

Key Issues

- Where are religions distributed?
- Why do religions have different distributions?
- Why do religions organize space and distinctive patterns?
- Why do territorial conflicts arise among religious groups?

KI #1 Where Are Religions Distributed?

- Distribution of Religions

- Geographers distinguish two types of religions:

1. *Universalizing religions*- attempt to be global by appealing to all people regardless of location or culture.

- 58 percent of world's population practices a universalizing religion.

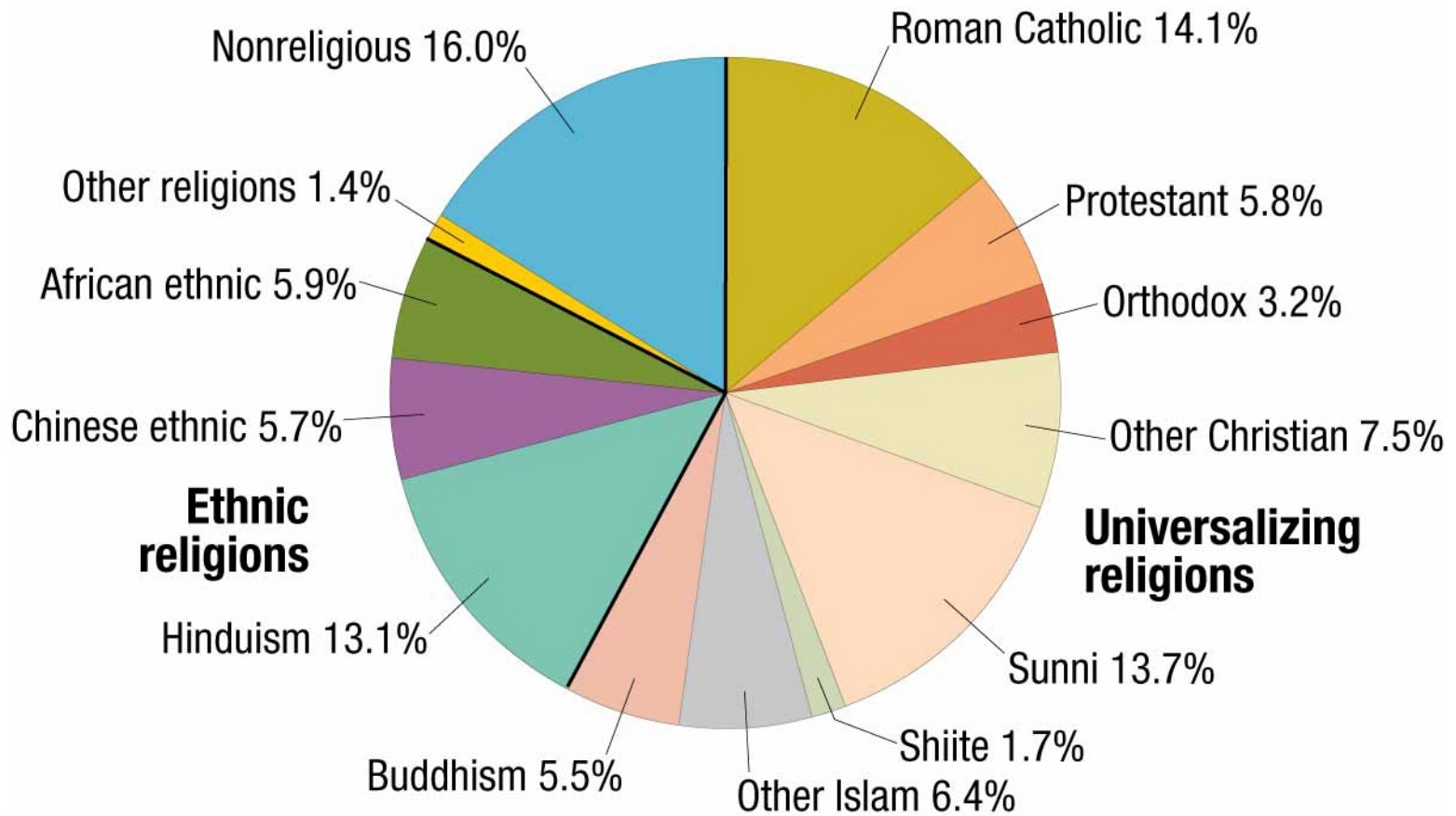
- » Christianity: 2.1 billion Christians

- » Islam: 1.5 billion Muslims

- » Buddhism: 376 million Buddhists

2. *Ethnic religions*- appeal primarily to one group of people living in one place.

- 26 percent of world's population practices an ethnic religion.



Where Are Religions Distributed?

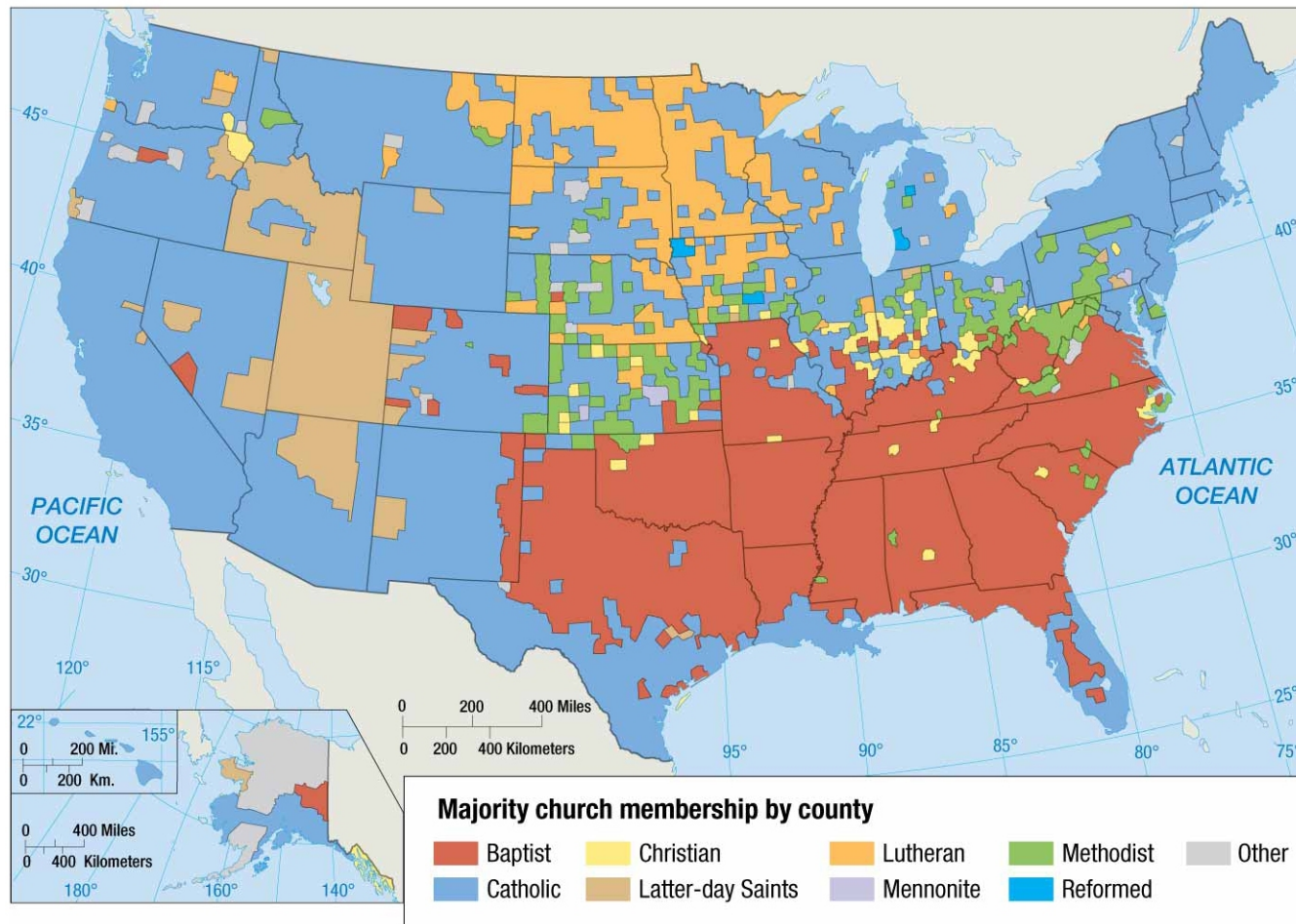
- Branches of Universalizing Religions
 - Three principal universalizing religions divided into branches, denominations, and sects.
 - A *branch* is a large and fundamental division within a religion.
 - A *denomination* is a division of a branch that unites a number of local congregations in a single legal and administrative body.
 - A *sect* is a relatively small group that has broken away from an established denomination.

Where Are Religions Distributed?

- Branches of Universalizing Religions
 - Branches of Christianity in Europe
 - Three major branches include...
 1. Roman Catholic (51 percent of the world's Christians)
 2. Protestant (24 percent of the world's Christians)
 3. Orthodox (11 percent of the world's Christians)
 - Distributions
 - Roman Catholicism dominant branch in southwestern and eastern Europe.
 - Protestantism dominant branch in northwestern Europe.
 - Orthodoxy dominant branch in eastern and southeastern Europe.

Where Are Religions Distributed?

- Branches of Universalizing Religions
 - Branches of Christianity in the Western Hemisphere
 - 93 percent of Christians in Latin America are Roman Catholic.
 - 40 percent in North America
 - Protestant churches have approximately 82 million members in the United States.
 - Baptist church has largest number of adherents (37 million).



Where Are Religions Distributed?

- Islam

- Branches of Islam

- Two major branches include...

- 1. Sunni

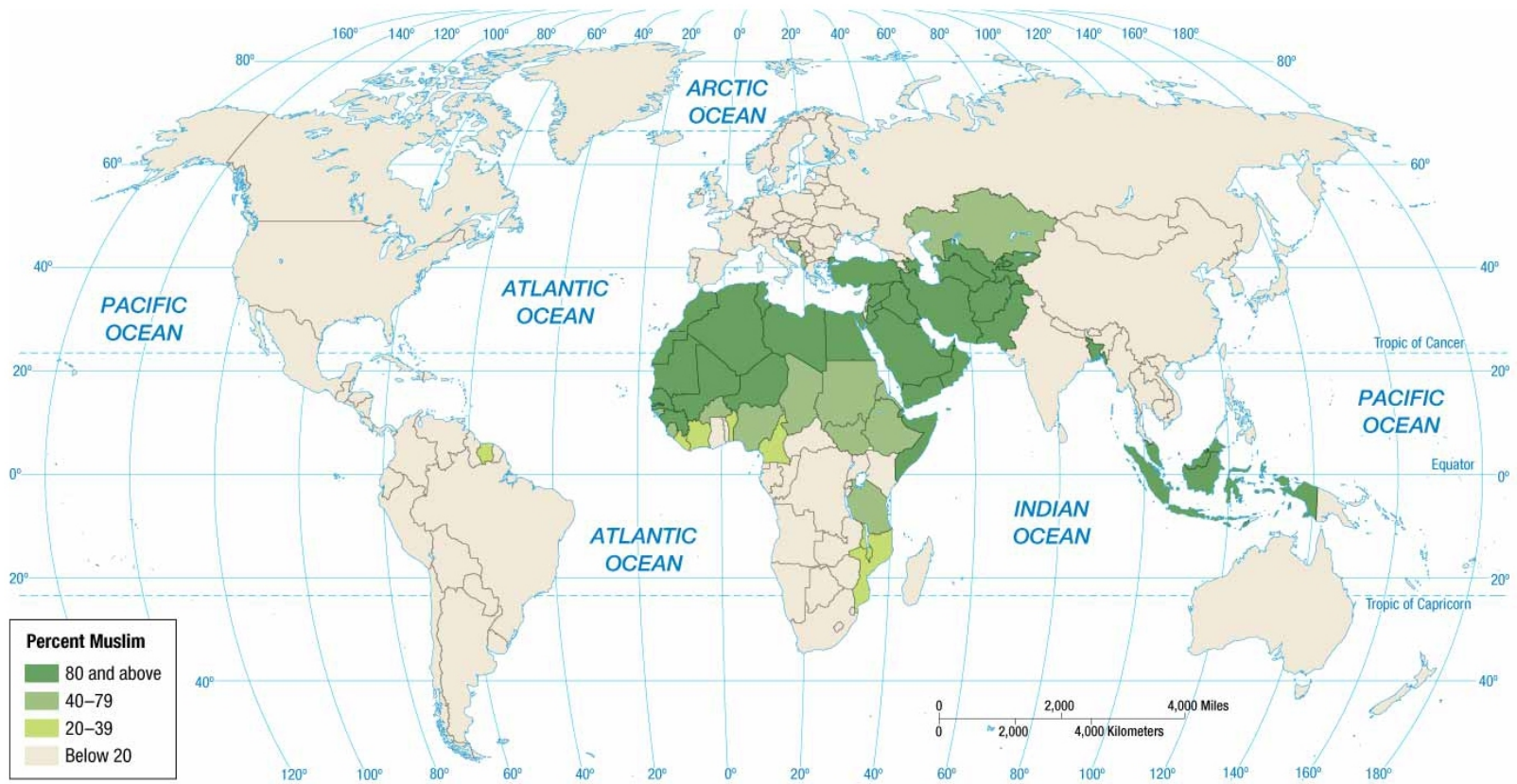
- » Largest branch in most Muslim countries in Southwest Asia and North Africa

- » 83 percent of all Muslims

- 2. Shiite

- » Greatly concentrated in the Middle Eastern countries of Iran, Azerbaijan, Iraq, Oman, and Bahrain

- » 16 percent of all Muslims



Percent Muslim

- 80 and above
- 40-79
- 20-39
- Below 20

0 2,000 4,000 Miles
 0 2,000 4,000 Kilometers

Where Are Religions Distributed?

- Buddhism

- Branches of Buddhism

- Three major branches include...

- 1. Mahayana

- » 56 percent of Buddhists

- » Located primarily in China, Japan, and Korea

- 2. Theravada

- » 38 percent of Buddhists

- » Located primarily in Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, and Thailand

- 3. Vajrayana

- » 6 percent of Buddhists

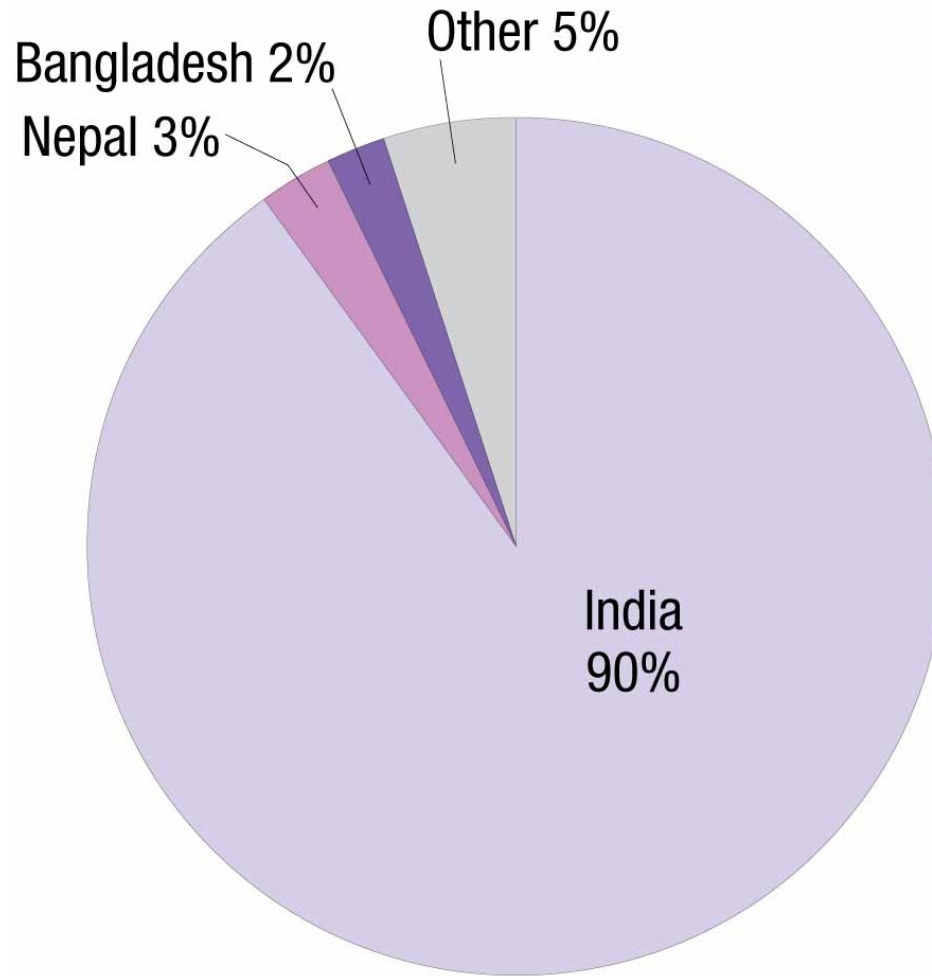
- » Located primarily in Tibet and Mongolia.



Where Are Religions Distributed?

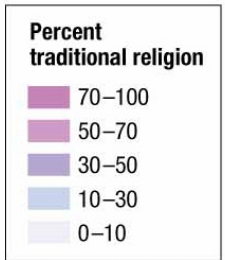
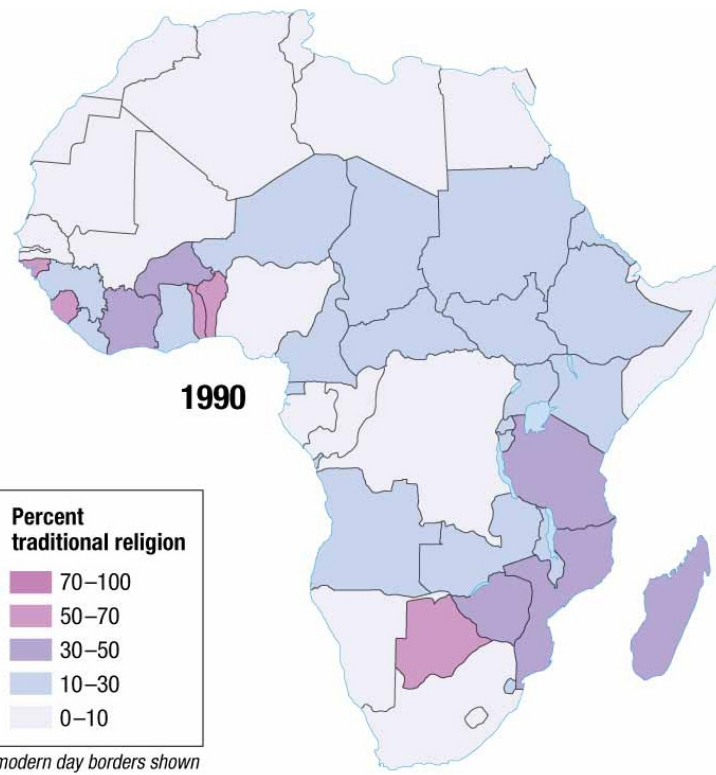
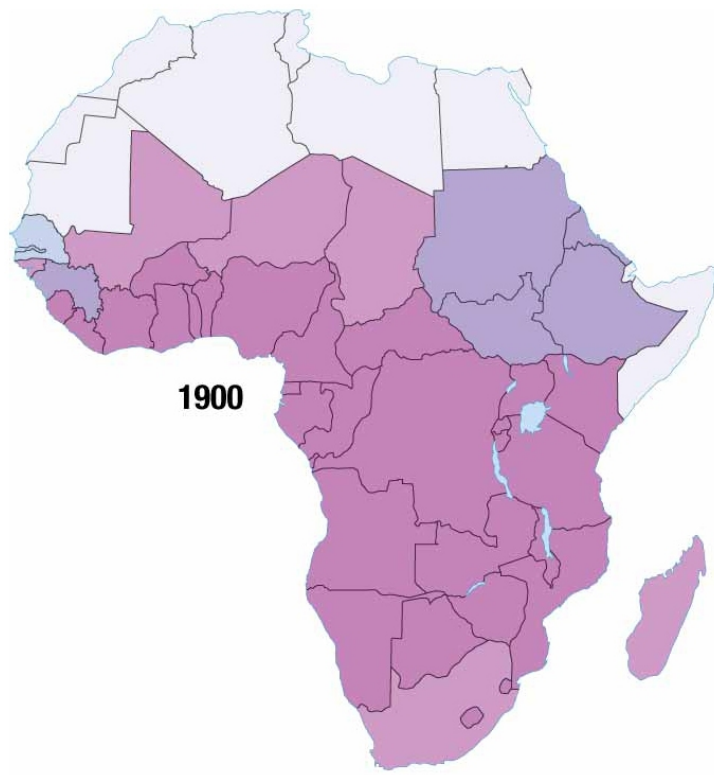
- Ethnic Religions
 - Often remain within the culture where they originated.
 - Typically have relatively more clustered distributions than do universalizing religions.
 - Ethnic religion with largest number of followers is Hinduism.
 - 900 million adherents
 - Nearly all concentrated in India and Nepal

Percent of world Hindu population



Where Are Religions Distributed?

- Ethnic Religions
 - A combination of Buddhism (a universalizing religion) with Confucianism, Taoism, and other traditional Chinese practices is practiced in East Asia and Southeast Asia.
 - Blending or combining of several traditions is known as *syncretism*.
 - *Animism* is an ethnic religion whose followers believe that inanimate objects or natural events, such as natural disasters, have spirits and conscious life.
 - 100 million Africans adhere to animism.



modern day borders shown

Where Are Religions Distributed?

- Ethnic Religions

- Judaism

- First recorded religion to espouse *monotheism*, belief that there is only one God.
 - Contrasts *polytheism*- the worship of a collection of gods.
 - Distribution
 - 2/5 live in the United States
 - 2/5 live in Israel.
 - Christianity and Islam find some of their roots in Judaism.

KI #2 Why Do Religions Have Different Distributions?

- Origins of Religions
 - Universalizing religions have precise places of origin.
 - Often based on events in the life of an influential man.
 - Ethnic religions not tied to single historical individual; often have unclear or unknown origins.
 - Buddhism
 - Founded: ~2,500 years ago
 - Founder: Siddhartha Gautama
 - Origin: India

Why Do Religions Have Different Distributions?

- Origins of Religions

- Christianity

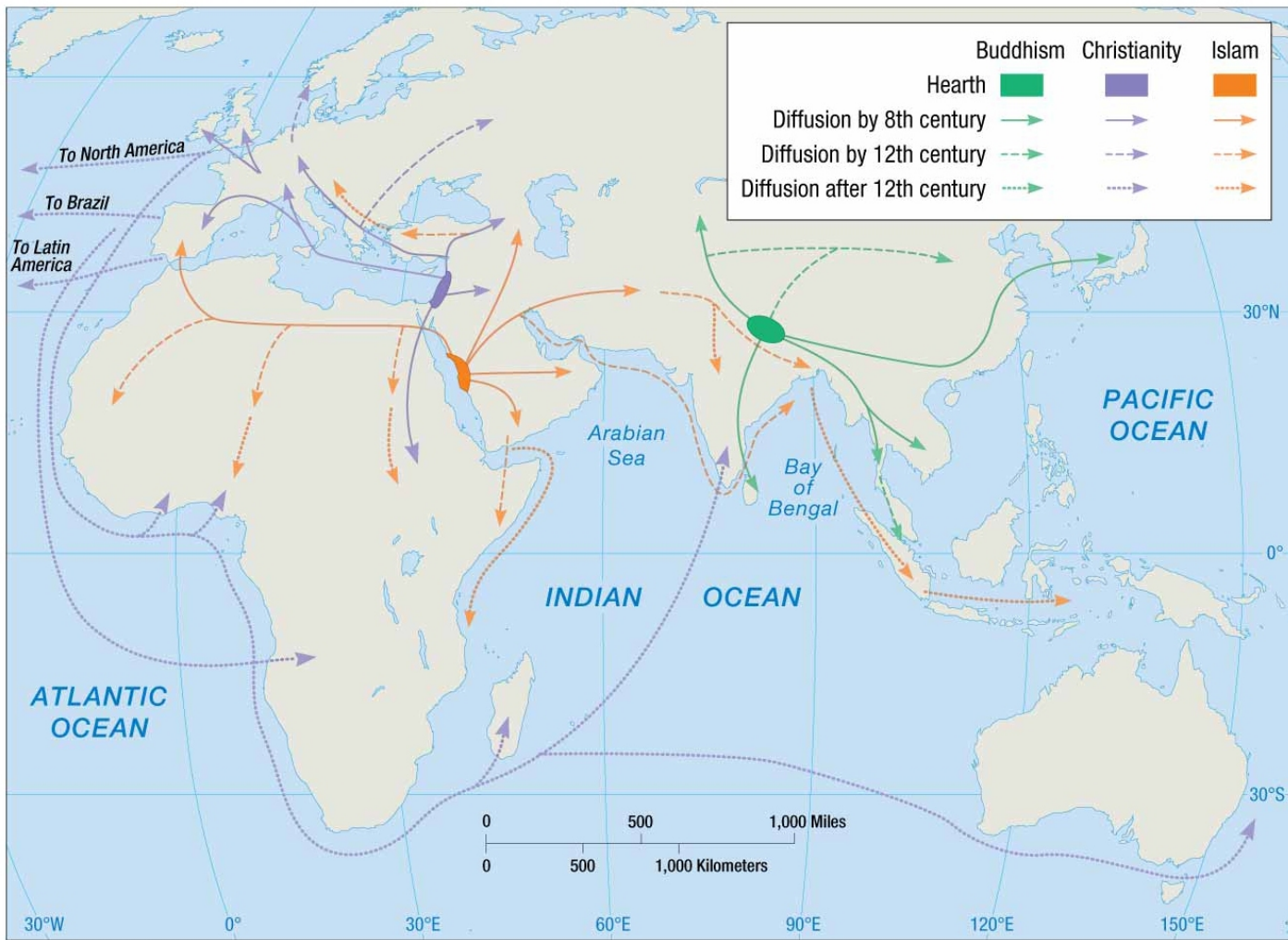
- Founded: ~2,000 years ago
 - Founding: Based on teachings of Jesus
 - Origin: Region located in present-day Palestine

- Islam

- Founded: ~1,500 years ago
 - Founder: Prophet Muhammad
 - Origin: Makkah (Mecca) located in present-day Saudi Arabia

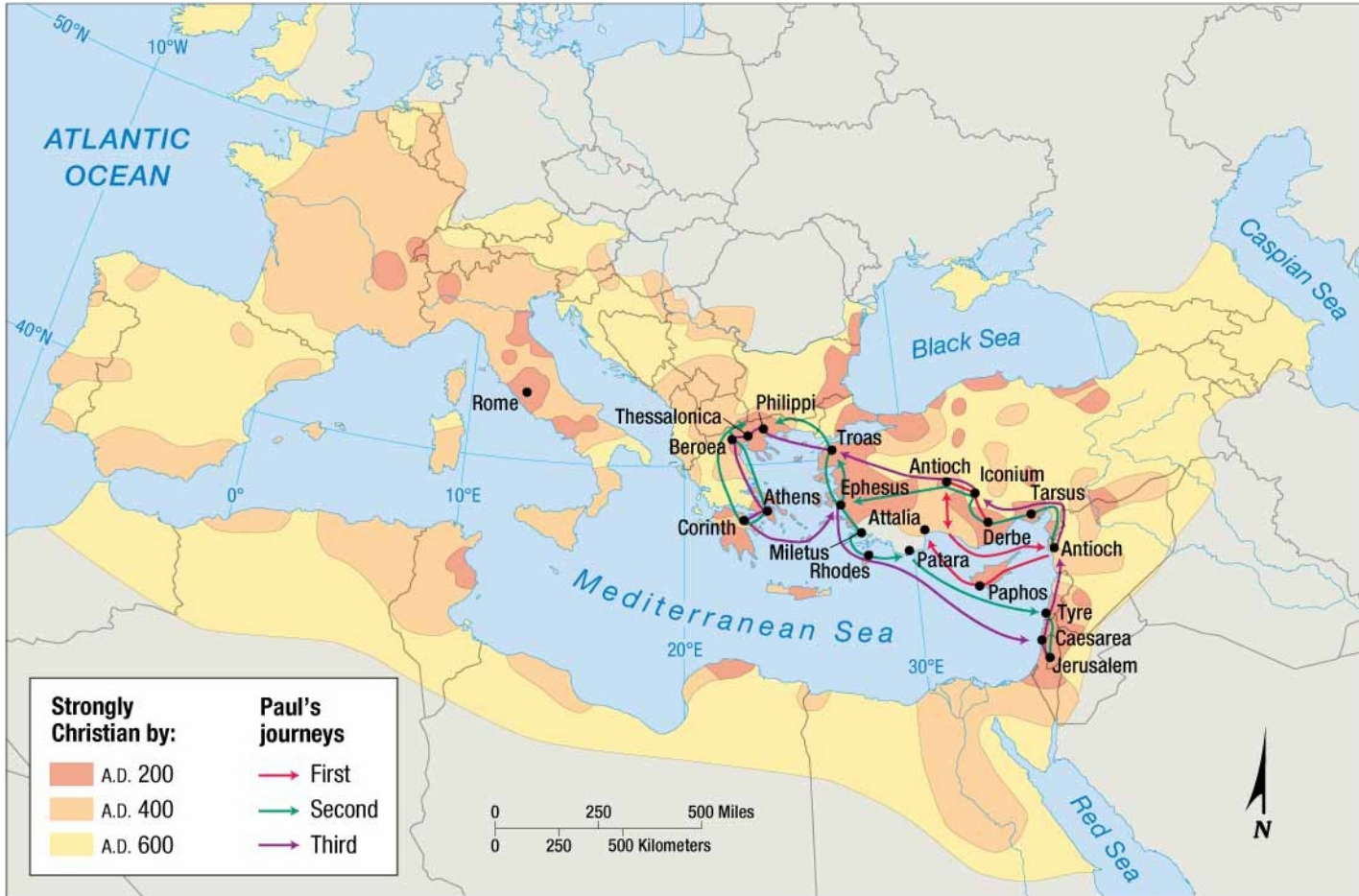
Why Do Religions Have Different Distributions?

- Diffusion of Religions
 - Asia is home to each hearth for Christianity, Islam, and Buddhism.
 - Followers transmitted the messages preached in the hearths to people elsewhere.
 - Each of the three main universalizing religions has a distinct diffusion pattern.



Why Do Religions Have Different Distributions?

- Diffusion of Religions
 - Christianity
 - Hierarchical Diffusion
 - Emperor Constantine helped diffuse the religion throughout the Roman Empire by embracing Christianity.
 - Relocation Diffusion
 - *Missionaries*, individuals who help transmit a religion through relocation diffusion, initially diffused the religion along protected sea routes and the excellent Roman roads.
 - Migration and missionary activity by Europeans since 1500 have extended Christianity all over the world.
 - » Permanent resettlement in the Americas, Australia, and New Zealand

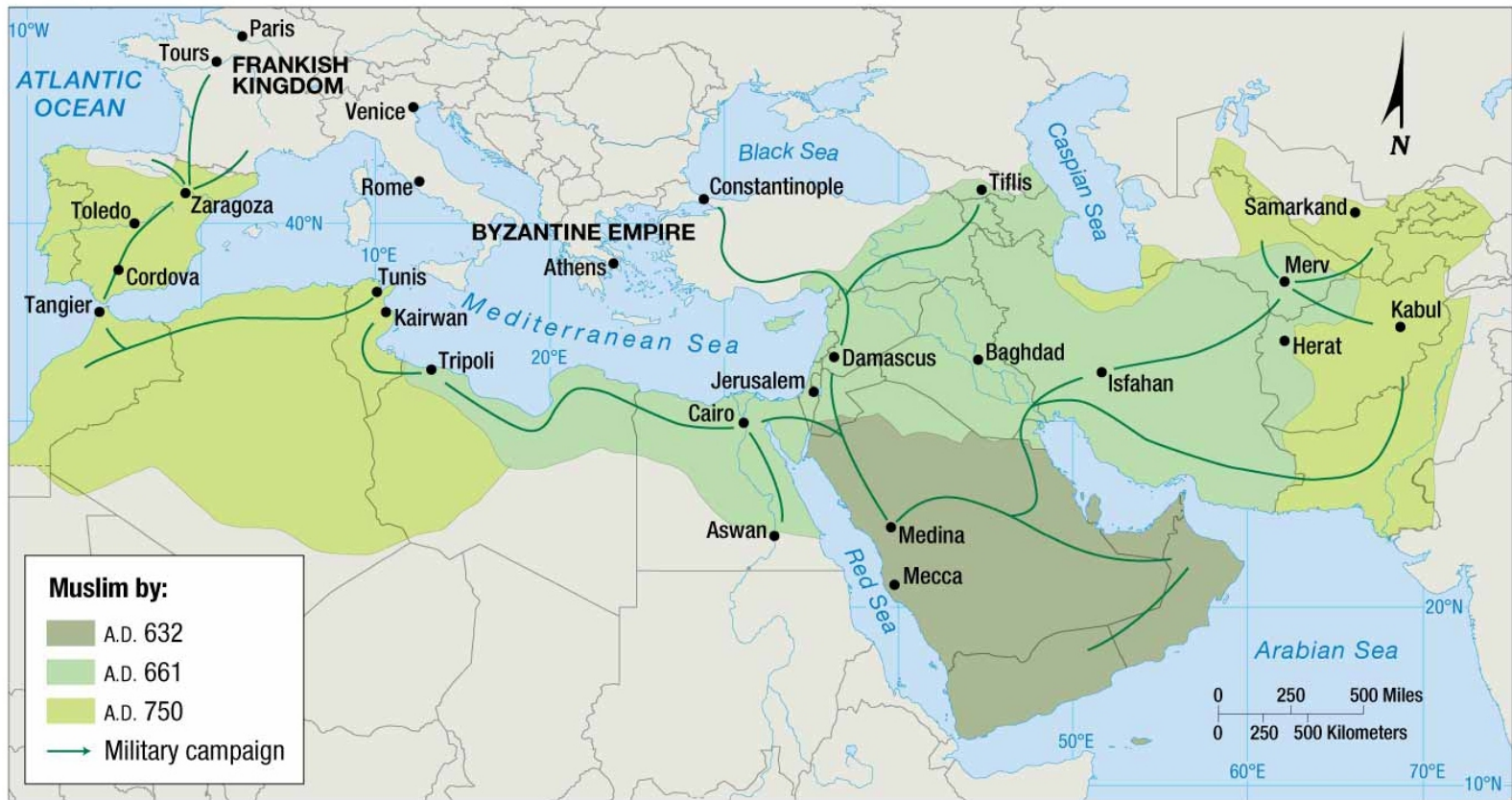


Why Do Religions Have Different Distributions?

- Diffusion of Religions

- Islam

- Muhammad's successors organized followers into armies and led a conquest to spread the religion over an extensive area of...
 - Africa
 - Asia
 - Europe
 - Relocation diffusion of missionaries to portions of sub-Saharan Africa and Southeast Asia transmitted the religion well beyond its hearth.

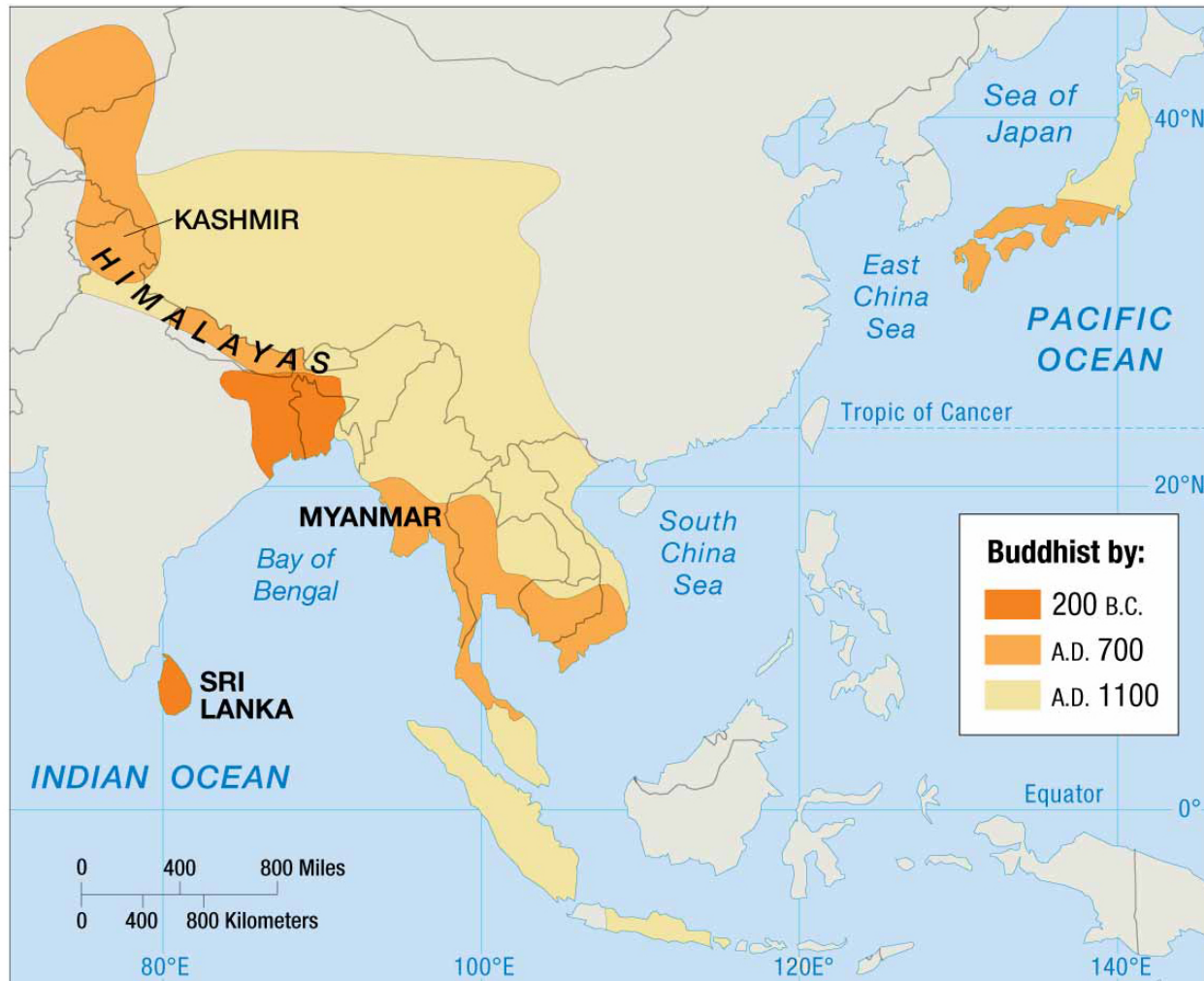


Why Do Religions Have Different Distributions?

- Diffusion of Religions

- Buddhism

- Diffused relatively slowly from its origin in northeastern India.
 - Emperor Asoka accredited with much of its diffusion throughout the Magadhan Empire (273 to 232 B.C.).
 - Missionaries sent to territories neighboring the empire.
 - Buddhism introduced to China along trade routes in the first century A.D.



Why Do Religions Have Different Distributions?

- Diffusion of Religions

- Ethnic Religions

- Most have limited, if any, diffusion.
 - Lack missionaries
 - Diffusion to new places is possible, if adherents migrate for economic gains and are not forced to adopt a strongly entrenched universalizing religion.
 - Judaism's diffusion is unlike other ethnic religions because it is practiced well beyond its place of origin.
 - Other nationalities have historically persecuted Jews living in their midst because of their retention of Judaism.

KI #4 Why Do Religions Organize Space in Distinctive Patterns?

- Sacred Space

- Geographers study the impact on the landscape made by all religions.

- Places of worship are sacred structures that physically anchor religion to landscape.

- Christian Church

- » More significant role in Christianity than in other religions because of belief that building is the house of God.

- » Church traditionally largest and tallest building in a community. Additional significance given to it by locating it in a prominent location—e.g., square or center of town

- » No single architectural style

- Bahá'í Houses of Worship

- » Dispersed to different continents

- » Open to adherents of all religions

Why Do Religions Organize Space in Distinctive Patterns?

- Sacred Space

- Muslim Mosques

- » Space for community assembly
 - » Not viewed as a sanctified place
 - » Attention to cardinal directions is emphasized— e.g., pulpit at end of a courtyard faces Makkah.
 - » Distinctive feature is a *minaret*, a tower where a man known as a *muezzin* summons people to worship.

- Buddhist Pagodas

- » Prominent and ornate element on landscape that often includes tall, many-sided towers arranged in a series of tiers, balconies, and slanting roofs.
 - » Contain relics believed to be a portion of Buddha's body or clothing.
 - » Not designed for congregational worship.



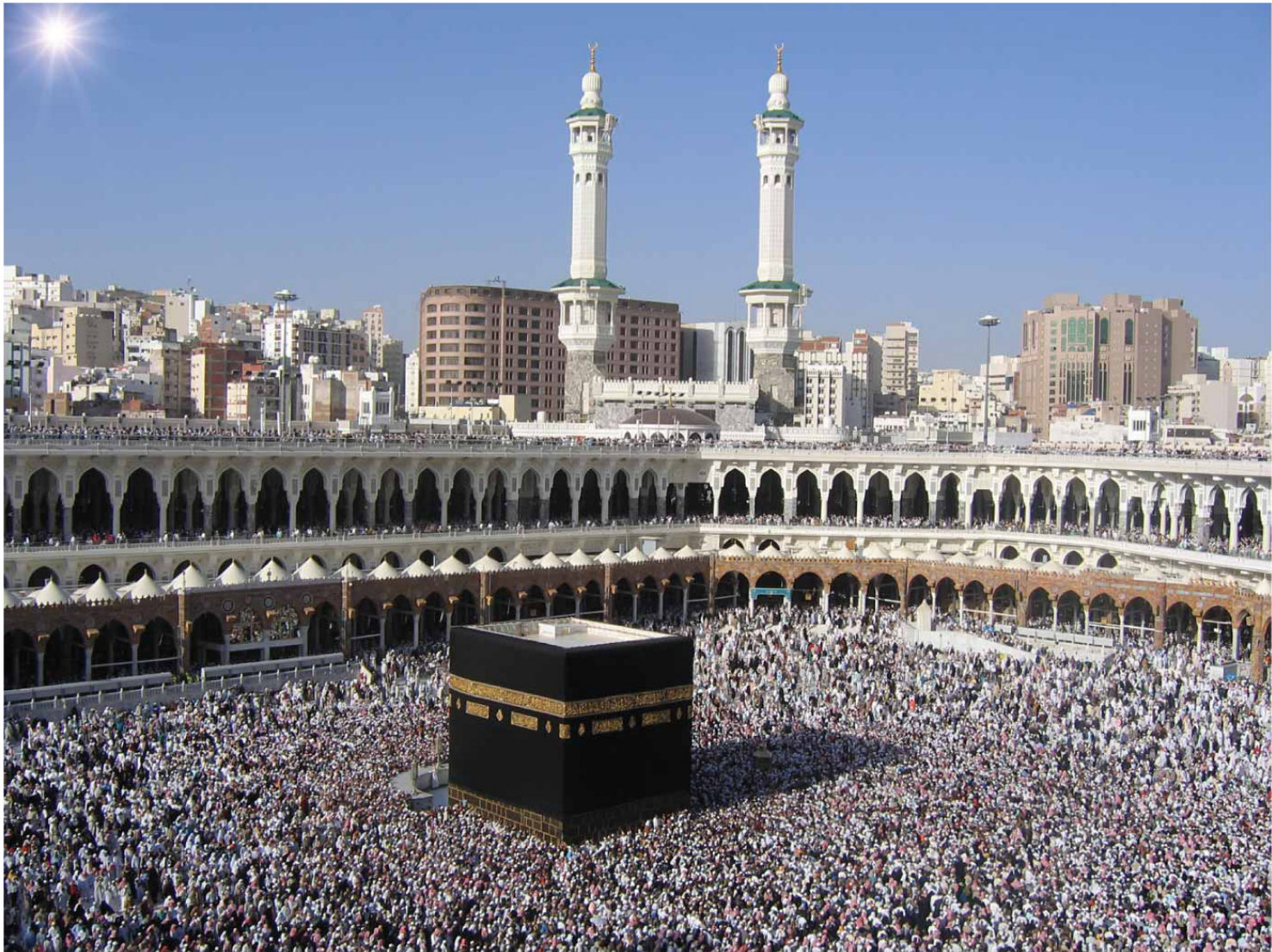
Why Do Religions Organize Space in Distinctive Patterns?

- Sacred Places in Universalizing Religions
 - Cities and places associated with the founder's life are endowed with holiness.
 - Not necessarily in close proximity of each other
 - Not needed to be related to any particular physical environment
 - Buddhism and Islam place most emphasis on identifying shrines that mark locations of important events in the life of Buddha or Muhammad.
 - *Pilgrimages*, journeys for religious purposes, are incorporated in Islamic doctrine.



Why Do Religions Organize Space in Distinctive Patterns?

- Sacred Places in Universalizing Religions
 - Holy Places in Islam
 - Holiest locations are in cities associated with Prophet Muhammad.
 - Holiest City is Makkah (Mecca), birthplace of Muhammad.
 - » Now contains the holiest object in the Islamic landscape—al-Ka’ba—a cubelike structure encased in silk that stands in Islam’s largest mosque, Masjid al-Haram.
 - Second-most-holy place is Madinah (Medina).
 - » Muhammad’s tomb is in Madinah.



Why Do Religions Organize Space in Distinctive Patterns?

- The Landscape in Ethnic Religions
 - Ethnic religions are closely tied to the physical geography of a particular place.
 - Hindu Landscape
 - Hinduism closely tied to physical geography of India
 - » Mt. Kailas is holy because it is home to Siva.
 - » Holiest places are riverbanks and coastlines.
 - » Hindus believe that they achieve purification by bathing in holy rivers—e.g., Ganges River
 - Solstice
 - Special significance in some ethnic religions
 - » Stonehenge is a prominent remnant of a pagan structure aligned so that sun rises between two stones on solstices.

Why Do Religions Organize Space in Distinctive Patterns?

- Disposing of the Dead
 - Climate, topography, and religious doctrine combine to create differences in practices to shelter the dead.
 - Burial
 - Christians, Muslims, and Jews typically bury the deceased in designated areas called cemeteries.
 - » Cemeteries were typically only public open space in congested urban places prior to the nineteenth century.
 - Cremation
 - Hindus wash the bodies of the deceased with water from the Ganges River first, then burn them with a slow fire on a funeral pyre.



Why Do Religions Organize Space in Distinctive Patterns?

- Religious Settlements and Place Names
 - Most human settlements serve an economic purpose, but some are established primarily for religious reasons.
 - *Utopian settlement* is an ideal community built around a religious way of life.
 - Salt Lake City culminated the utopian movement in the United States when it was built by the Mormons.
 - Roman Catholic immigrants have frequently given religious place names, or *toponyms*, to settlements primarily in the U.S. Southwest and Quebec.

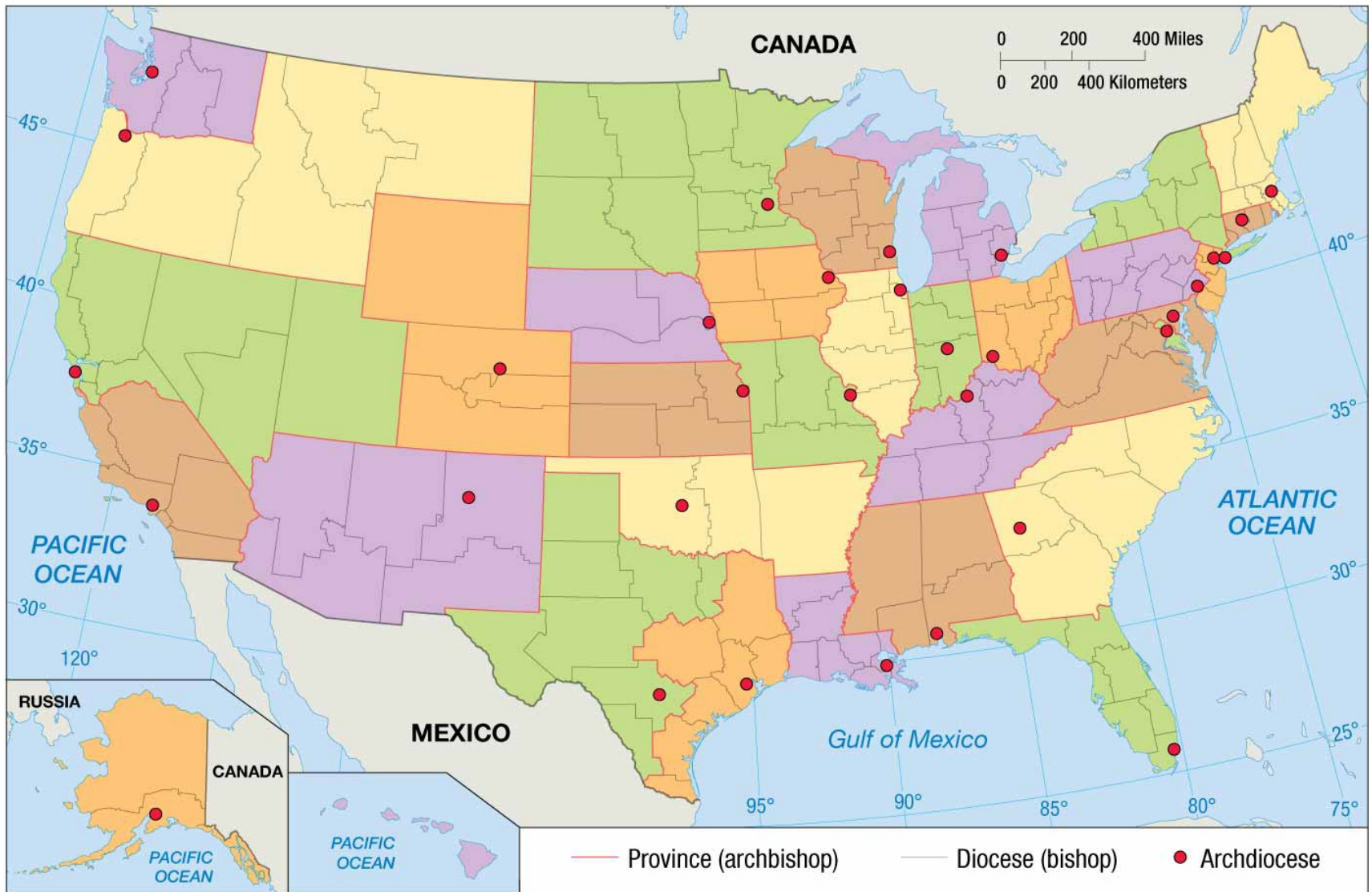


Why Do Religions Organize Space in Distinctive Patterns?

- The Calendar
 - Universalizing and ethnic religions approach the calendar differently.
 - Ethnic Religion
 - Holidays are closely aligned with natural events associated with the physical geography of the homeland.
 - Prominent feature is celebration of the seasons.
 - » Closely tied to local agriculture
 - Universalizing Religion
 - Major holidays relate to events in the life of the founder rather than the seasons of one particular place.
 - » Ramadan (Islam): part of five pillars of faith
 - » Easter (Christian): resurrection of Jesus

Why Do Religions Organize Space in Distinctive Patterns?

- Administration of Space
 - Universalizing religions must be connected to ensure consistency of doctrine.
 - Hierarchical Religions
 - Exemplifies a well-defined geographic structure and organizes territory into local administrative units.
 - » Roman Catholic Church created administrative units on much of Earth's inhabited land with each being headed by a leader who is accountable to the next higher-ordered leader.
 - Locally Autonomous Religions
 - Islam
 - » No religious hierarchy
 - » No formal territorial organization

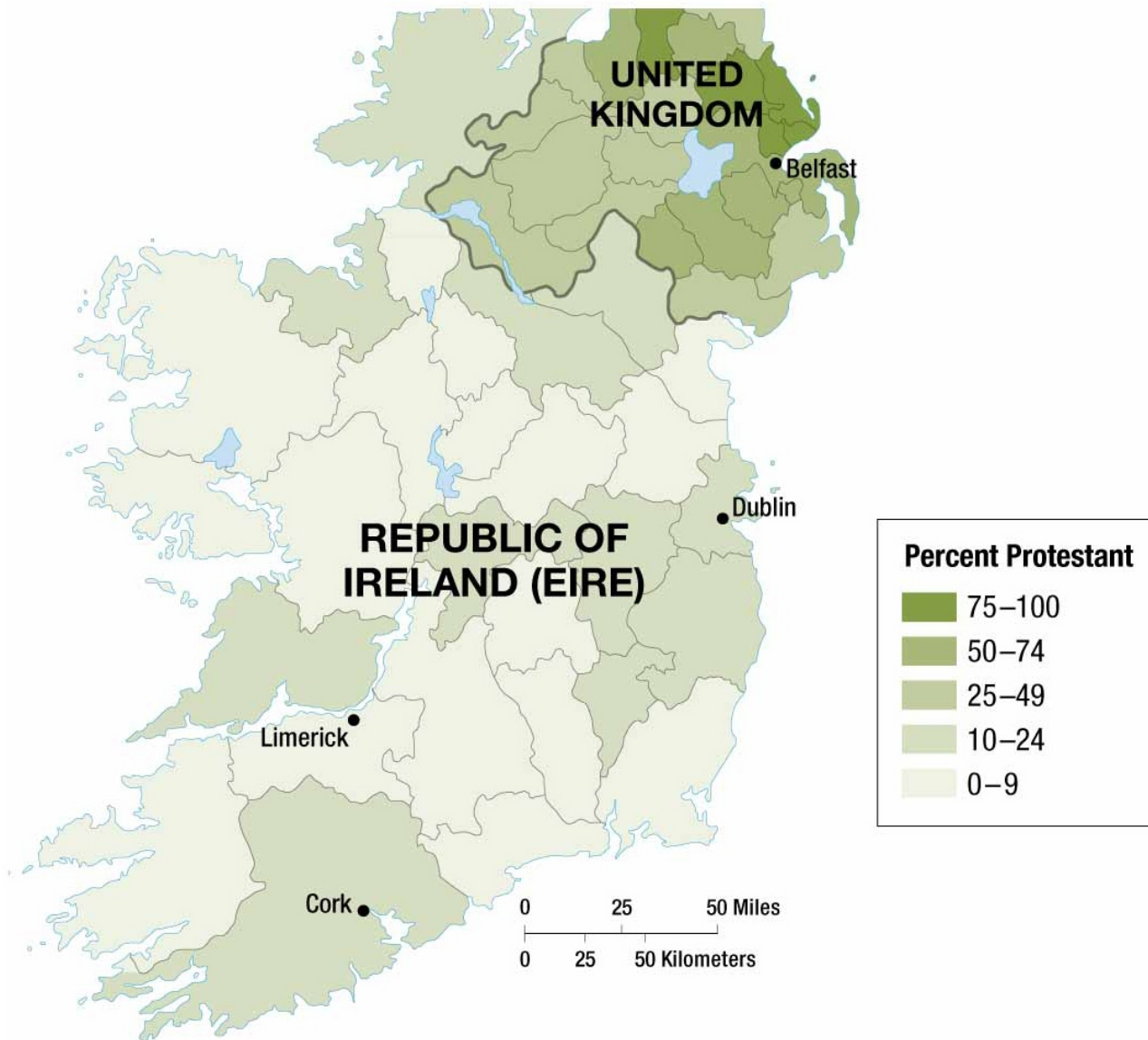


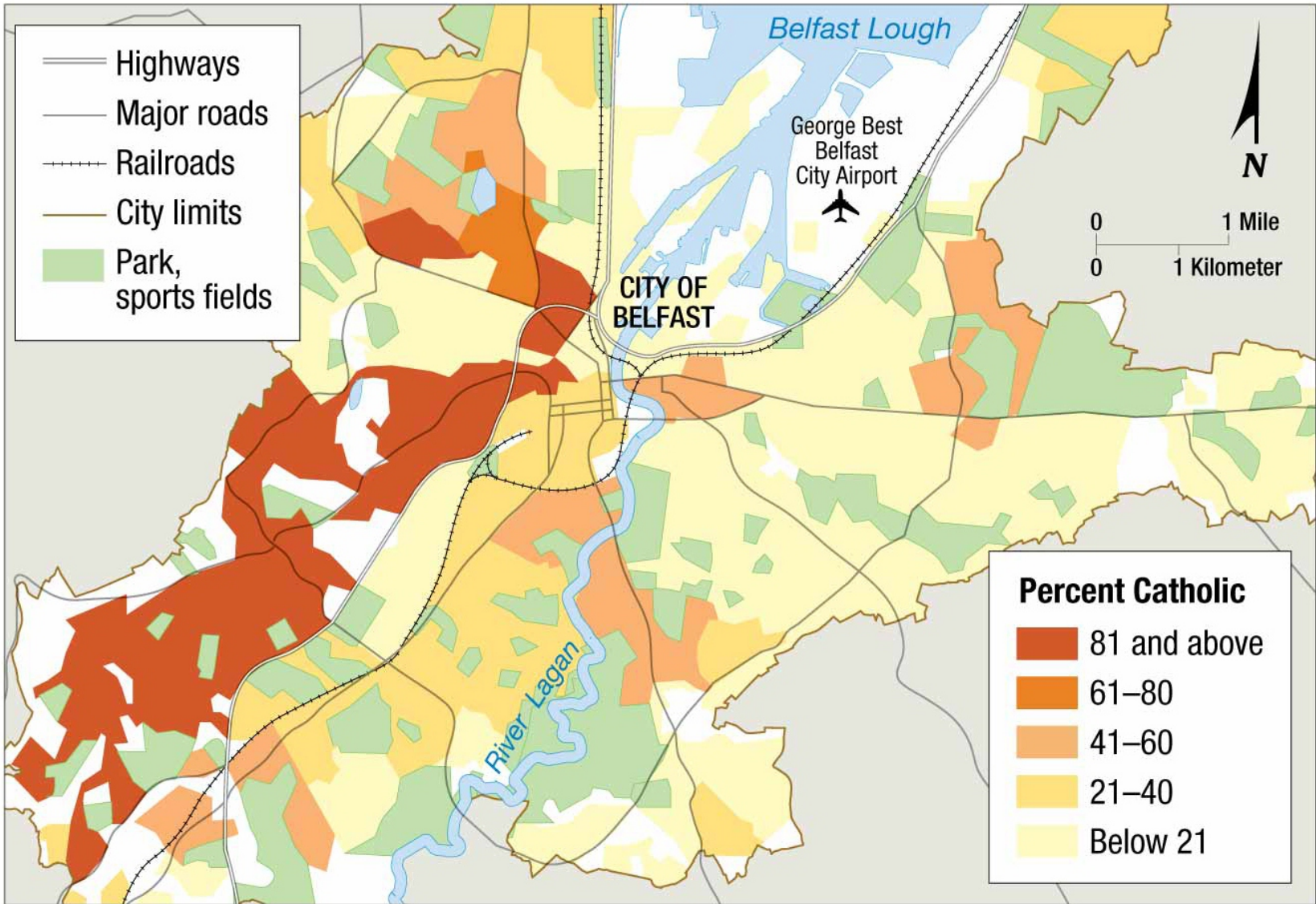
Why Do Territorial Conflicts Arise among Religious Groups?

- Religion versus Government Policies
 - Religious groups may oppose policies seen as contradicting their religious values.
 - Religion is element of cultural diversity that has led to most conflict in places.
 - Religious *fundamentalism*, a literal interpretation and strict adherence to basic principles of a religion, has spurred more intense conflict recently.
 - Taliban versus Western Values
 - Taliban's control of Afghanistan's government in the 1990s led to strict laws opposing Western values.
 - » “Western, non-Islamic” leisure activities banned
 - » Ex: Soccer stadiums converted to settings for executions and floggings.

Why Do Territorial Conflicts Arise among Religious Groups?

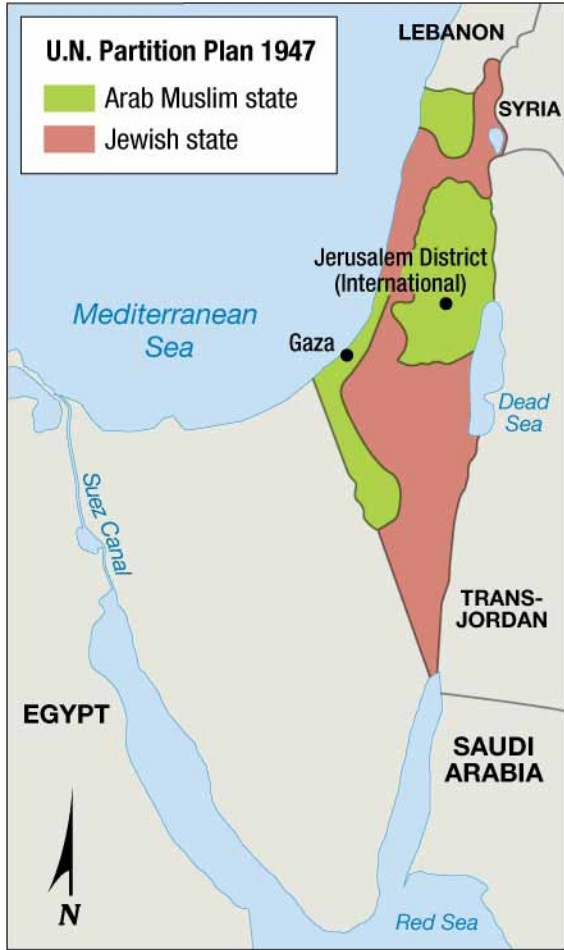
- Religion versus Religion
 - Conflicts most likely to occur at a boundary between two religious groups.
 - Religious Wars in Ireland
 - A small faction chose to join the United Kingdom when Ireland became independent in 1937.
 - » 46 percent protestant and 40 percent Roman Catholic (2001)
 - Roman Catholics have been victimized by discriminatory practices, such as exclusion from higher-paying jobs and better schools.
 - Belfast, the capital city, is highly segregated.
 - Protests by Roman Catholics began in 1968 with bloodshed of both Protestants and Roman Catholics.





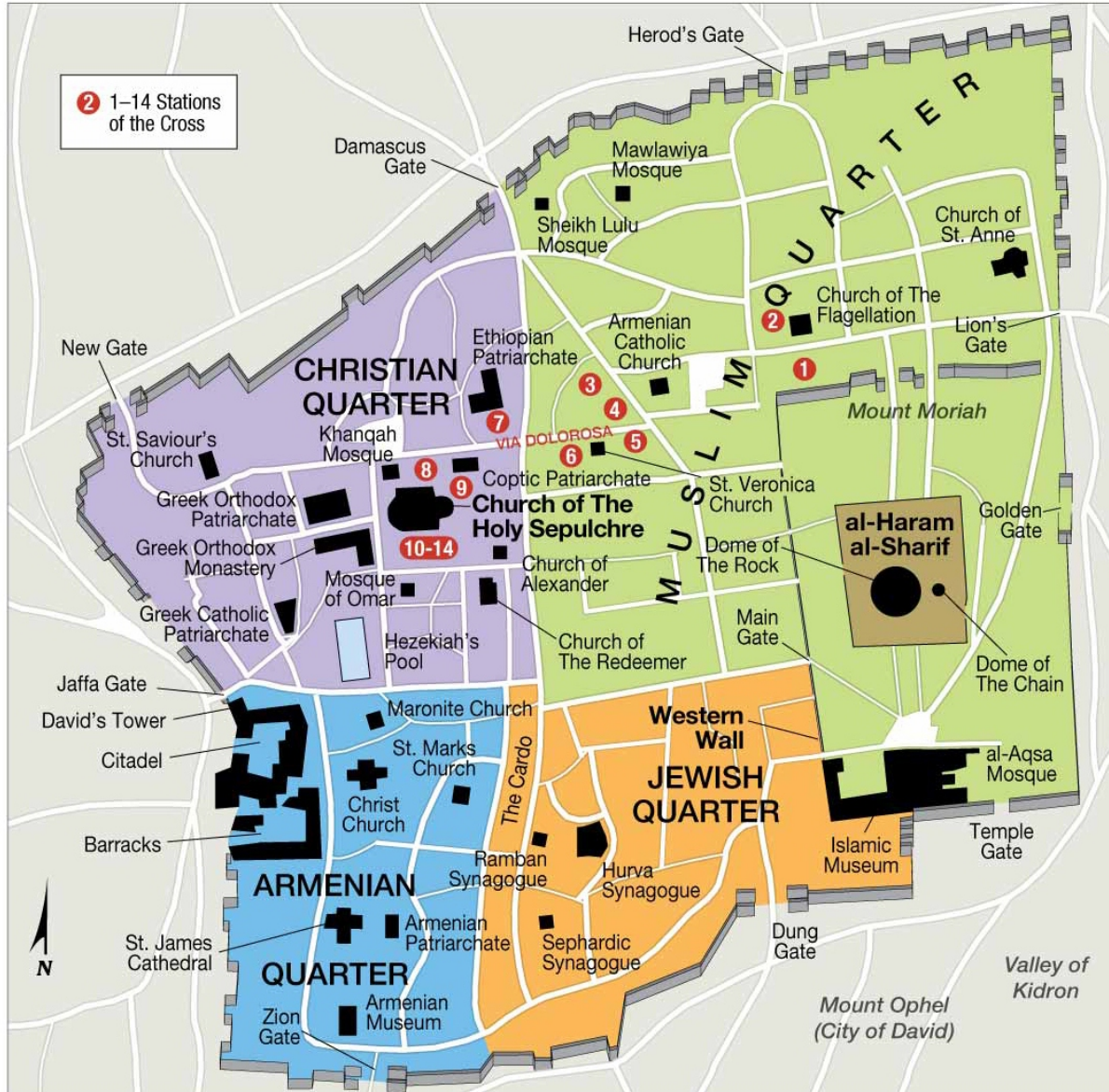
Why Do Territorial Conflicts Arise among Religious Groups?

- Religious Wars in the Middle East
 - Conflict in the Middle East is among the world's longest standing.
 - Jews, Christians, and Muslims have fought nearly 2,000 years to control the same small strip of Land in the Eastern Mediterranean.
 - Judaism: special claim to the territory it calls the Promised Land where major events in the development in the religion occurred.
 - Islam: Muslim army conquered this land in seventh century A.D. Jerusalem is the third holiest city to Muslims, because it is believed to be where Muhammad ascended into heaven.
 - Christianity: considers it the Holy Land and Jerusalem the Holy City, because the major events in Jesus's life, death, and resurrection occurred there.



Why Do Territorial Conflicts Arise among Religious Groups?

- Conflicting Perspectives of the Holy Land
 - After the 1973 war, the Palestinians emerged as Israel's principal opponent.
 - Palestinians viewed themselves as the legitimate rulers of Israel.
 - Biggest obstacle to peace in the Middle East is the status of Jerusalem.
 - Peace will likely not be possible, if one religion has political control over Jerusalem.



Summary

- The world has three large universalizing religions—Christianity, Islam, and Buddhism—each of which is divided into branches and denominations.
- A universalizing religion has a known origin and clear patterns of diffusion, whereas ethnic religions typically have unknown origins and little diffusion.

Summary

- Holy places and holidays in a universalizing religion are related to the events in the life of its founder or prophet. They are related to the local physical geography in an ethnic religion.
- With the Earth's surface dominated by four large religions, expansion of the territory occupied by one religion may reduce the territory of another.