

Chapter 6

Religions

Religions: Key Issues

1. Where Are the World's Religions Distributed?
2. Why Do Religions Have Distinctive Distributions?
3. Why Do Religions Organize Space in Distinctive Patterns?
4. Why Do Territorial Conflicts Arise Among Religious Groups?

Key Issue 1: Where Are the World's Religions Distributed?

1.1 Introducing Religions

1.2 Global Distribution of Religions

1.3 Distribution of Christians

1.4 Distribution of Muslims and Buddhists

1.5 Distribution of Ethnic Religions

1.6 Distribution of Other Religions

What is Religion?

- Religion

- Definition is often relative to group being asked

- The belief in and worship of a superhuman controlling power, especially a personal God or gods.
 - A particular system of faith and worship.
 - A pursuit or interest to which someone ascribes supreme importance
 - A set of values that dictates one's actions and behaviors

- Adherents

- Someone who supports a particular religion or set of ideas.

- Basic classifications

- Monotheism, Polytheism, Animism, *Panentheism*

- Belief in One God
 - Belief in Many Gods
 - Belief that inanimate objects have spirits
 - Belief that a single god, number of gods, or other form interpenetrates every part of the universe and extends timelessly beyond it

Percentage of Adherents by Religion

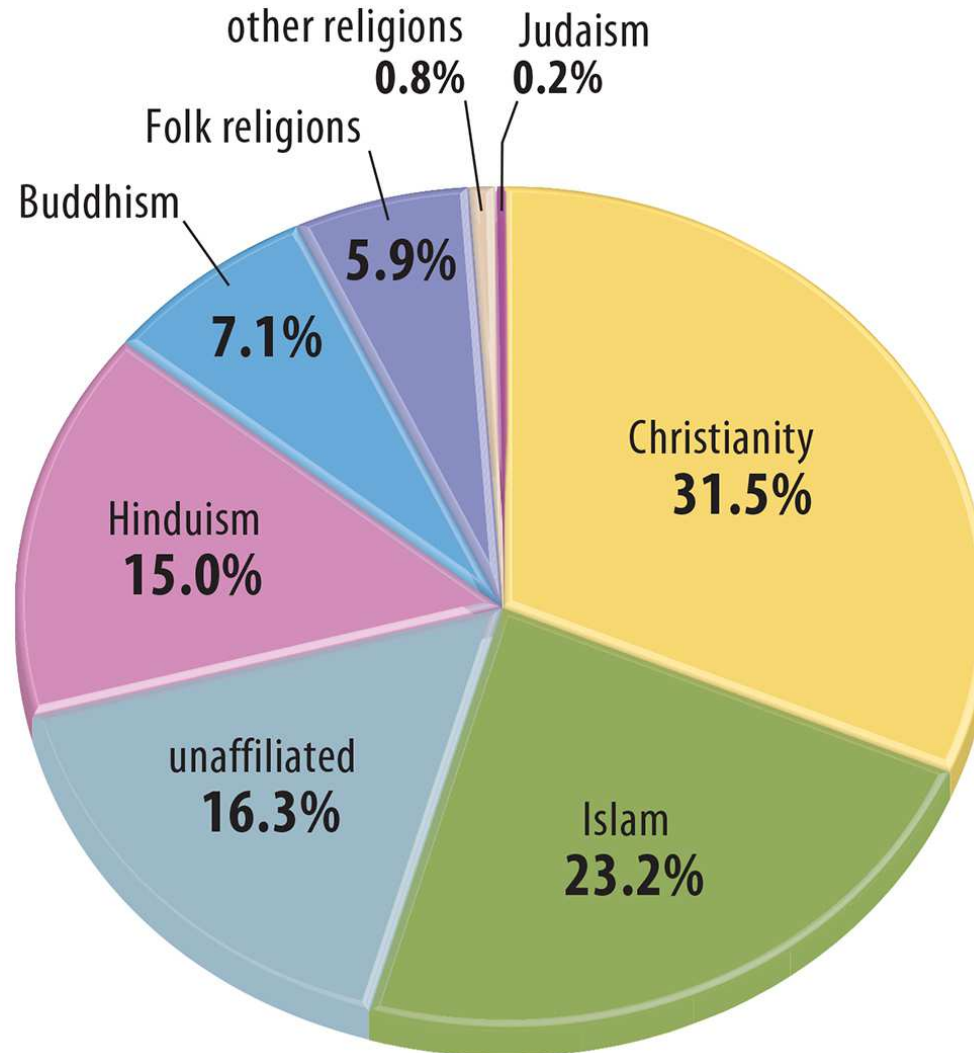


Figure 6-1: 77 percent of the world follows a branch of Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, or Buddhism, the four largest religions.

Most Numerous Religions by Country

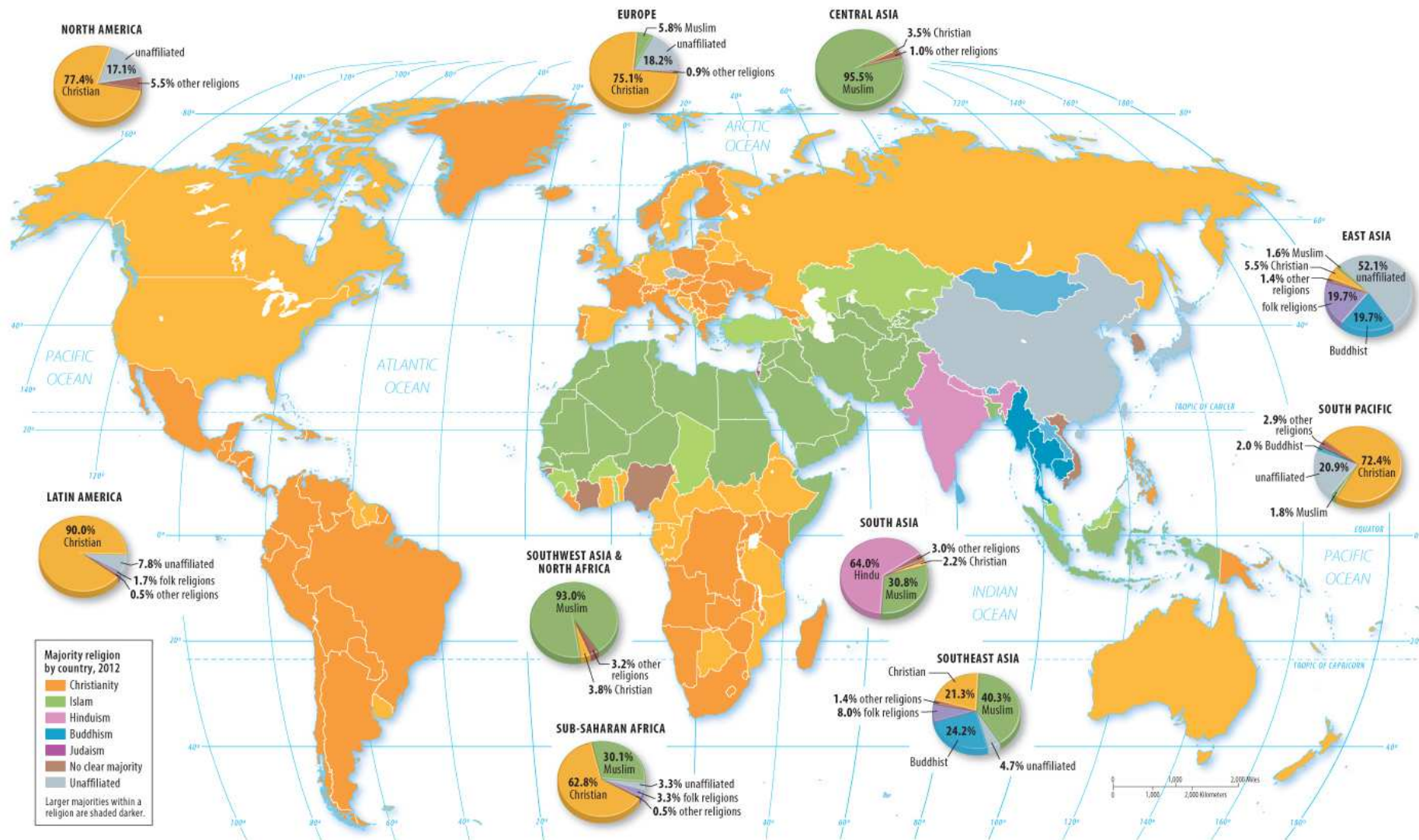


Figure 6-5: The Western Hemisphere, Europe, and sub-Saharan Africa are predominantly Christian; Southwest Asia and North Africa are majority Muslim.

Types of Religions

- Universalizing Religion
 - Seek converts; don't need to be born into
 - Known origin and clear patterns of diffusion
 - Tend to be large in size
 - Examples: Christianity, Islam, Buddhism
- Ethnic religions
 - Does not seek converts; usually born into it
 - Typically have unknown origins and little diffusion
 - Examples: Hinduism, Judaism, Chinese Folk, African Animism

What type of diffusion are you likely to see in each type of religion?

Branches of Christianity in Europe

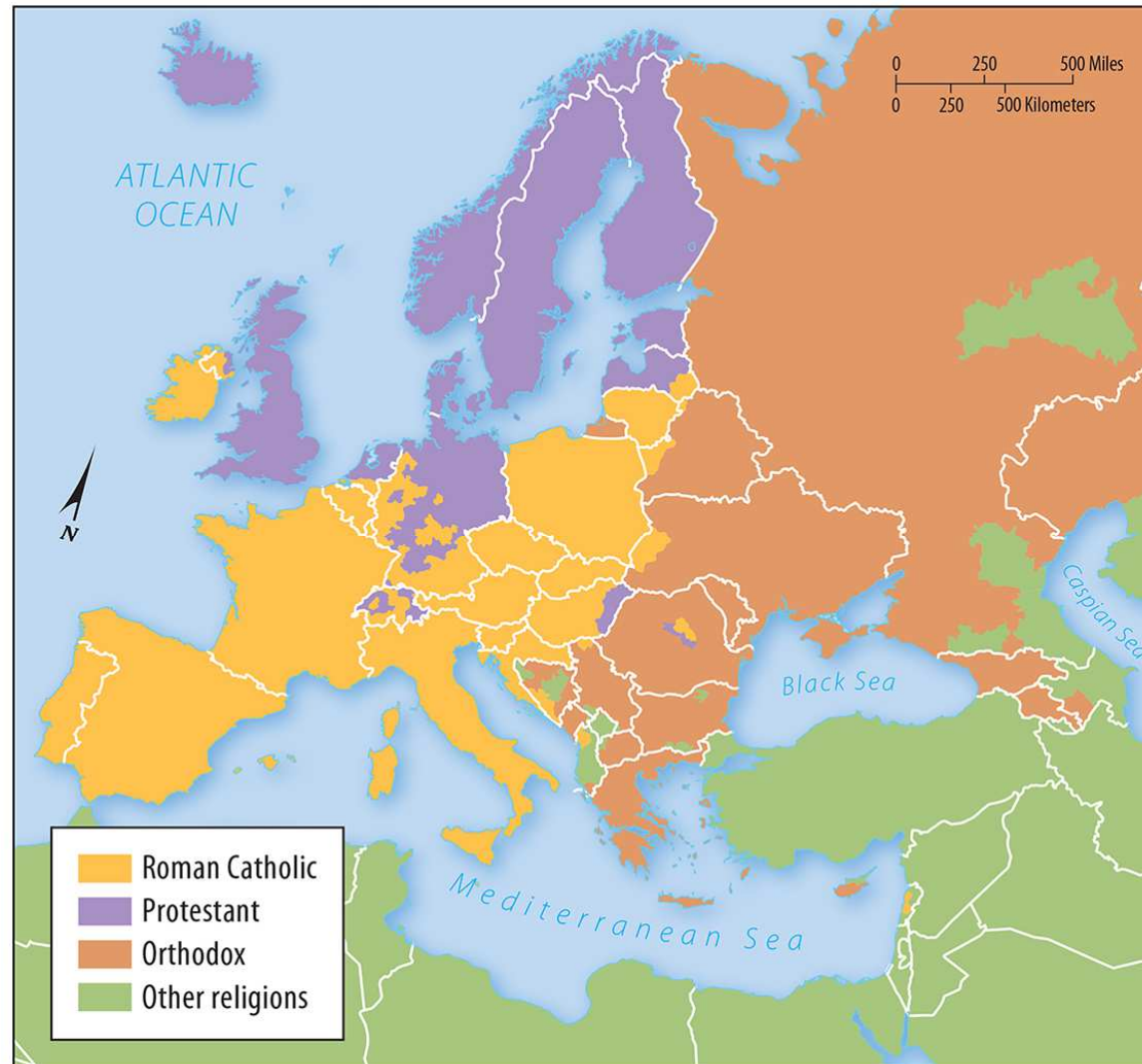


Figure 6-6: Christianity is divided into Roman Catholic, predominantly in the south, Protestant in the north, and Orthodox in the east.

Most Numerous Faiths by U.S. County

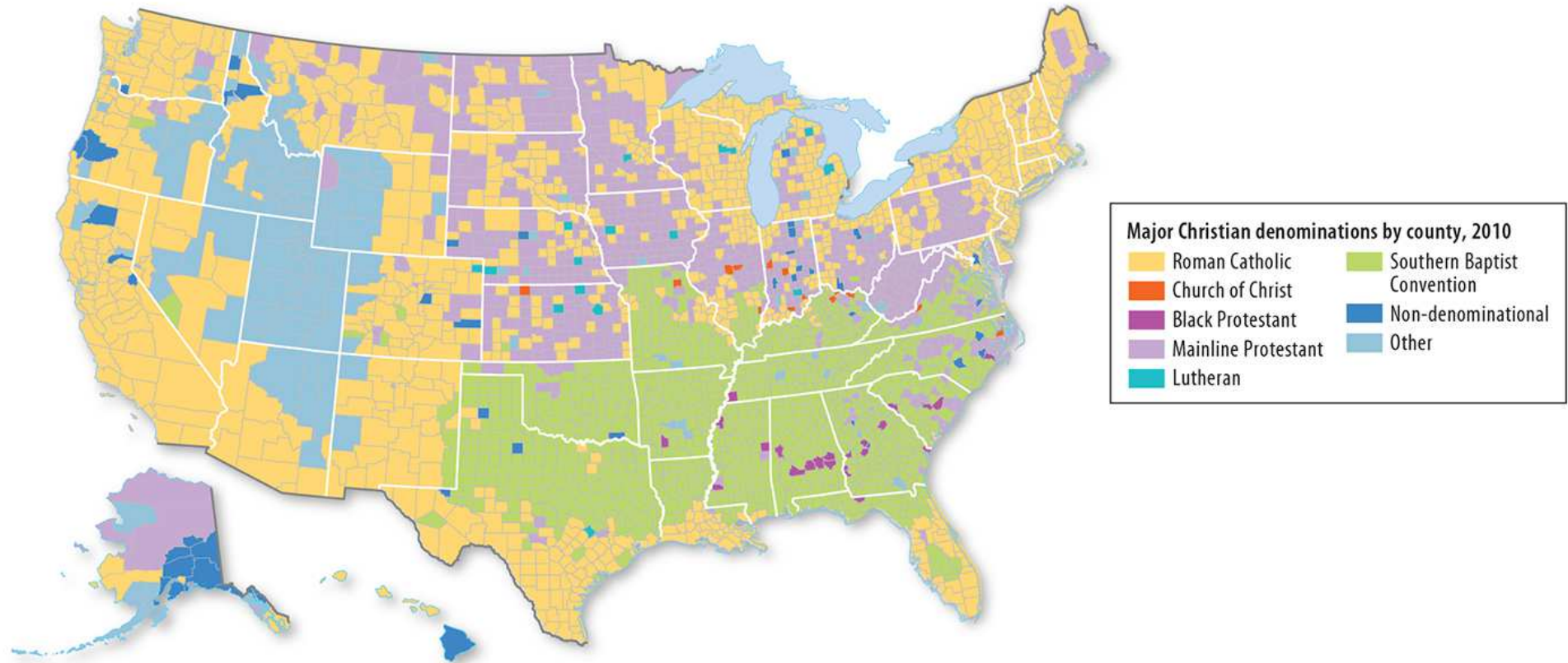


Figure 6-7: American Christianity has a diversity of distinct faiths with regional distributions.

Most Numerous Non-Christian Faiths by U.S. County

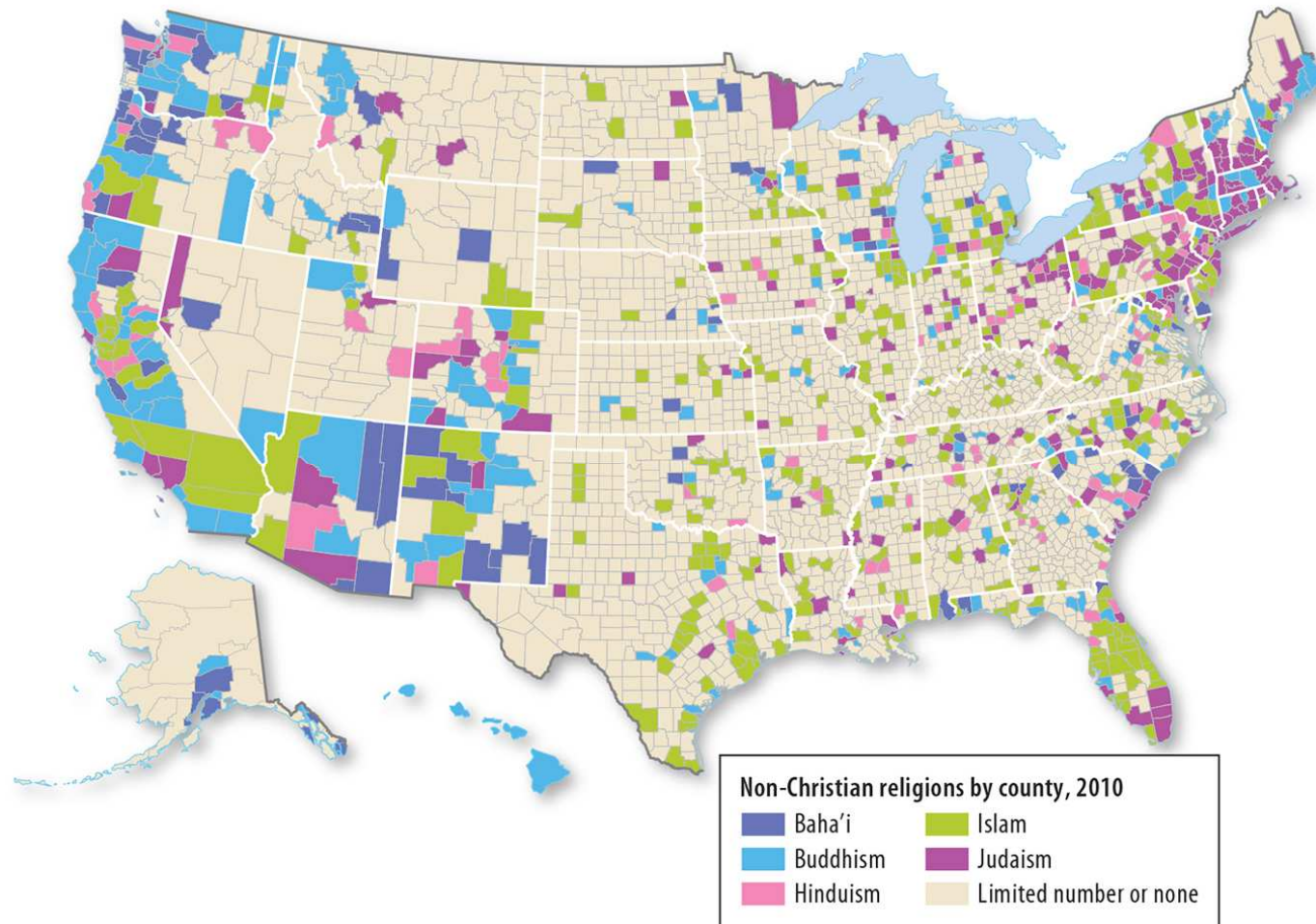


Figure 6-8: Non-Christian faiths tend to be more common closer to the coast and in urban areas.

Cartogram of Muslim Adherents

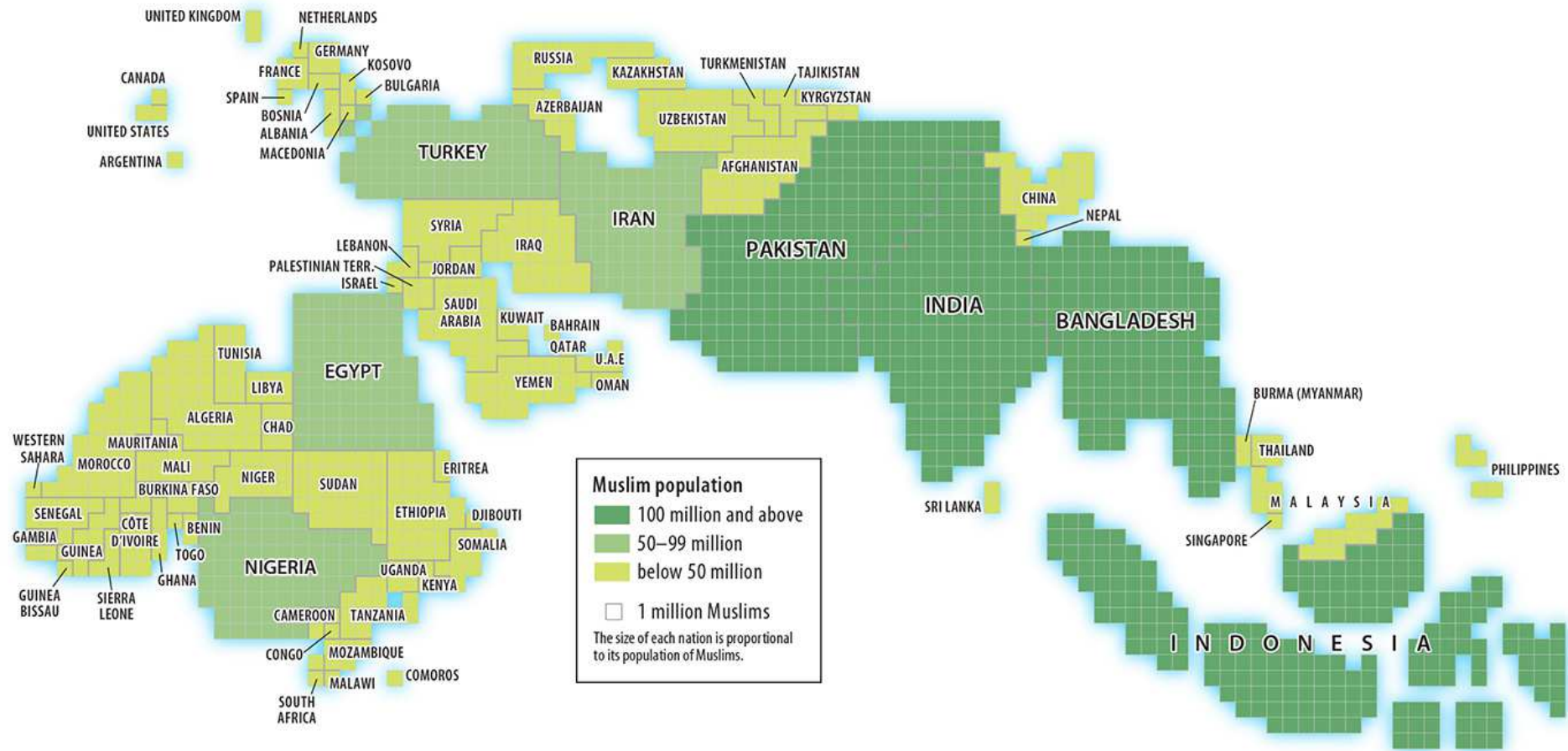


Figure 6-9: Muslim populations are very large in South Asia and Indonesia.

Distribution of Branches of Islam

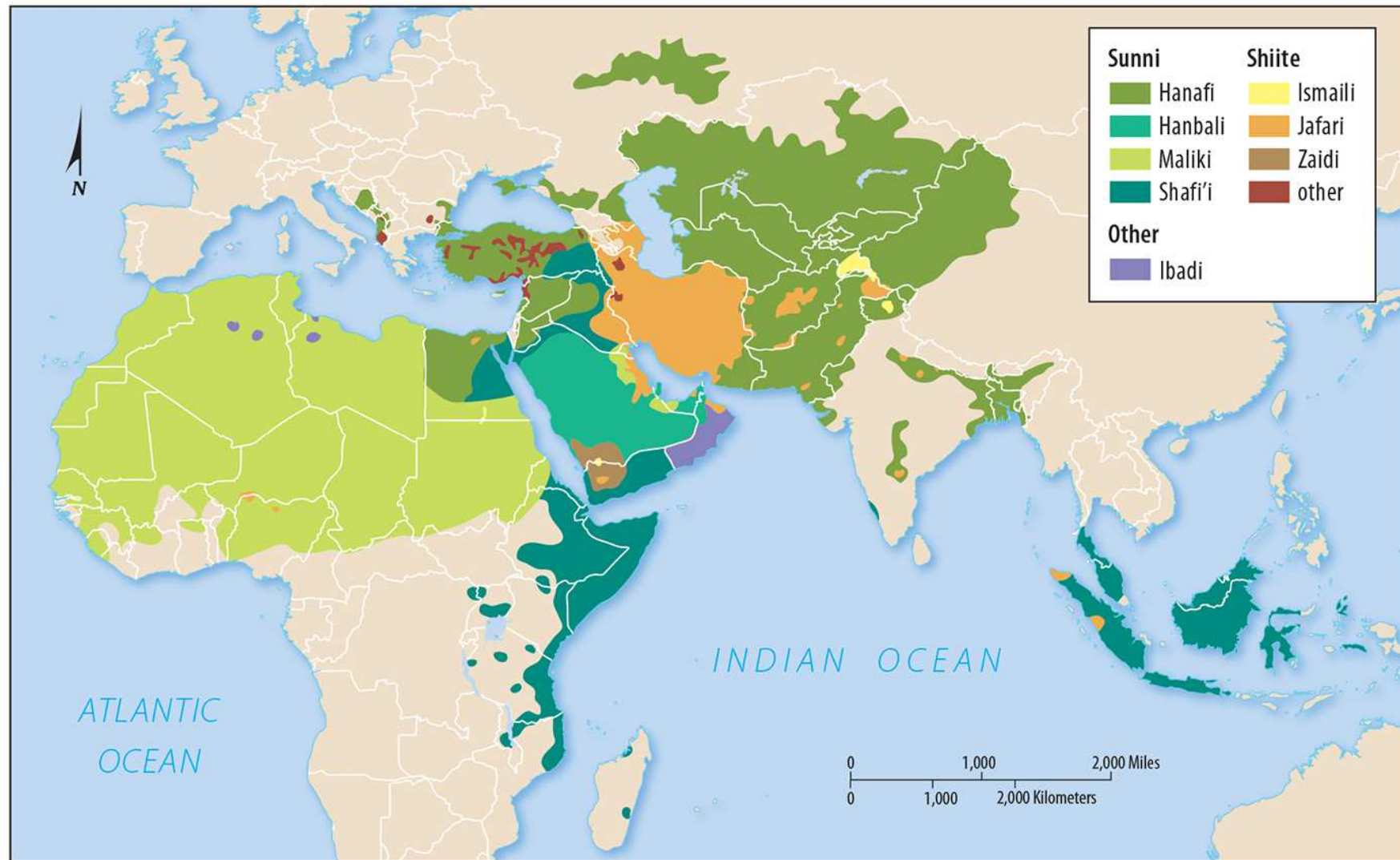


Figure 6-10: Islam's two main branches, Sunni and Shiite, are based on a disagreement on the line of succession from Muhammad.

Distribution of Branches of Buddhism



Figure 6-11: Buddhism is practiced throughout East and Southeast Asia.

Distribution of Hindus

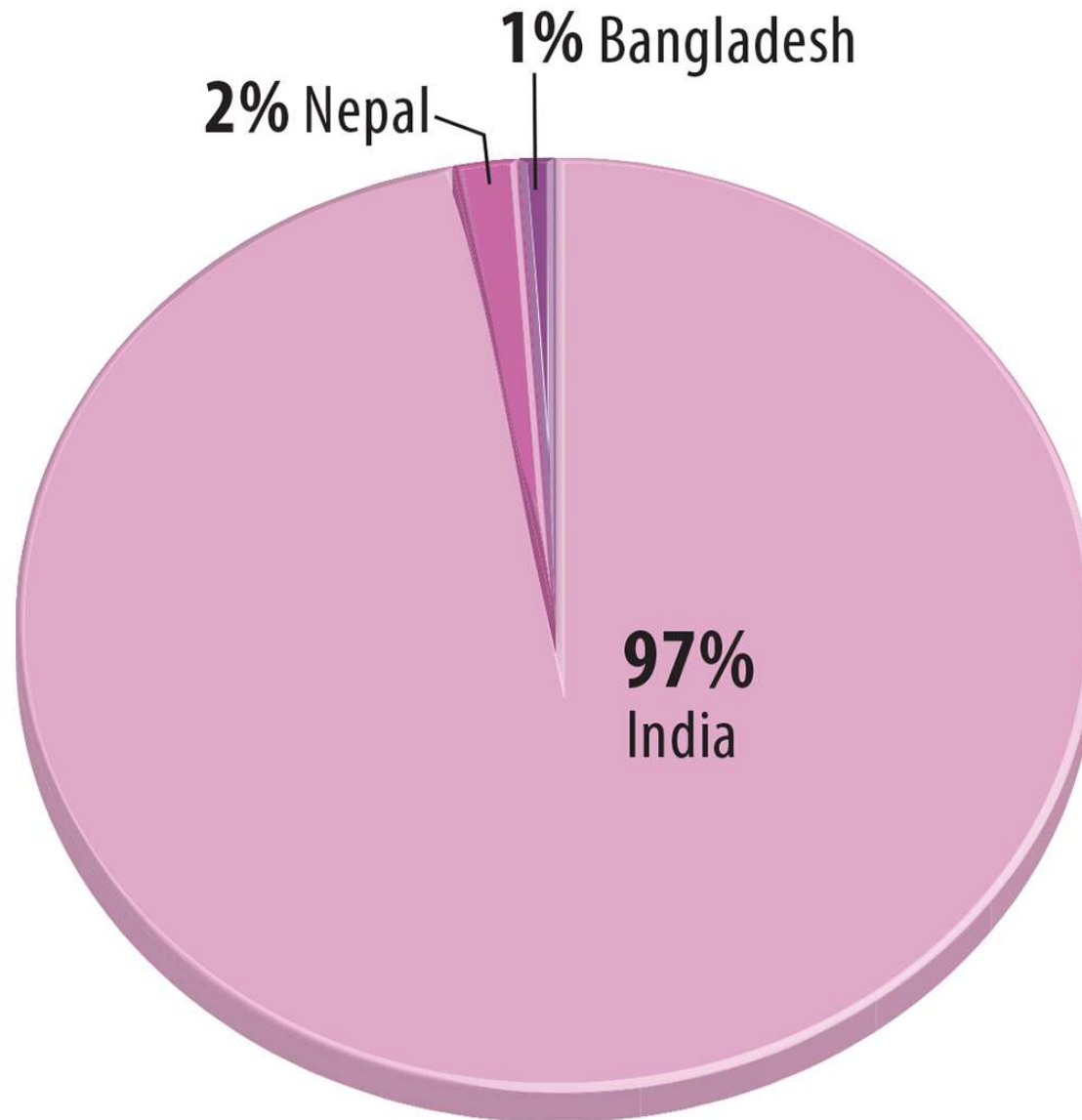


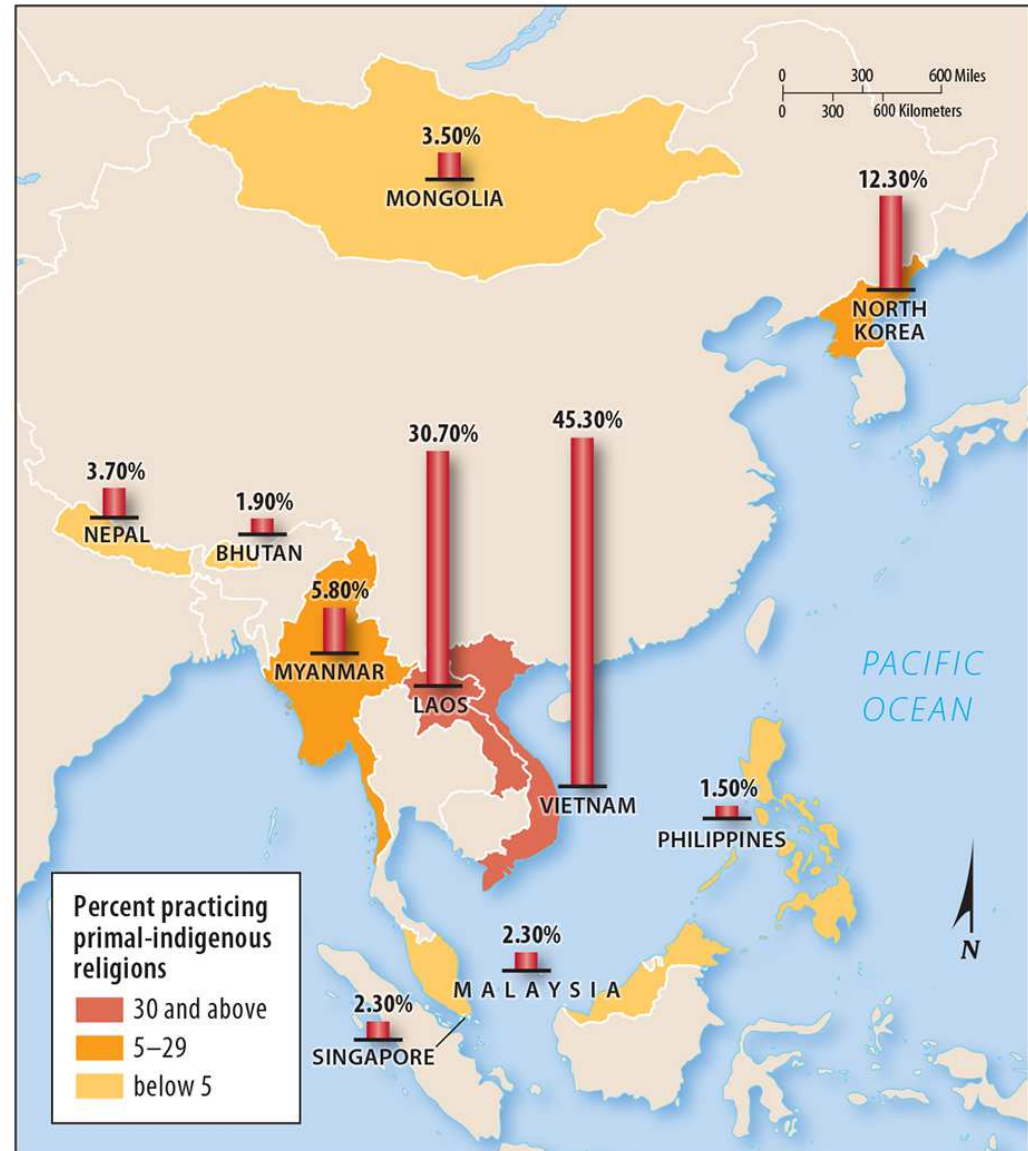
Figure 6-12: Hindus are concentrated nearly entirely in India.

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.
- Animism
 - Followers believe that inanimate objects or natural events, such as natural disasters, have spirits and conscious life.
 - 100 million Africans adhere to animism.

Distribution of Primal-Indigenous Religions in Southeast Asia

Figure 6-14: Primal-indigenous ethnic religions are relatively common in Southeast Asia.



Distribution of African Traditional Religions, 1900 and 2010

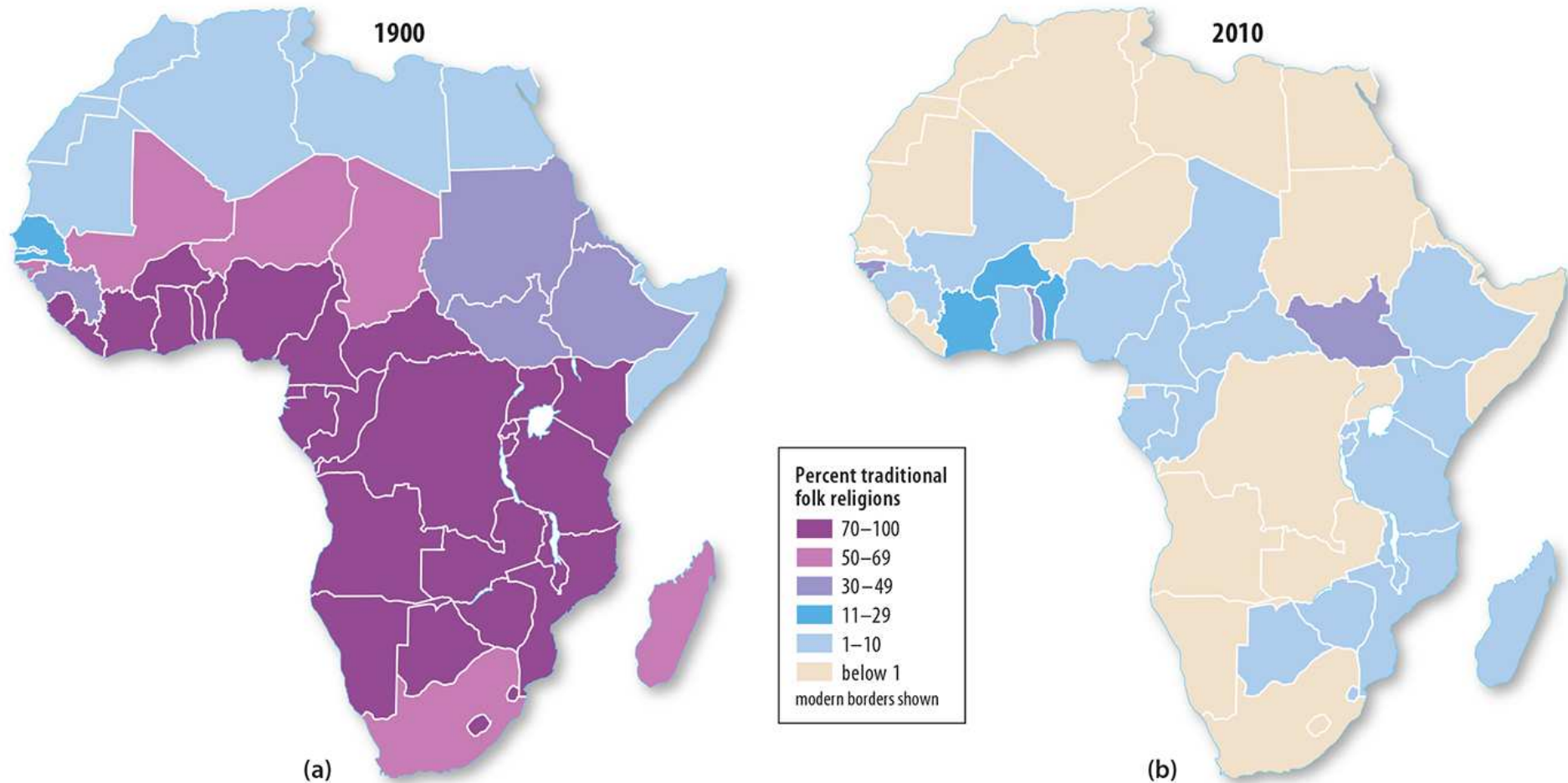


Figure 6-15: Traditional folk religions in Africa have become less common in part because of the activity of Christian and Muslim missionaries.

Clustered Religions With at Least 1 Million Adherents

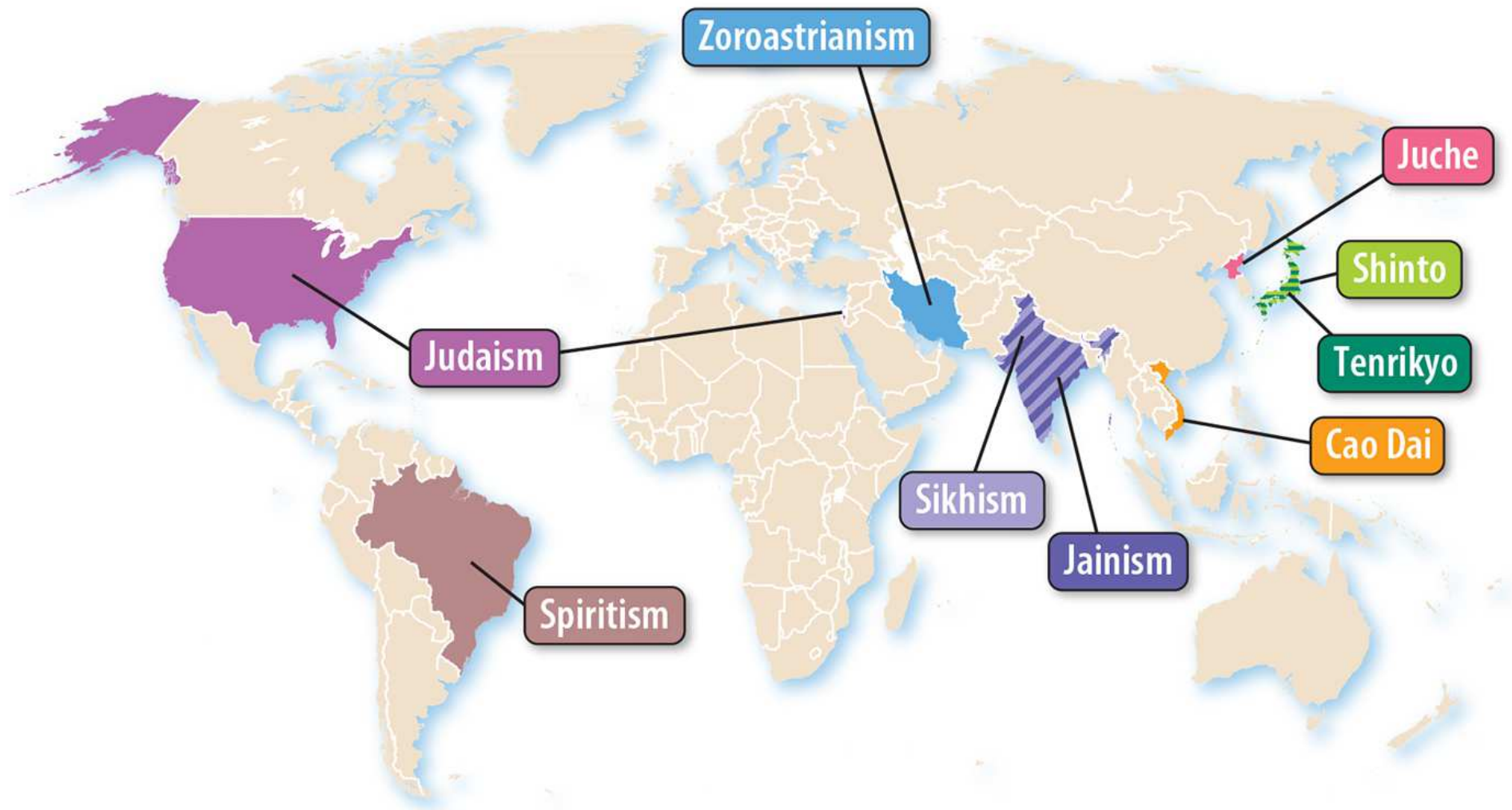


Figure 6-16: Most of the adherents to clustered religions are in Asia.

Distribution of Bahá'ís

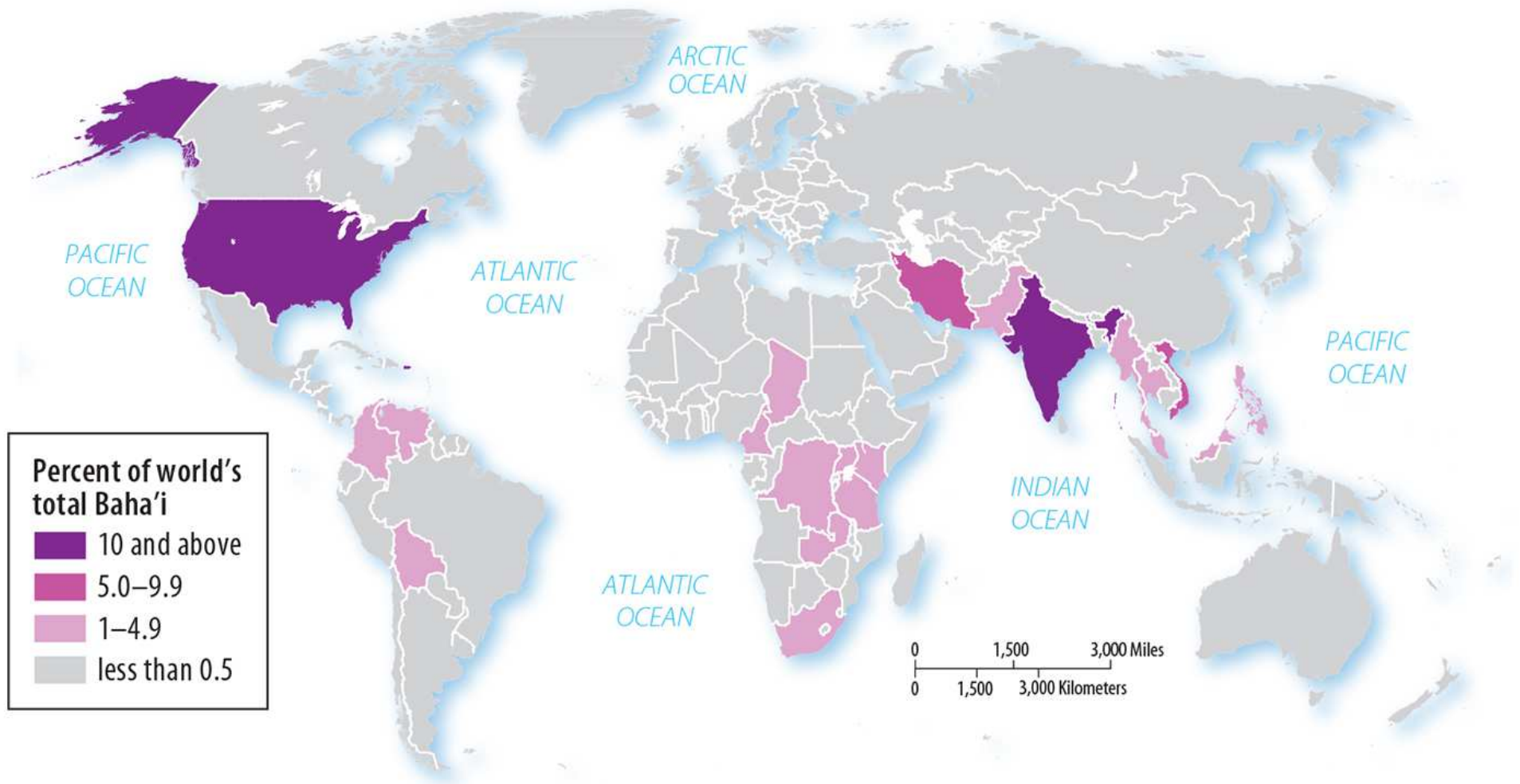


Figure 6-18: In contrast to Figure 6-15, the universalizing religion Bahá'í is relatively dispersed in its distribution.

Non- Religion Religions?

- Atheism
 - Belief that God does not exist
- Agnosticism
 - Belief that nothing can be known about whether God exists
- Secular Humanism
 - Belief that humanity is capable of morality and self-fulfillment without belief in God.

Key Issue 2: Why Do Religions Have Distinctive Distributions?

2.1 Origin of Christianity and Islam in Southwest Asia

2.2 Origin of Buddhism and Hinduism in South Asia

2.3 Historical Diffusion of Religions

2.4 Recent Migration of Christians

2.5 Migration of Muslims and Jews

Diffusion of Religions

- Christianity

- Hierarchical Diffusion

- Emperor Constantine helped diffuse the religion throughout the Roman Empire by embracing Christianity.

- Relocation Diffusion

- Missionaries

- Help transmit a religion through relocation diffusion
 - Migration and missionary activity by Europeans since 1500 have extended Christianity all over the world.
 - Permanent resettlement in the Americas, Australia, and New Zealand

Origin of Christianity



Figure 6-19: The Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, Israel is a historic site in the origin of Christianity as the site of Jesus's resurrection.

Diffusion of Religions

- Islam
 - Muhammad's successors organized followers into armies to force the spread over an extensive area of...
 - Africa, Asia, Europe
 - Relocation diffusion of missionaries to portions of sub-Saharan Africa and Southeast Asia transmitted the religion

Origin of Islam



Figure 6-20: The Mosque of the Prophet in Madinah, Saudi Arabia marks the burial place of Muhammad, the Prophet of Islam.

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.

Origin of Buddhism



Figure 6-21: The Mahabodhi (Great Awakening) Temple represents the place where Buddha attained enlightenment.

Diffusion of Religions

- Ethnic Religions
 - Most have limited, if any, diffusion.
 - Possible, if adherents migrate 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.

Diffusion of Universalizing Religions

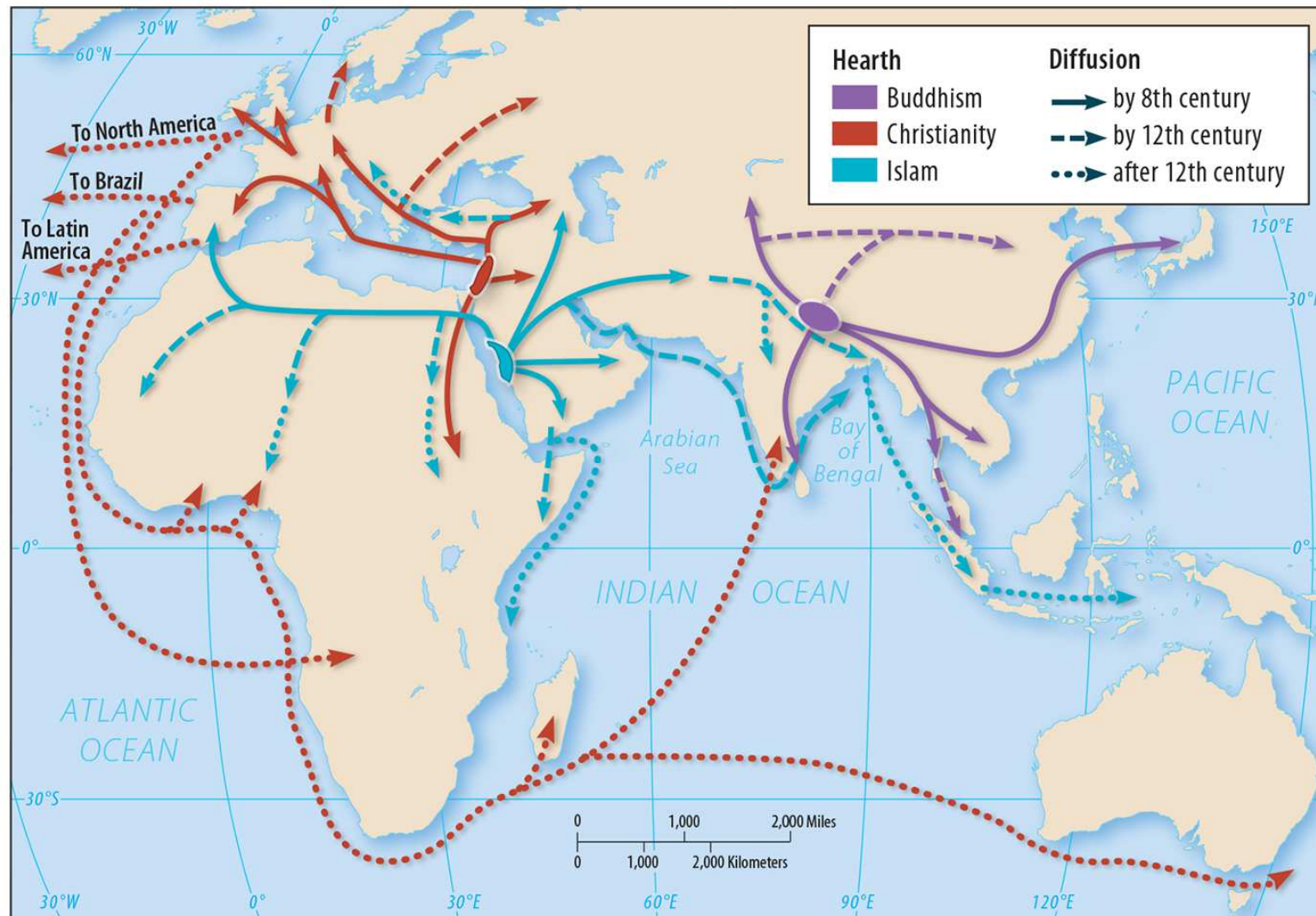


Figure 6-24: Universalizing religions have diffused around the world. Note overlaps for consideration in discussion of territorial conflicts (Key Issue 4).

Unknown Origin of Hinduism



Figure 6-23: Changu Narayan, from around A.D. 325, is the oldest surviving Hindu temple in Nepal, but there is not a known single origin of Hinduism.

Early Diffusion of Christianity

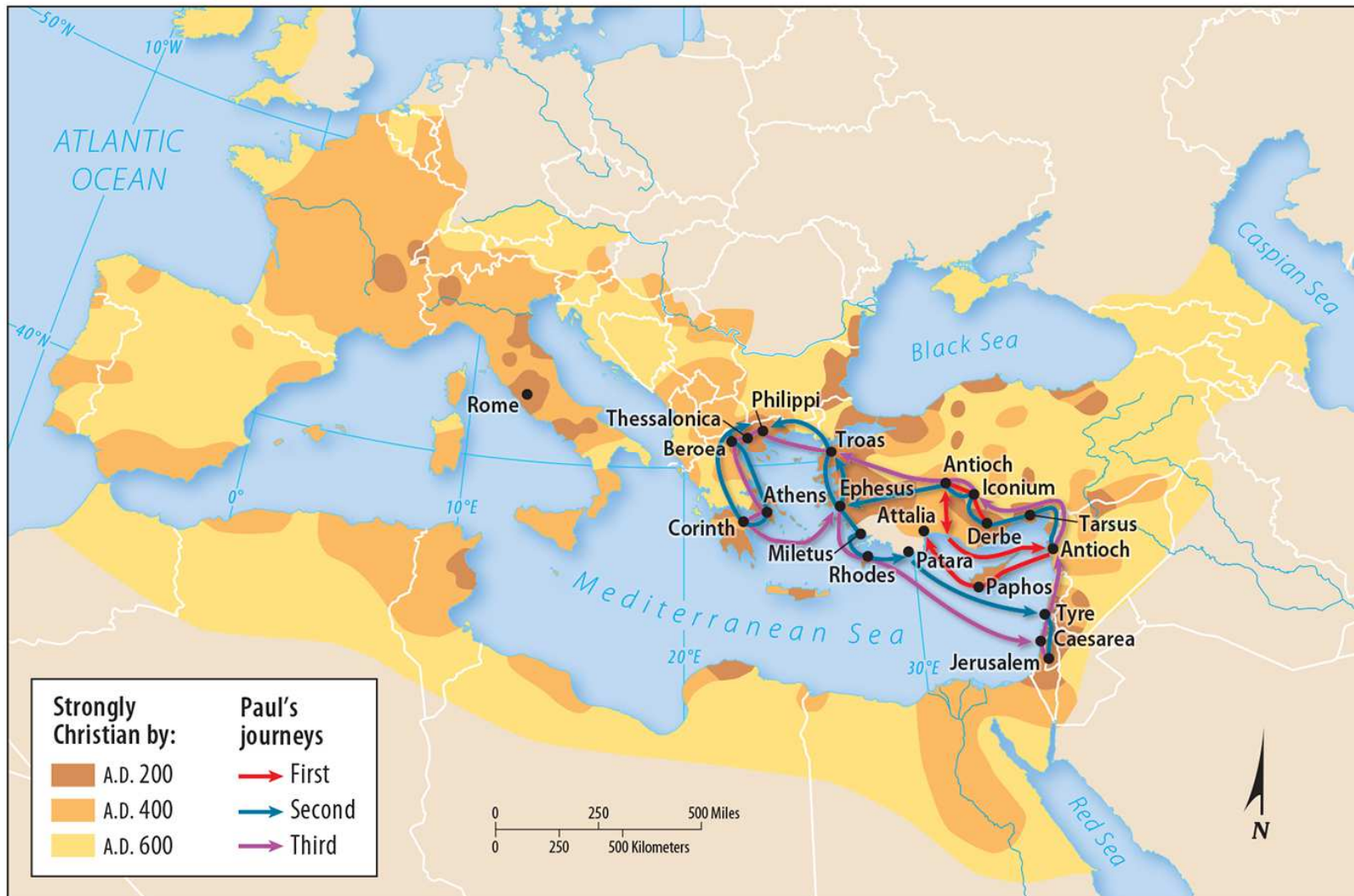


Figure 6-25: Christianity was spread around the Mediterranean by missionaries and the conversion of rulers.

Diffusion of Islam

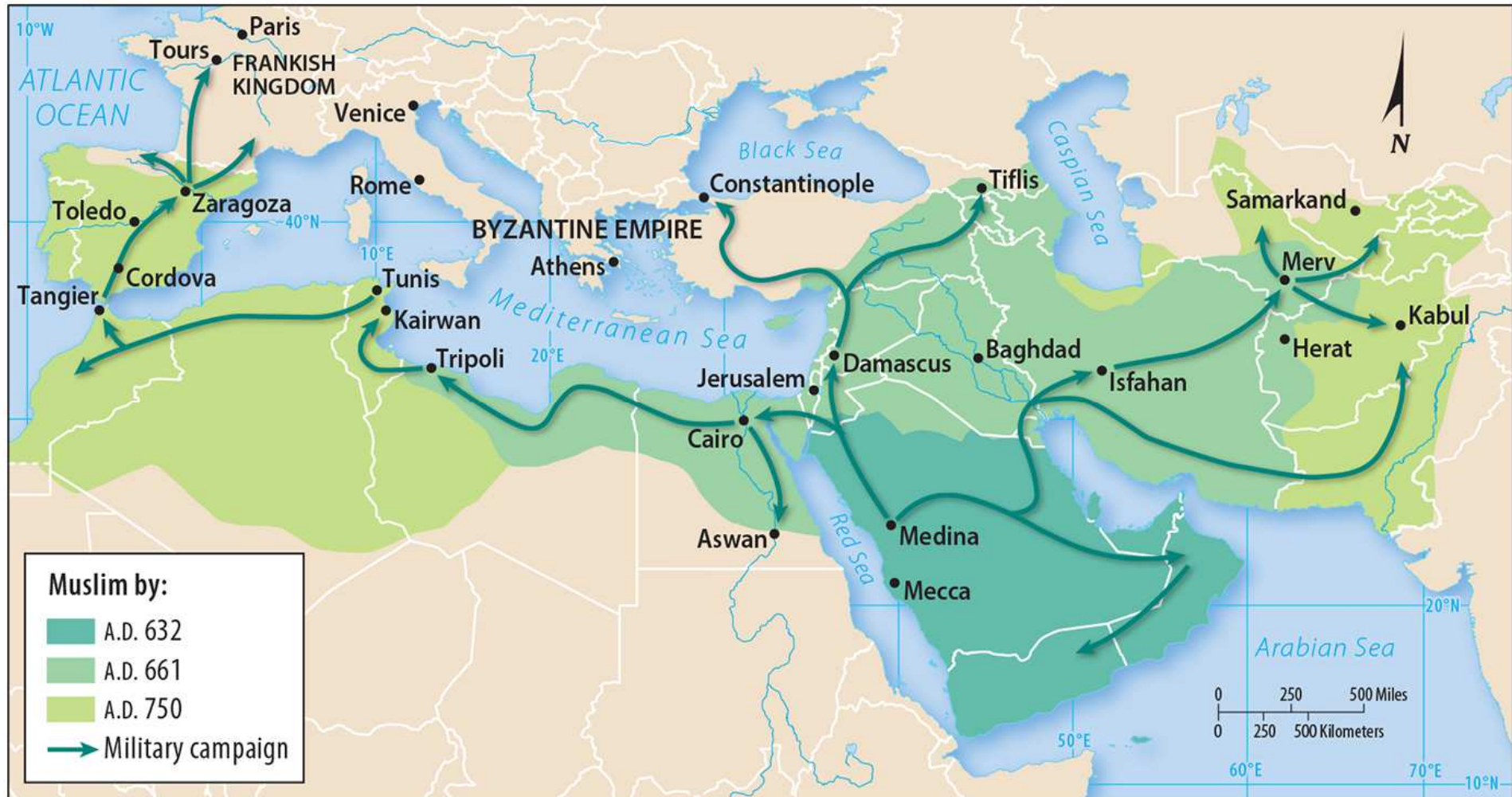


Figure 6-26: Islam diffused through a combination of military campaigns and missionary activity.

Religion of International Migrants

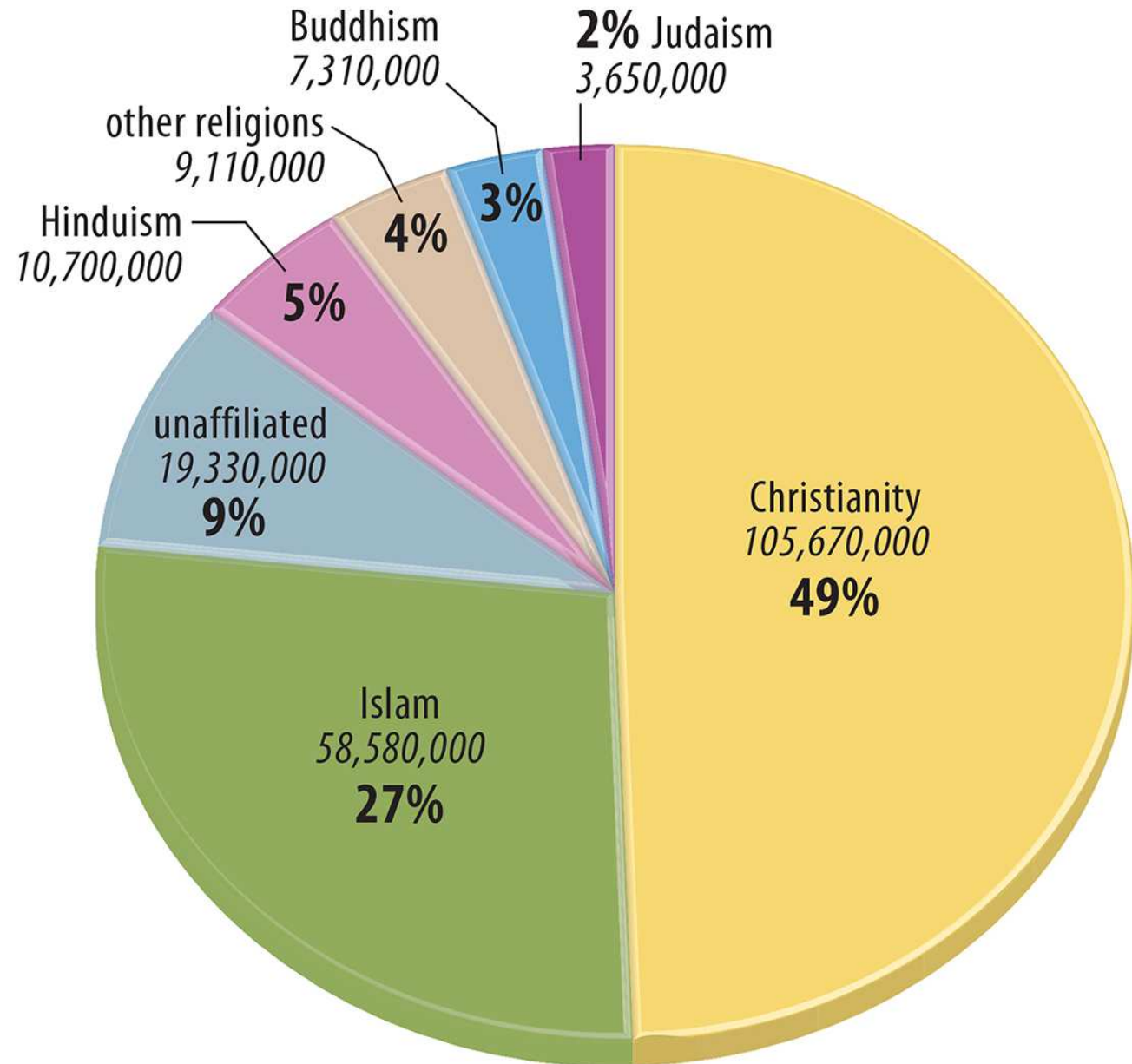


Figure 6-27: Christians make up a disproportionate share of migrants (less than one-third of the world's population is Christian).

Migration of Christians

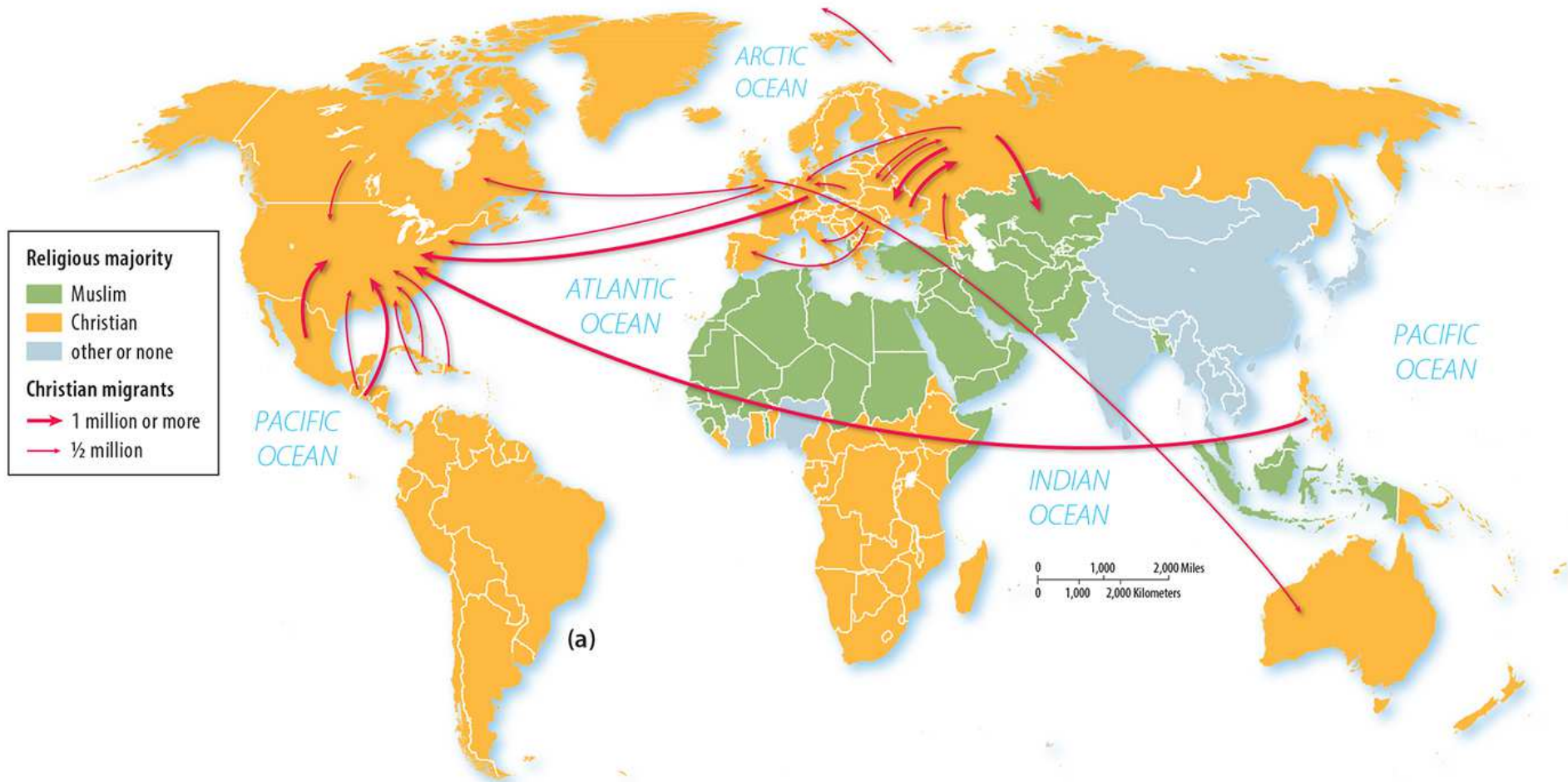
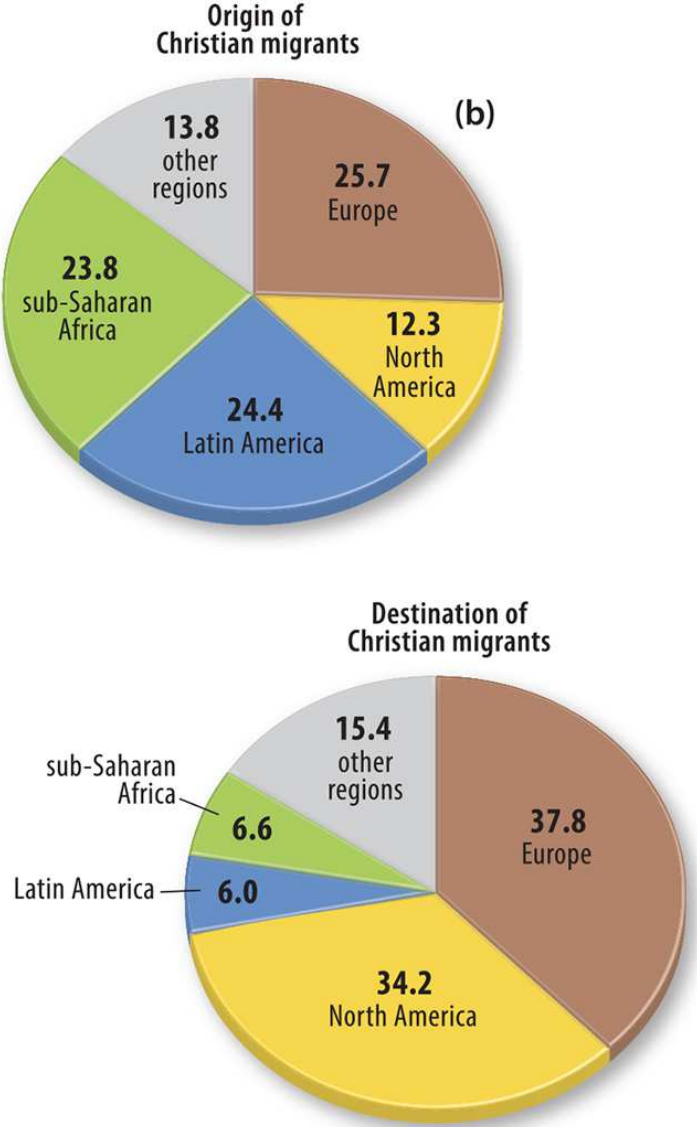


Figure 6-29(a): Large flows of Christians are from countries with Christian majorities into other countries with Christian majorities.

Origin and Destination of Christian Migrants

Figure 6-29(b): Europe and North America are popular destinations for Christian migrants.



Largest Flows of Muslim Migrants

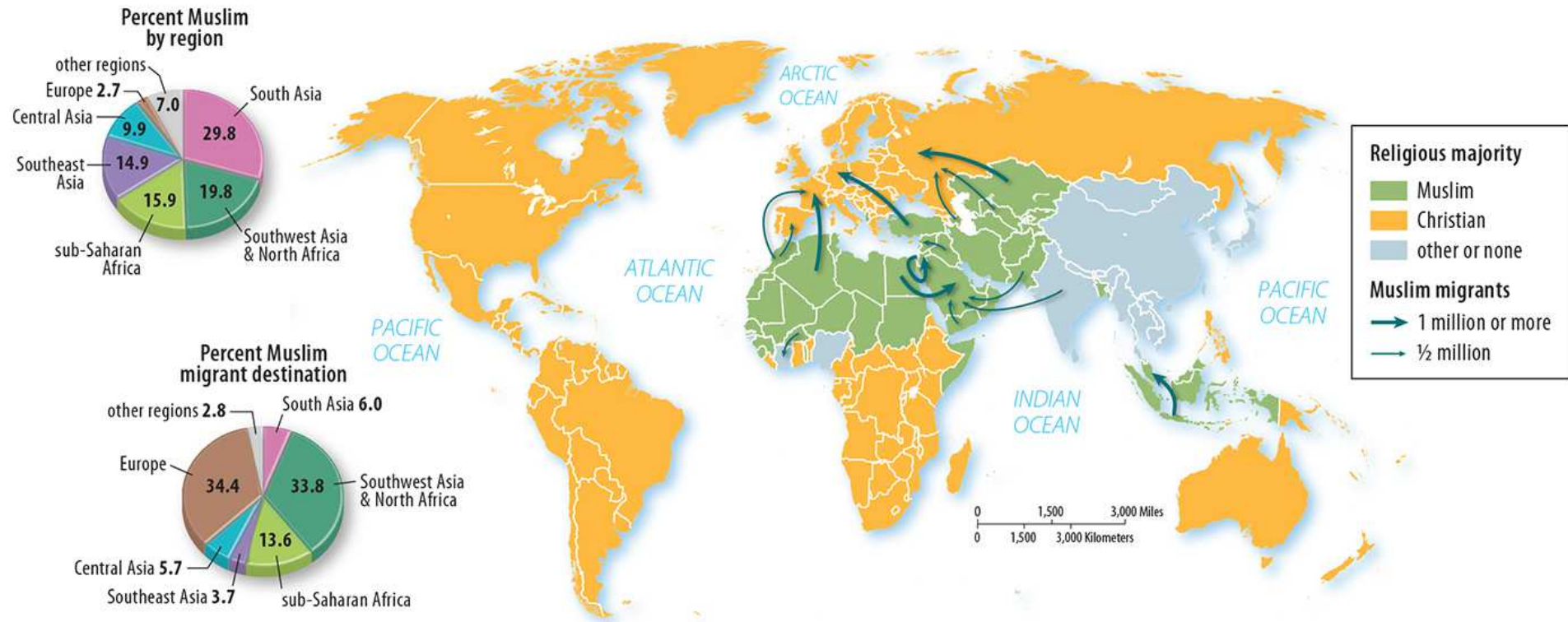


Figure 6-33: Some large flows of Muslim migrants are from Muslim-majority countries to other Muslim-majority countries. There are also large flows of Muslims into Christian-majority Europe.

Distribution of Jews, 1910 and 2012

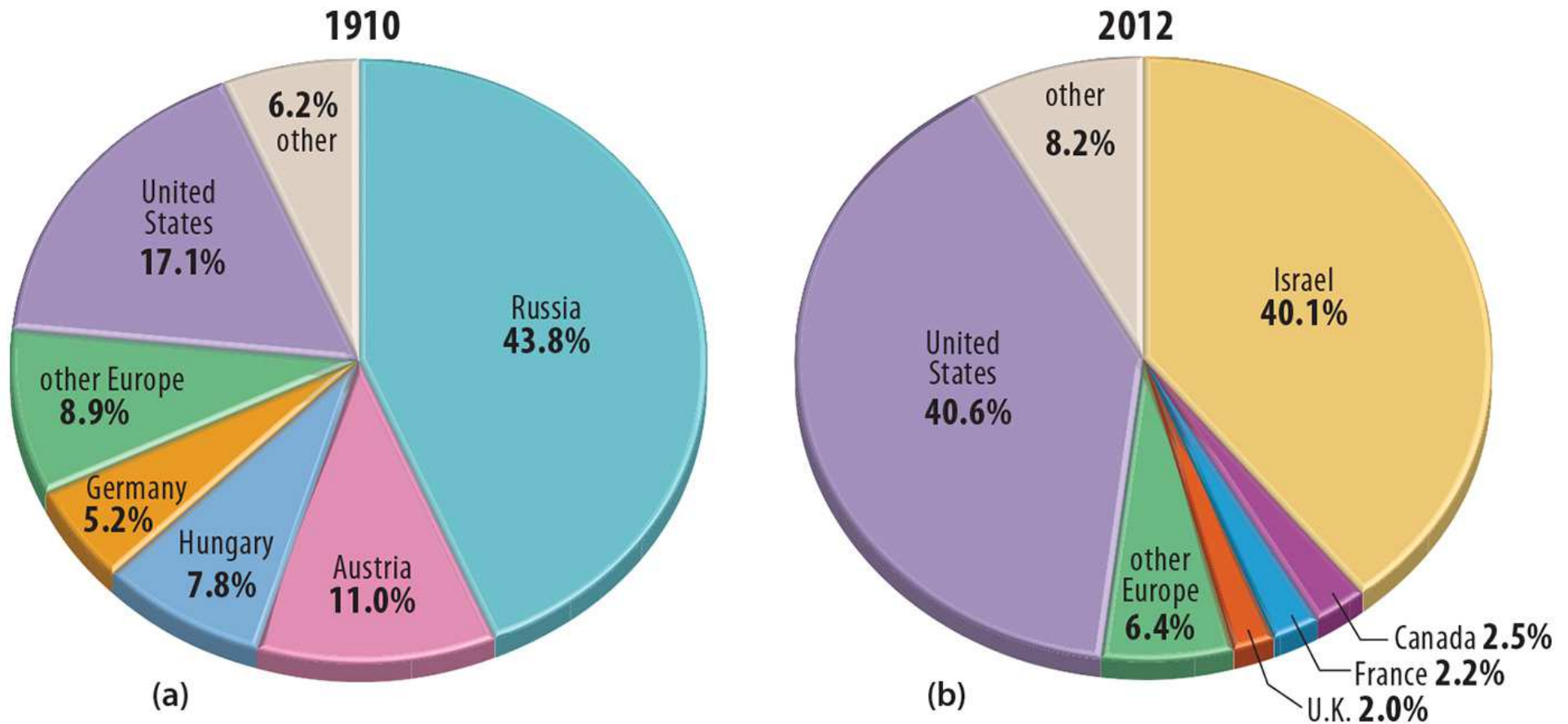


Figure 6-36: The Jewish population has undergone a major change in distribution from being mostly in Europe to mostly in the United States and Israel.

Key Issue 3: Why Do Religions Organize Space in Distinctive Patterns?

3.1 Places of Worship

3.2 Religious Settlements and Toponyms

3.3 Administration of Space

3.4 Sacred Space in Universalizing Religions

3.5 The Landscape in Ethnic Religions

3.6 Religious Calendars

Sacred Spaces and Places

- Universalizing religions
 - Christian Church, Muslim Mosques, Buddhist Pagodas
 - Islam- Mecca and Medinah
 - Birthplace of Muhammad and site of the Kaaba
 - Tomb of Muhammad
 - Burying the dead is most commonly practiced
 - Utopian settlements are ideal communities built around a religious way of life.
 - Often places have religious names
 - 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

Sacred Spaces and Places

- Ethnic religions
 - Usually a connection to the physical world
 - The Ganges River and Mt. Kailas in Hinduism
 - Cremation is most commonly practiced
 - 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
 - Judaism is the exception to ethnic generalities

Places of Worship



Figures 6-37, 6-38, and 6-39: An Orthodox church (above), Protestant church (top right), and Buddhist pagoda (bottom right) are sacred structures to adherents of each religion.



Religious Toponyms in Canada

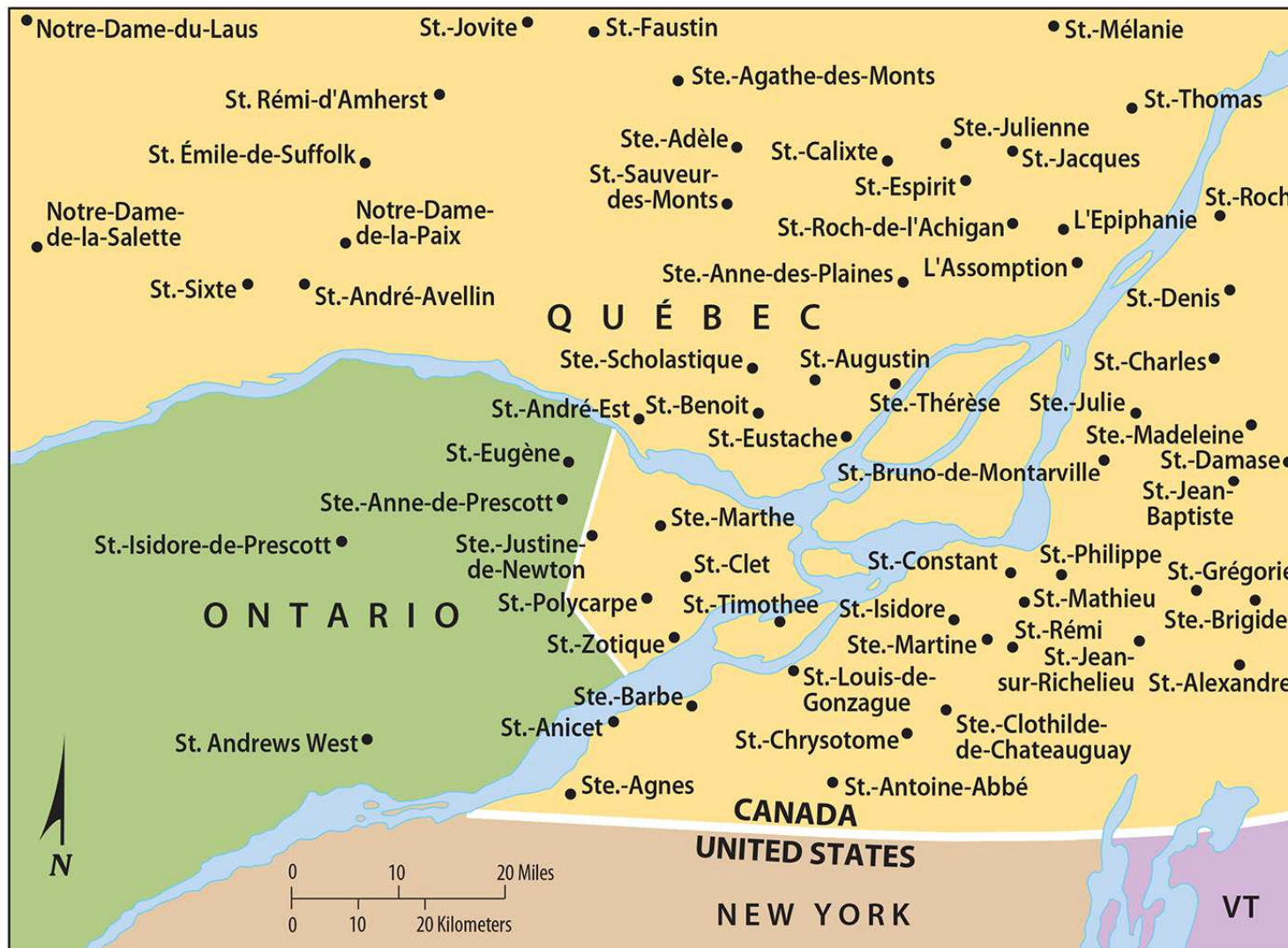


Figure 6-41: Places named after saints reflect the influence of Roman Catholicism.

Mapping Religious Segregation

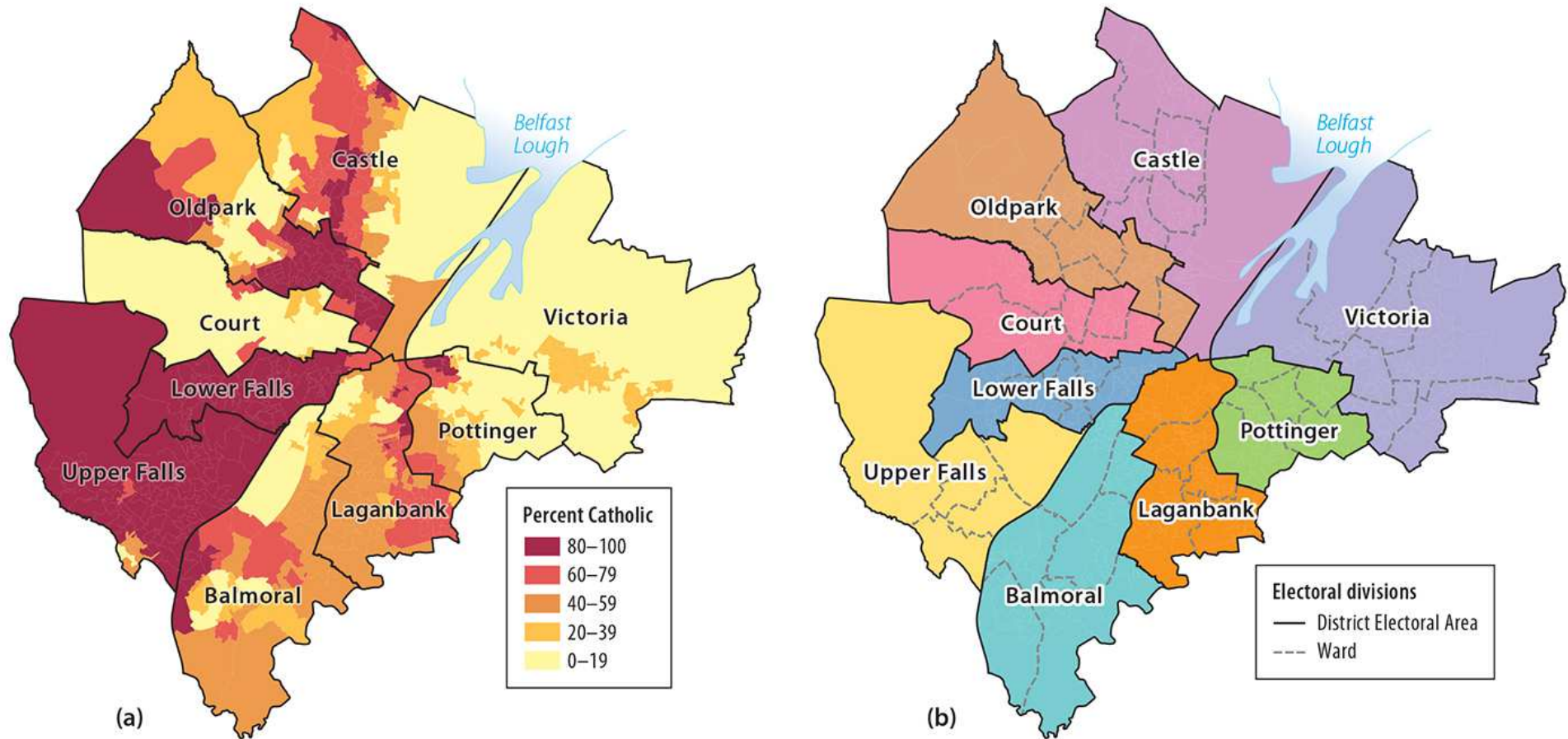


Figure 6-42: Electoral divisions in Northern Ireland show concentrations of Irish Catholics in certain electoral divisions and concentrations of Protestants in others.

Roman Catholic Hierarchy in the U.S.

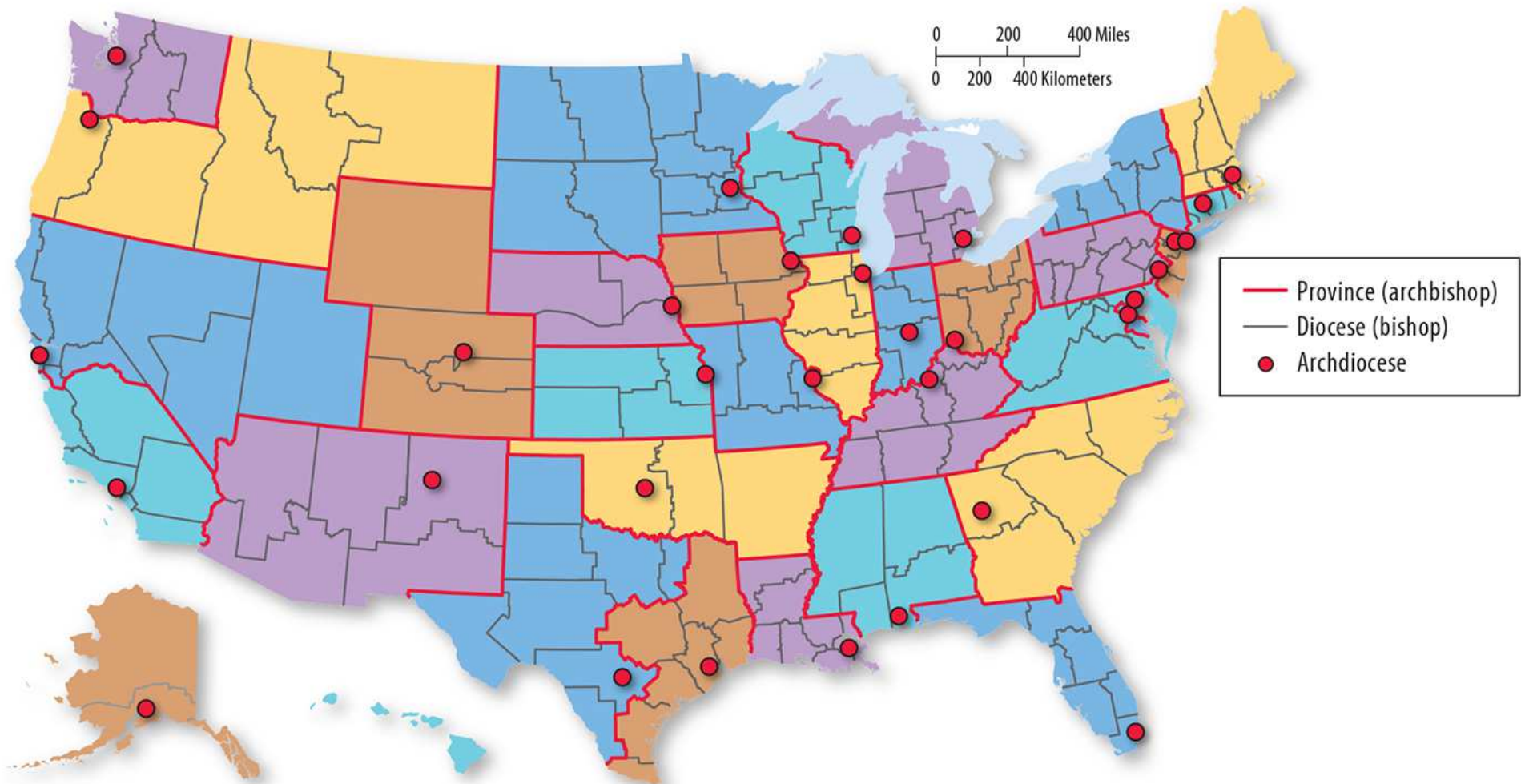
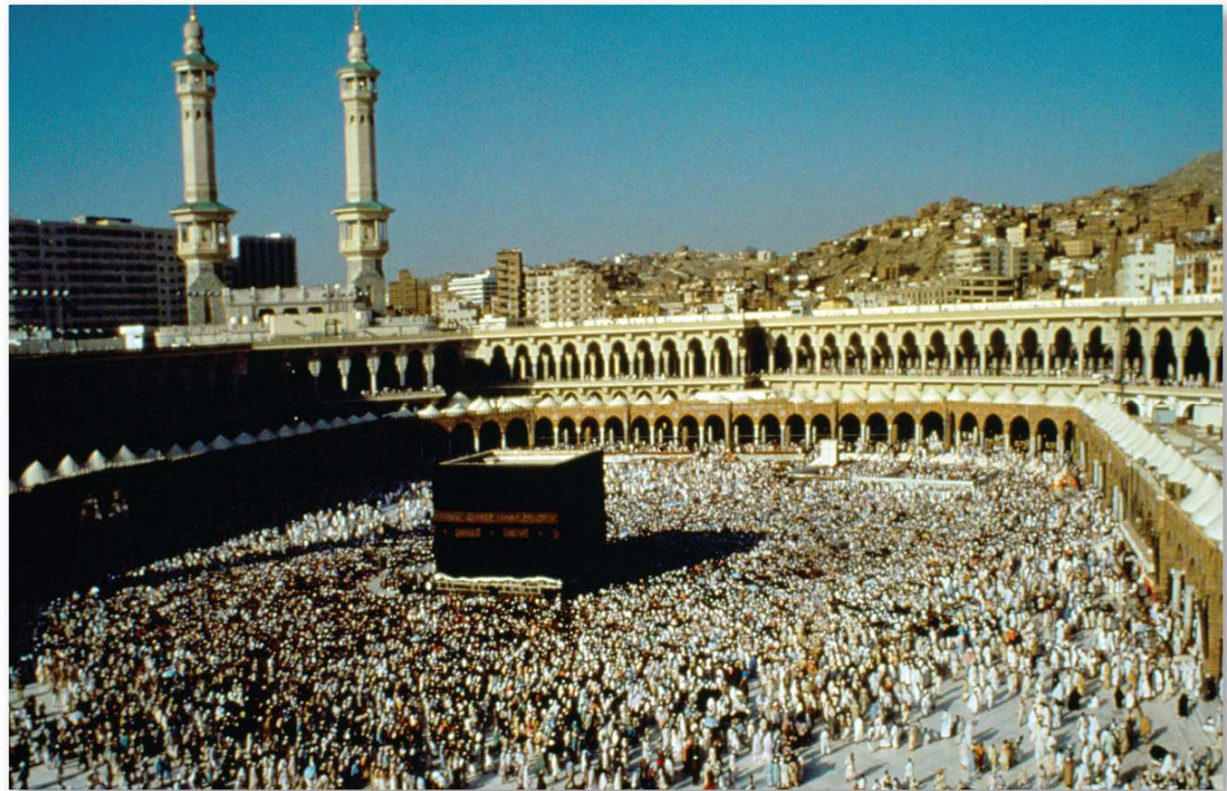


Figure 6-43: The Catholic Church divides space into provinces and dioceses with administrative clergy over each level of the hierarchy.

Sacred Space in Universalizing Religions



Figures 6-47 and 6-48: Dhamek Stupa (left) in Sarnath, India is sacred to Buddhists. The Masjid al-Haram (Great Mosque) in Makkah, Saudi Arabia is sacred to Muslims.

The Landscape in Ethnic Religions



Figures 6-49 and 6-50: Ethnic religions differ in views of disposal of the dead. Hindus favor cremation at Varanasi (left), while Zoroastrians historically preferred open exposure (right).

Religious Calendars

- Universalizing religions tend to recognize dates in the life of the founder.
- Ethnic religions' calendars are more organized around seasons.

Key Issue 4: Why Do Territorial Conflicts Arise Among Religious Groups?

4.1 Challenges for Religions in South and East Asia

4.2 Challenges for Religions in Central and Southwest Asia

4.3 Geographic Perspectives in the Middle East

4.4 Jerusalem's Challenging Geography

Challenges for Religions in South and East Asia

- Hindu's traditional caste system—conflict with social equality
- Religious revival after Soviet Communist era ended
- Continued conflict between religion and communism in China

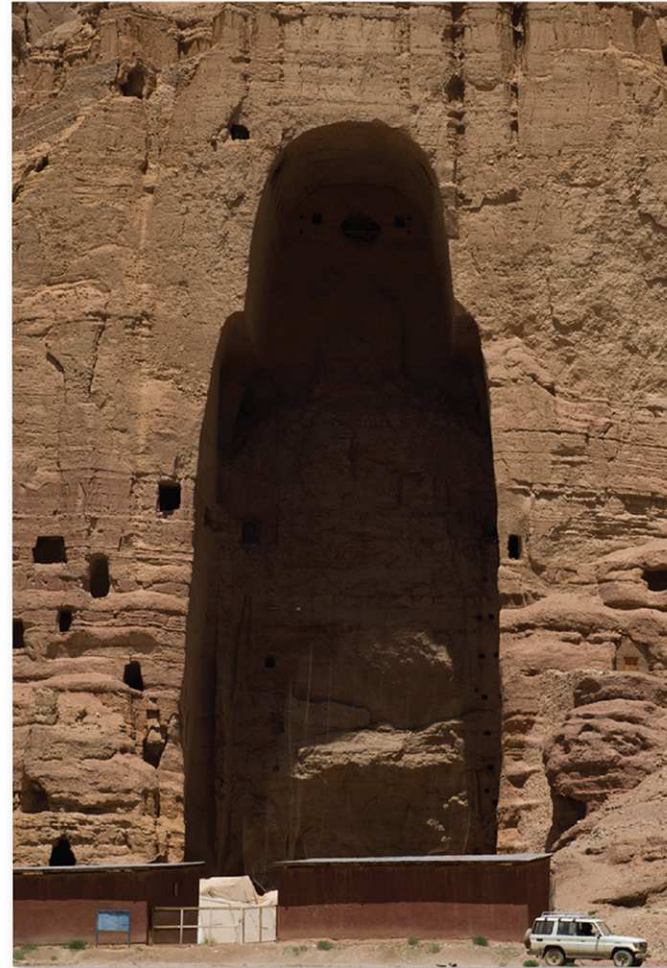
Religion versus Government Policies

- 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
 - Taliban versus Western Values
 - Taliban's control of Afghanistan's government in the 1990s led to strict laws opposing Western values called Sharia Law
 - “Western, non-Islamic” leisure activities banned
 - Ex: Soccer stadiums converted to settings for executions and floggings.

Taliban vs. Western Values



(a) 1998



(b) 2001

Figure 6-55: The Taliban, in Afghanistan's strict interpretation of Islamic values, led to laws and actions counter to many Western values, including the destruction of this statue of Buddha.

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.

Religious Wars in the Middle East

- Conflict here is among the world's longest standing.
 - Although they can trace their origins to Abraham, the religions have diverged in ways that make cohabitation difficult.
 - 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.
 - To recapture the Holy Land from its Muslim conquerors, European Christian launched a series of military campaigns, known as Crusades

Territorial Changes in Israel and its Neighbors

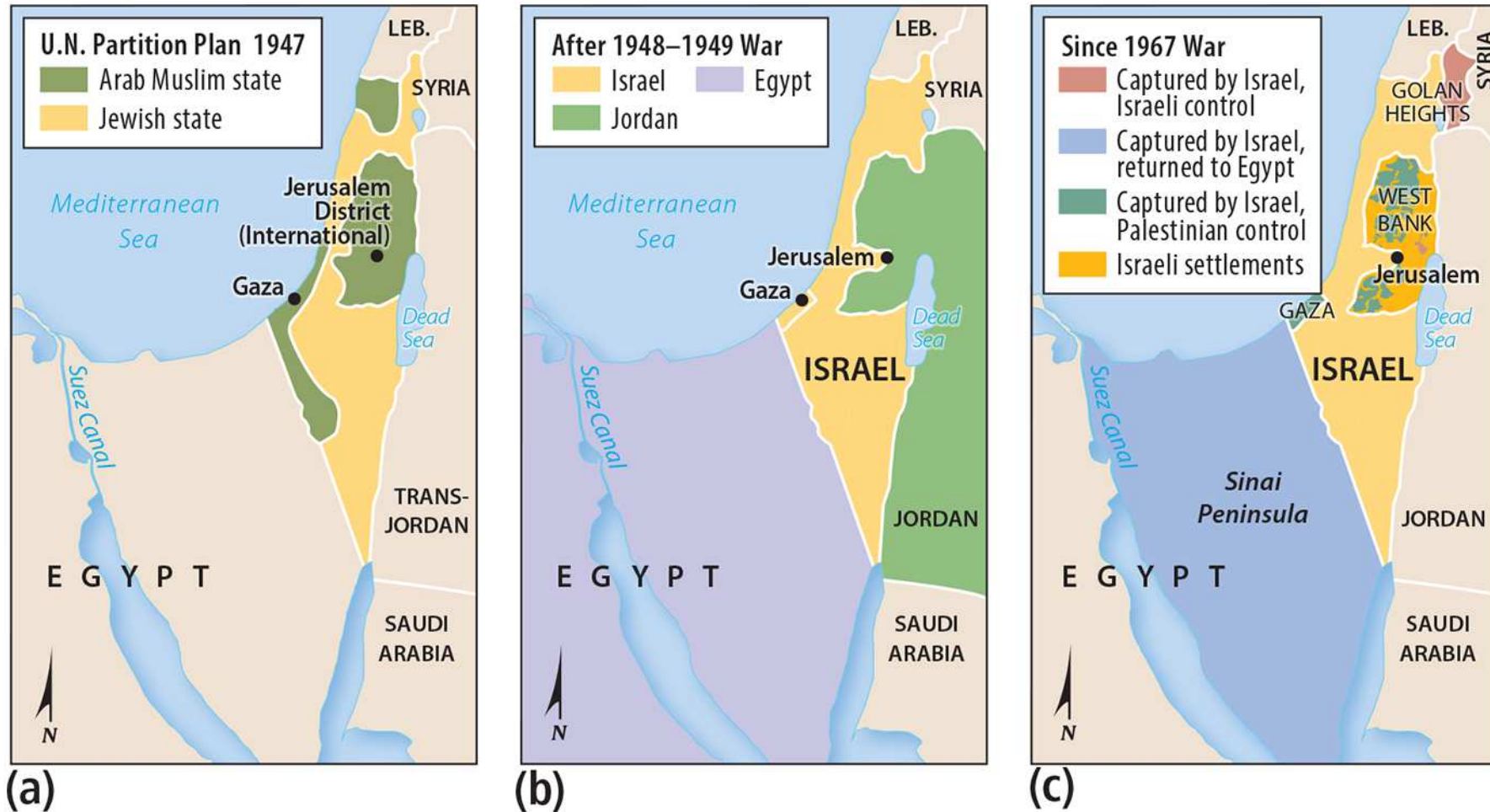


Figure 6-57: Israel's territory has expanded since 1947. Israel's possession of territory dedicated to Palestinians remains controversial.

Conflicting Perspectives of the Holy Land

- 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.
 - Most sacred space for Muslims in Jerusalem was built on top of the most sacred space for Jews.

Jerusalem's Challenging Geography



Figure 6-59: The Dome of the Rock, a holy site to Muslims, is next to the Western Wall, a site sacred to Jews.

Conflict in the Middle East

Figure 6-56: The area of present-day Israel has a long history of conflicting Jewish, Christian, and Muslim claims.



Jerusalem's Challenging Geography

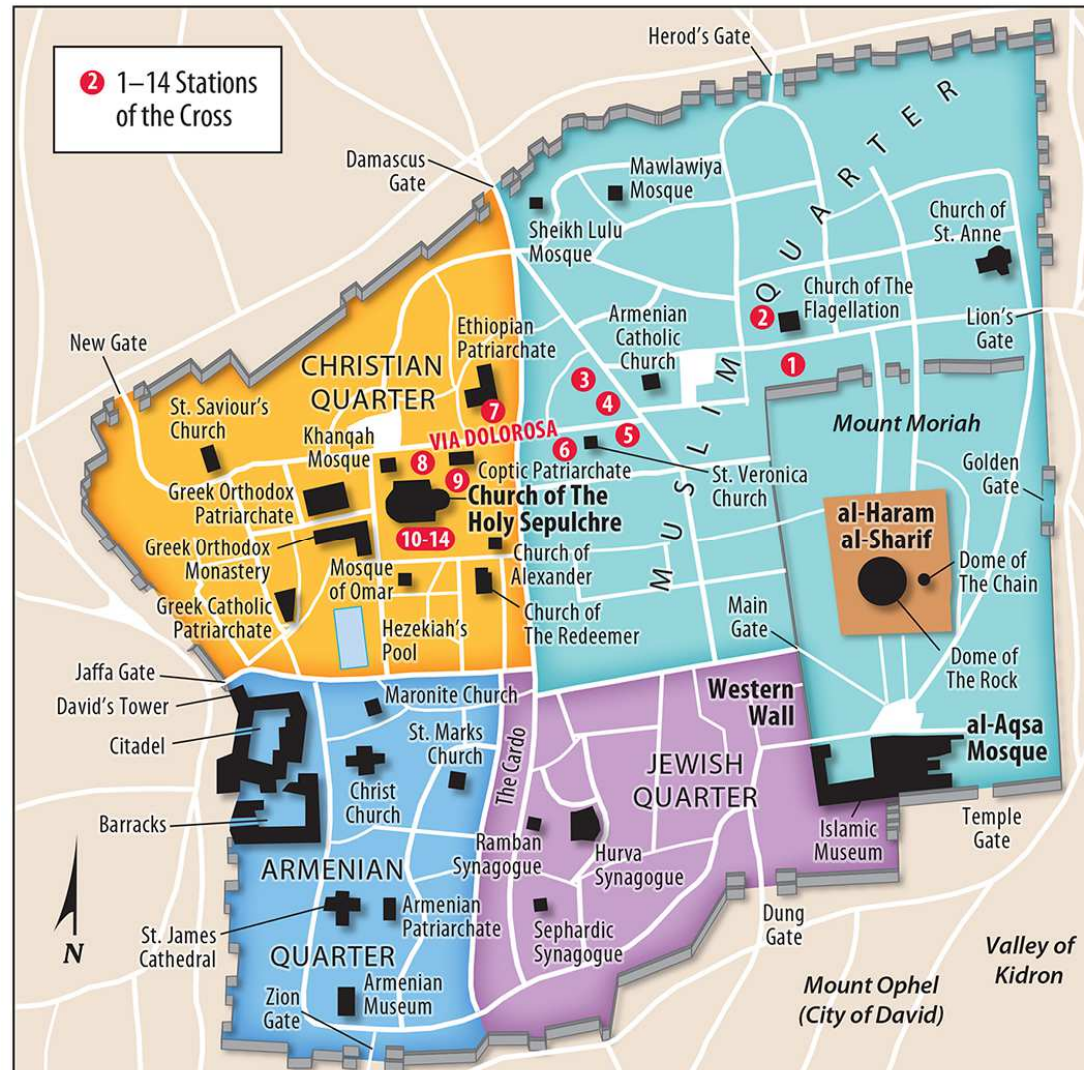


Figure 6-58: The Old City of Jerusalem is divided into quarters due to competing religious claims.

Jerusalem's Challenging Geography



Figures 6-60 and 6-61: Israel is building a security fence on the boundary with the West Bank.