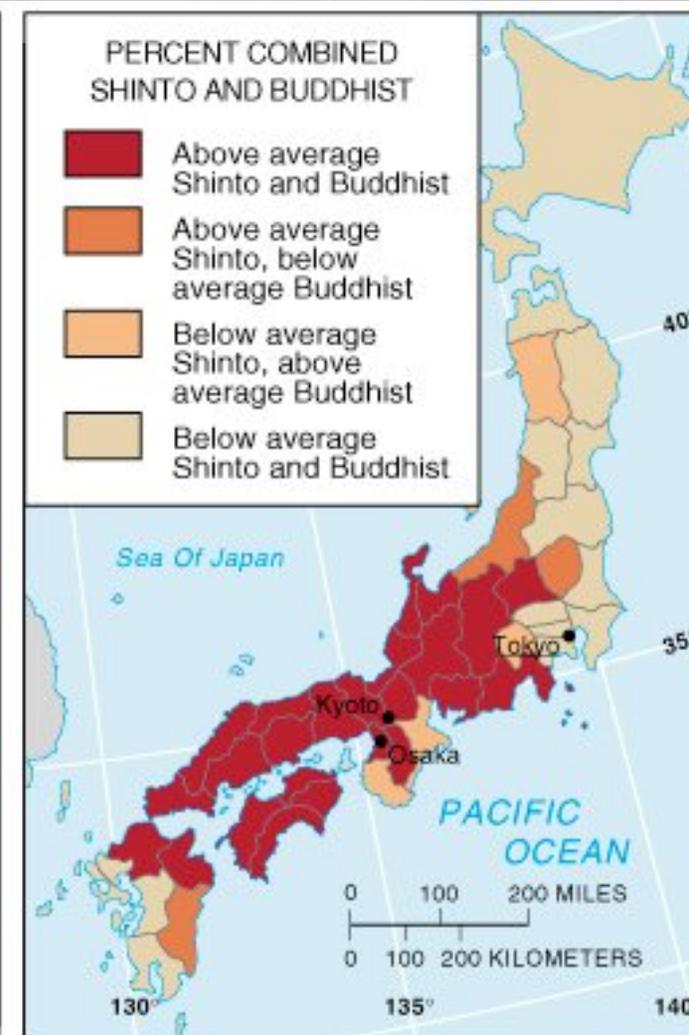
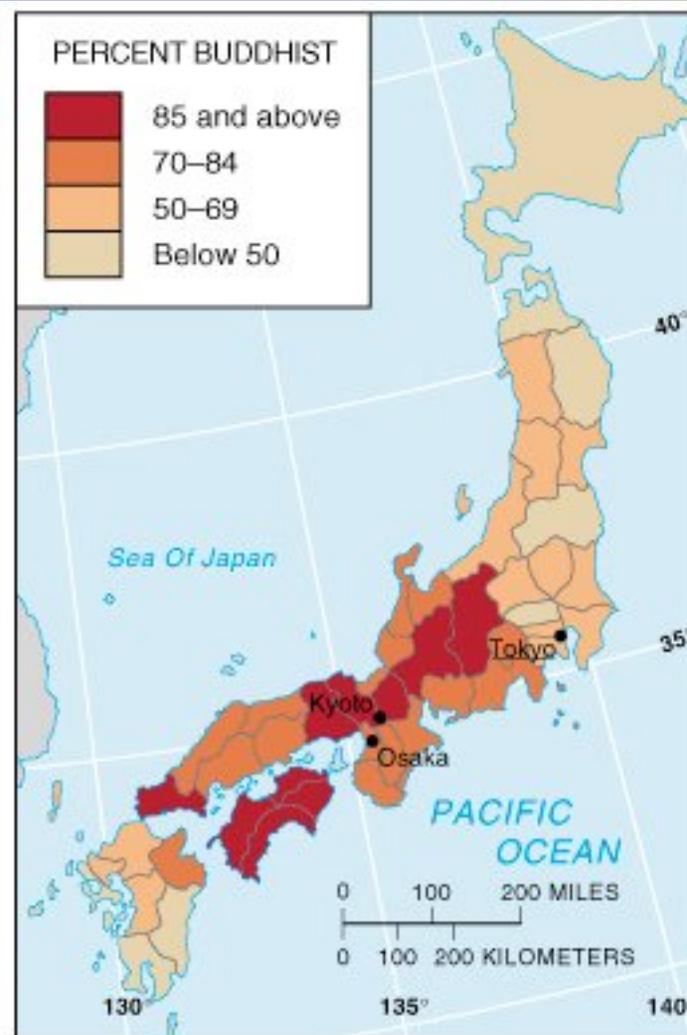
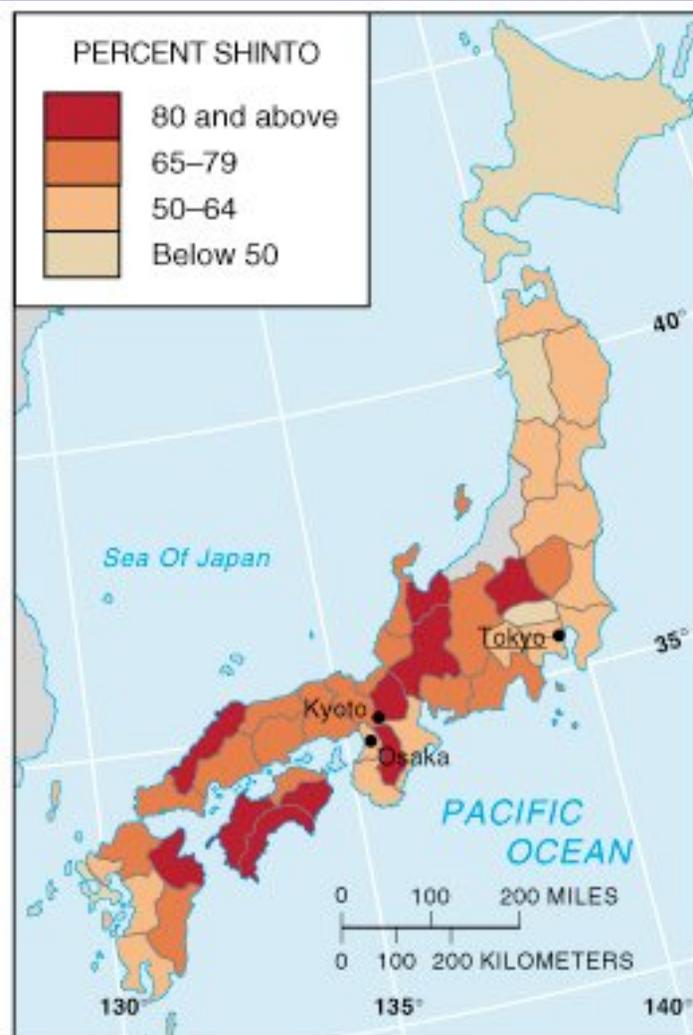


Voodoo Dolls, Haiti



Shrine, Bangalore, India

Syncretism - the mixing of two or more religions that creates unique rituals, artwork, and beliefs.



Key Terms

Secularization - a process that is leading to increasingly large groups of people who claim no allegiance to any church.

Some of these people are atheists. Others simply do not practice. Still others call themselves spiritual, but not religious.

- Common in Europe and the cities of the U.S.
- Common in former Soviet Union and China.

Fundamentalism - a process that is leading to increasingly large groups of people who claim there is only one way to interpret worship.

Fundamentalists generally envision a return to a more perfect religion and ethics they imagine existed in the past.

- Common in the U.S. and in some Islamic nations.

Religious Conflict

The Big Question: Can secular society exist alongside traditional and fundamentalist religious sects and states?

- We are quick to notice fundamentalism abroad (i.e. Salman Rushdie's death sentence by Shia clerics) and not so quick to recognize it at home (abortion clinic bombings; Southern Baptist Convention's calls for women to submit to their husbands' authority).
- American evangelical Christianity and Islamic fundamentalism are the two most influential fundamentalist movements in the world.
- Fewer and fewer states are governed by an official church.