

LESSON 2

THE COURSE OF MISSIONS

A.D. 500-1300

An Overview of the Period

The dates of 500 to 1300 are arbitrary. This lesson begins with an Irish mission to northern Britain and concludes with the work of Raymond Lull (1235-1315) in North Africa. Historians refer to the period from about A.D. 500 to A.D. 1000 as the Dark Ages. It was during this period that barbarian tribes, mostly from central Europe, spilled over into western and southern Europe, and even into North Africa. The Visigoths captured and sacked Rome in A.D. 410, Gaul two years later, and settled down to rule what is now France and Spain. In 493 the Ostrogoths from eastern Russia invaded northern Italy and controlled it for forty years. The Lombards captured and controlled northern Italy (535-72), but did not take Rome. The Franks, at the close of the fourth century, fought their way into southern Germany and eastern France. They were destined to be the dominating power in Europe until about the tenth century. When the Frankish king Charlemagne gave his backing to the Roman Catholic Church in A.D. 800, the result was the establishment of the Roman Empire in the West. However, with the decline of the successors of Charlemagne, his domain broke up giving rise to a multitude of small kingdoms and to the feudal system which made some to be serfs, others freedmen of limited liberty, and others landowners by the grace of the sovereign. Feudalism initially weakened the Church, but eventually reaction to the system strengthened the Church.

The rise of Islam and its militant spasmodic conquest of Jewish and Christian lands from the seventh century contributed also to the Dark Ages. The reactionary "Christian" Crusades in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries was one of the darkest chapters in the history of Christianity; but it did increase travel, opened up commerce, and brought enlightenment to many people.

Important events which determined the course of missions during this period were: (1) The invasion of Britain by missionaries from the monasteries of Ireland, (2) The founding of the Holy Roman Empire through an alliance between the Pope and Charlemagne, (3) The invasion of Britain by the Norsemen, and North Africa by the Mohammedans, (4) The crusades which exposed Christians to other peoples of the world, (5) Expansion of trade, contemporary with and following the crusades

One reason A. D. 500 to 1000 was called the d_____ a_____ is because b_____ tribes invaded western Europe during this period.

(dark, ages, barbarian)

Another reason was the Muslim c_____ of Jewish and Christian lands from the s_____ c_____.

(conquest, seventh, century)

and (6) The founding of missionary orders within the Catholic Church near the end of the period.

Missionary Endeavours, 500-800

Irish evangelization in Britain

Since Patrick, who was carried from Scotland as a slave to Ireland, became the apostle to the Irish, it was fitting that an Irishman should become an apostle to carry the gospel to Scotland. *Columba* was born a prince of the royal family of the O'Donnells of Donegal, Ireland in 521. Following the example of Patrick, Columba founded monasteries at Durrow, Londonderry, and Kells. In 563 Columba, accompanied by twelve companions, founded a monastery on the Isle of Iona, off the coast of Scotland. This monastery became one of the most noted mission training centres in history. It drew its pupils largely from Ireland. Scotland was largely pagan. Columba and his companions preached a complete faith in Jesus Christ and purity of life. They travelled throughout Scotland and to offshore islands evangelizing, teaching converts, building churches, and establishing monasteries. The influence of Columba and his school touched the Hebrides, Orkney and Shetland Islands, Wales and even the Saxons. After the death of Columba (597) his monasteries for 200 years sent missionaries to Britain and Europe.

Oswald, king of Northumbria, like Constantine and Clovis, decided in time of battle (c. 633) to become a Christian. He sent to the monastery in Iona for Christian teachers. *Aidan* was sent and was permitted to establish a monastery on an island off the coast of England. From this base Aidan and his companions travelled throughout Northumbria and beyond. For seventeen years they preached to the fierce Angles and Saxons with great effect. King Oswald gave his support and churches were built. Conversions continued unabated after the death of Oswald. Aidan was followed by Cuthbert, the gentle itinerant missionary who continued the evangelization of the Angles.

Rome's effort to Christianize Britain

In 596, a year before the death of Columba, Pope Gregory the Great (Gregory I), sent *Augustine*, abbot of the monastery of St. Andrew, with forty monks, as missionaries to Britain. Enroute they heard of the savagery of the Angles and Saxons, and in Gaul turned back. Gregory ordered Augustine on. With seven monks he arrived at Kent in southeast Britain. Ethelbert, king of Kent, whose wife Bertha was a Frankish Christian, had some knowledge of Christianity. He permitted the monks to preach in Canterbury, capital of Kent. The virtuous life and forceful preaching of the monks impressed Ethelbert and he was soon converted. True to custom, his parliament adopted the religion of the ruler as the official religion. Within a year Augustine reported 10,000 baptisms. The Canterbury Cathedral was founded and

In _____, C_____ founded a m_____ on the Isle of Iona, near S_____.

(563, Columba, monastery, Scotland)

List the endeavours of missionaries sent out from the monastery at Iona.

(Compare your answers with the text.)

Missionaries from monasteries of Columba touched the following countries:

H _____, O _____,
S _____, W _____,
N _____, and E _____.

(Compare your answers with the text.)

Mark the following true or false.

1. Pope Gregory I sent Augustine to Britain. _____
2. Augustine, with 40 monks, arrived at Kent. _____
3. King Ethelbert permitted Augustine and the monks to preach in Canterbury. _____
4. Augustine reported no converts during the first year. _____

Continued on the next page.

Augustine was appointed its first archbishop. The Celtic Christianity which prevailed in Ireland and was spreading in Scotland and Northumbria, met the Roman Christianity which was spreading northward from Canterbury. There were controversies between the two, but by 664 when the Synod of Whitby convened, most of British Christendom was related to the Roman Catholic Church. Rome found a champion in *Wilfrid* of the Northumbria region. He was for a time Bishop of York. Near the close of the seventh century (686-87) "Wilfrid was himself to carry out notable evangelistic work among the still heathen Saxons in Sussex. With this the conversion of England was held in principle to have been completed."¹

5. Roman Christianity spread northward and conflicted with Celtic Christianity. _____
6. Roman Christianity largely prevailed in Britain. _____

(Compare your answers with the text.)

Irish thrust into France, Switzerland and Italy

Columban (545-615), also called Columbanus, was trained in the missionary abbey in Bangor, Ireland where he became proficient in Latin, Greek, and Hebrew. At age forty he set forth with twelve companions on a mission to Europe. His first labour was in Burgundy in southwest France, where he founded a monastery at Luxueil. After twenty years Columban and his Celtic monks were expelled because he had rebuked the king and queen for their immortality. His band went to the region of Lake Constance, where they preached the gospel to the barbarian ancestors of the Swiss. One who accompanied Columban from Ireland was *St. Gall*, who became the apostle of northeastern Switzerland. The once famous monastery of St. Gall testifies to his success. Columban zealously destroyed pagan idols and temples and built monasteries to replace them. The expanding power of the Burgundians caught up with Columban and drove him across the Alps into Italy where he established his last monastery at Bobbio. The Irish Christian influence lingered for centuries. A fine collection of Irish manuscripts is preserved in the Cathedral at St. Gallen.

C _____ and t _____ companions went from Ireland to Europe as missionaries.

(Columban, twelve)

They established monasteries in:

Luxueil in F _____

St. Gall in S _____

Bobbio in I _____

(France, Switzerland, Italy)

Mission to Holland

Willibrord was a British evangelist trained in Ripon, Northumbria and in Ireland. He was saturated with Irish Christianity, but later became aligned with the Roman Church. In 690, with eleven companions, Willibrord crossed over into Frisia (Holland and a part of Belgium) and established work at Utrecht. The support given him by Pepin, the Frankish mayor of the palace, was a mixed blessing since there was constant friction between the Franks and the Frisians. Pepin recommended Willibrord to be Bishop of Frisia. But in 695 Pope Sergius called Willibrord to Rome and consecrated him Archbishop of Frisia, thus assuring his independence of Frankish bishops. He and his companions laboured almost fifty years in Frisia. He founded monasteries at Utrecht, Antwerp, Echternach and Susteren. These were mission

In 690 W _____, a British evangelist, went to F _____. Pope S _____ made him Archbishop of Frisia.

(Willibrord, Frisia, Sergius)

He established monasteries as mission centres in U _____, A _____, E _____, and S _____.

(Utrecht, Antwerp, Echternach, Susteren)

¹ Stephen Neill, *A History of Christian Missions* (Harmondsworth, England: Penguin Books Inc., 1964), p. 71.

centres from which monks went forth on missionary journeys and to which they returned. Despite the friction between Frisians and Franks, a well established church survived.

Apostle to Germany

Winfrid (680-754), best known as Boniface, was "the greatest missionary of the dark ages" according to Bishop Stephen Neill. Until he was almost forty Winfrid was a monk at Exeter and Nursling, near Winchester. Forty years of mission work began when he joined Willibrord in Frisia. Little is known of that period of his ministry. The turning point in his ministry came in 722 when Pope Gregory II summoned him to Rome to be consecrated bishop for the German frontier without a fixed see. Boniface chose to collaborate with the Roman Church because he believed his mission work would endure only if churches were strictly organized and were assured of support from a strong centre, such as Rome.

The most dramatic act in the life of Boniface came in 724 when he faced the pagans in a contest similar to that of Elijah with the prophets of Baal. Surrounded by angry pagans and fearful half-Christians, Boniface chopped down the sacred oak of Thor at Geismar near Hesse. When the huge object of veneration came crashing down and nothing happened to Boniface, the superiority of his God was established. Thousands of people were baptized and a chapel was built with wood from the oak.

In 741 Boniface was called upon to reform the Frankish Church. High government officials sold ecclesiastical offices for services to the court. The Church was marked with spiritual impotence and moral decay. Boniface had little success in reforming the Frankish Church, but he did impose a measure of discipline and bound it more closely in allegiance to Rome. About 745 he was made Archbishop of Mainz and in 751 presided over the coronation of Pepin when he became King of the Franks. Evidently pomp and honours did not satisfy the aging Boniface. He longed to return to Frisia. Repairing to the far side of the Zuider Zee, he preached with power and marked success, but this stirred up violent pagan reaction. As he waited to confirm a group of new believers, an angry mob killed him and his fifty companions.

Boniface will be remembered for his organizational genius. He founded bishoprics in Thuringia, Hesse, Franconia, and Bavaria. He established monasteries at Reichenan (724), Murbach (728), and Fulda (744). For these, he imported monks from England, and he guided the monasteries towards becoming centres of learning. The report that he baptized 100,000 people is probably exaggerated, but no one denies that he earned the title Apostle to Germany.

Nestorians in China

Followers of Nestorius, a presbyter and monk of Antioch, Syria, were known as Nestorians. Nestorian

Complete the following statements.

Winfrid was known as B _____.

He joined W _____ as missionary in Frisia.

He was made bishop of the G _____ frontier by Pope G _____ II.

He chopped down the s _____ o _____ of T _____ to prove the superiority of his God.

Following this, t _____ were baptized.

Boniface was known as A _____ to G _____.

(Compare your answers with the text.)

sensual delights for those who submit to Him. It recognizes there was a Messiah, Jesus, born of a virgin. He was a miracle worker and prophet. It denies that He was divine and that He died on a cross. Allah caught Jesus up to heaven and placed another person upon the cross. Islam is completely fatalistic: all things are already determined. A man's good works prove that he is elected to a paradise of sensual and fleshly enjoyment. These good works include endless prayers (repetition of a formula), fasting, almsgiving, and militant conquest of unbelievers.

Spread of Islam

After the death of Mohammed in 632, his followers unified the warring tribes of Arabia and set forth to crush idolatry and establish Islam. By 650 the ancient empire of Persia had been destroyed. Jerusalem fell in 638 and Caesarea in 640. Soon all of Palestine and Syria were under Muslim control. In 642 Alexandria was captured, followed by the conquest of all Egypt. The Muslims advanced across North Africa, seizing Carthage in 697. After seven years of fighting, Spain was subdued in 715. The Muslims marched northward into France, where they were defeated at Tours by Charles Martel in 732. This is one of the important dates of Christian history. The decisive defeat of the Muslims at Tours probably prevented the encirclement and possible subjugation of Christianity in Europe. The Muslims did not, however, abandon their purpose of world conquest. Rome was plundered in 846 and by 902 Sicily was a Muslim country. A stalemate existed for some five centuries, during which time the Seljuk Turks occupied Palestine and Syria and nibbled away at the Christian-ruled Byzantine Empire. By the fifteenth century the Ottoman Turks, in a second tide of conquest, had invaded Greece and the Balkans. Constantinople fell to the Turks in 1453. In the meantime the Moors were being driven from Spain, surrendering Alhambra, their last stronghold, in 1492.

Some effects on Christianity

Prior to the Muslim invasion, the Christian population around the Mediterranean had grown to considerable proportions, especially in Syria, Alexandria and Carthage. What effect did Muslim occupation have on Christianity in these lands? It is doubtful that Muslims always gave their victims a choice between the Koran and the sword. "Christians and Jews were considered by Mohammed as 'the people of the book' and were accorded a special status--*dhimmis*, or 'protected people.' They were allowed to continue the practise of their religion under certain restrictions, provided they render to the new Caesar the things that belonged to him, particularly a heavier form of taxation."² Christians were

² J. Herbert Kane, *A Global View of Christian Missions* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1975), p. 50.

(Compare your answers with the text.)

Draw lines to MATCH the items in Column A with those in Column B.

<p>A</p> <p>632</p> <p>650</p> <p>638</p> <p>640</p> <p>642</p> <p>697</p> <p>715</p> <p>732</p>	<p>B</p> <p>Carthage</p> <p>Caesarea</p> <p>Persia</p> <p>Spain</p> <p>Byzantine</p> <p>Death of Mohammed</p> <p>Tours</p> <p>Jerusalem</p> <p>Alexandria</p> <p>Balkans</p>
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(Compare your answers with the text.)

The encirclement and likely subjugation of Christianity in Europe was averted by the _____ defeat of the _____s at Tours.

(decisive, Muslims)

In 1453, the Ottoman Turk captured _____.

(Constantinople)

reduced to second class citizens. They could not erect new temples; they must restrict worship to their temples; they were forbidden to convert Muslims, and a Muslim, if he embraced Christianity, could be put to death. Islam was exalted to the status of a superior religion and Christianity relegated to the status of an inferior religion. Under these circumstances Christianity became stagnant. The Muslims controlled the trade routes to the east, making it difficult for European Christians to export their faith in that direction. The Ottoman Turks systematically destroyed all Christian government remaining in eastern Europe from about 1300. The process was completed with the fall of Constantinople in 1453. The Byzantine Empire was permanently destroyed.

Crusades against the Muslims

Christians of Europe launched at least seven crusades against the Muslims from 1096 to 1270. The chief purpose of the crusades was to wrest the Holy City, Jerusalem, from the hands of the infidels. Long after the capture of Jerusalem by the Muslims in the seventh century, Christians were permitted to visit the Holy City. But in the eleventh century, when the Seljuk Turks were in power, pilgrimages by Christians were denied. For a century some of the popes had proposed a crusade against the Turks. In 1095 the Greek emperor Alexius, threatened by the Turks, appealed to the West not to delay a crusade any longer. Pope Urban II called all secular powers to a divine crusade against the Turks, promising forgiveness of sin to those dying in battle. By this crusade the pope hoped to accomplish a triple objective: (1) to liberate the Holy City, (2) to protect the eastern bastion of Christianity, and (3) to reunite the eastern and western branches of the Church.

The crusades had immediate and long reaching results, both good and bad. So far as accomplishing the objectives of the papacy, the crusades were in the main a failure. Jerusalem was freed for a season, but the East was not saved and the East and West were not united as a church. The crusades, however, did unite the rival nations of Europe in a common cause. They opened the eyes of thousands to a world hitherto unknown to them. They introduced a period of enlightenment. They opened up travel and commerce. They brought inventions from the East, such as printing and gunpowder. But the tragic fact is that the crusades introduced the use of the sword in the name of Christianity. The Teutonic Knights, coming out of the crusades, would fight for the Church in Prussia. Conquistadores, accompanying explorers to the New World, would offer the natives a choice between the cross and the sword. Most Christians have not heard of the crusades; the Muslims have never forgotten that a Christian army, after overpowering a garrison of 1,000 defenders at Jerusalem, went on to kill an additional 70,000 Muslims. The hate generated in the Muslims has not subsided after 900 years. A third of the world was

When Muslims defeated Christians, the victims were often reduced to s_____ c_____ c_____.

(second, class, citizens)

Christians of Europe launched seven c_____ against the M_____ from 1096 to 1270.

(crusades, Muslims)

Here are some results of the crusades. Label them good (G) or bad (B).

The crusades united rival nations of Europe in a common cause. _____

Opened the eyes of crusaders to another world. _____

Introduced a period of enlightenment. _____

Opened up travel and commerce. _____

Introduced the use of the sword in the name of Christianity. _____

Eternally embittered Muslims against Christians. _____

(Compare your answers with the text.)

rendered a barren desert so far as Christian mission work is concerned.

Attempts to evangelize Muslims

During the crusades a few Christian leaders repudiated the conquest of Muslims by force and advocated evangelization through compassionate proclamation. *Francis of Assisi* was the first of these. Failing to induce Church authorities to attempt such a mission, he enlisted some of his own order who attempted a spiritual ministry in Tuscany, Morocco, Spain, and Syria. Assisi himself spent a year and a half (1218-19) in Egypt, Palestine and Syria. His bold gentleness won the esteem of the Sultan at Damietta, who permitted him to preach freely to the soldiers. Although visible results were negligible, St. Francis gave a powerful witness to the true attitude towards Muslims.

The outstanding missionary to the Muslims in that time was *Raymond Lull*. A courtier of the King of Spain, Lull joined the Franciscan Order, studied in Paris, and dedicated forty-five years to pleading for the evangelization of the Muslims. He himself did mission work in Palestine and Armenia and went to North Africa three times: in 1292, 1309, and again in 1315, when he was eighty years of age. His method was a use of logical persuasive arguments for turning the Muslims to Christianity. Persecution dogged him to the end. Like Stephen, he prayed for those who stoned him, and then died at sea before reaching Europe.

Expansion of Christianity, 800-1300

The Saxons

Pope Leo III crowned Charlemagne, King of the Franks (771-814), as Emperor of the Romans on Christmas Day, A.D. 800. Even before this marriage of church and state, Charlemagne had championed the cause of the Church. He imposed Christianity upon the peoples he conquered. The Saxons were one of those people. A militant people, the Saxons who occupied northeast Germany, across the Rhine, were a constant menace to Charlemagne's kingdom. From 772 to 798 there was a succession of campaigns to subjugate and Christianize the Saxons by Charlemagne. What the Northumbrian missionaries had failed to do by preaching, Charlemagne attempted to do by the sword. This unorthodox method of Church expansion is to be deplored; but it is a chapter of history not to be ignored. "Once a German tribe had been conquered, its conversion was included in the terms of peace, as the price paid for enjoying the protection of the emperor and the good government that his arms ensured."³ Of course this posed a danger. Rebellion by the vanquished pagans could also mean rebellion against the religion imposed upon them. There

³ Stephen Neill, *A History of Christian Missions* (Harmondsworth, England: Penguin Books, 1964), p.79.

CIRCLE the correct answers in the following statements.

The first Christian leader to attempt to evangelize Muslims was, was not Francis of Assisi. He expressed, did not express the true Christian attitude towards Muslims.

(was, expressed)

Another outstanding missionary to the Muslims was

_____.

(Raymond, Lull)

Place a tick mark by the correct answer.

By which of these means did Charlemagne try to christianize the Saxons? preaching _____ treaties _____ force _____

(Compare your answer with the text.)

was rebellion, which Charlemagne put down mercilessly, putting to death 4,500 Saxons in one day. As a deterrent, Charlemagne published a list of death penalties for such offences as killing a bishop, priest or deacon; refusal to be baptized; or plotting with pagans against the Christians. In his attempt to impose his rule and Christianity Charlemagne burned crops and wiped out complete communities. Dr. Neill observes that "by the time of the death of Charlemagne the pacification and the conversion of the Saxons was reckoned to be complete."⁴ The key phrase in this quotation is: "was *reckoned* to be complete." One must wonder how deeply Christianity penetrated the lives of the Saxons. It is true that Charlemagne encouraged missionaries, many of them Anglo-Saxons, to go to their kinfolks to baptize and instruct them. As W.O. Carver said: "Charlemagne had them baptized first and evangelized afterward."⁵ No doubt the evangelization and instruction did more to establish their faith than did their baptism. Centuries later, descendents of Saxon Germans were among the staunchest defenders of the faith during the Reformation.

Scandinavians

This name refers to an ethnic group of people which includes those of Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Iceland and Greenland. During the ninth century these fierce warriors from the north repeatedly invaded Britain, northern France, and Belgium. In 793 they sacked Landisfarne, off the coast of Scotland. In 867 the Kingdom of Northumbria fell before them. King Alfred the Great stopped the Danes in England with a decisive victory in 878. He forced a considerable number of the Viking leaders to embrace Christianity. Disaster struck Ireland with the invasion of the Norwegians. Much of the Christianity and institutions planted by Patrick and his successors were stamped out. In 851 the Norwegian Olaf the White established a pagan kingdom in Dublin which endured almost three centuries.

Christian rulers and prelates, both in England and Europe, were concerned about the conversion of these barbarian invaders. Their conversion would prove to be a long and slow process. The pioneer apostle to the Scandinavians was *Ansgar*, born in Amiens, France in 801. He was trained at the famous monastery founded by Columban at Corbie (or Corvey), France. After the conversion of King Harald of Denmark, Louis the Pious, son of Charlemagne, sent Ansgar to Denmark in 821 where he established a Christian school, but success was limited due to the antagonistic attitude of the Danes. In Sweden the earliest Christianity seems to have entered informally. King Bjorn sent to Germany for missionaries just after Ansgar had been banished from Denmark. Answering Bjorn's invitation Ansgar went to

Scandinavian countries were: D _____,
S _____, N _____,
I _____, and G _____.

(Compare your answers with the text.)

The Scandinavians invaded these countries where Christianity was flourishing: S _____,
I _____, and E _____.

(Scotland, Ireland, England)

Is the following statement true or false?

The pioneer missionary to the Scandinavians was Ansgar, who laboured primarily in Denmark. _____

(true)

⁴ Neill, *A History of Christian Missions*, p. 80.

⁵ William Owen Carver, *The Cause of Christian Missions* New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1939), p. 75.

Sweden in 832. After a brief stay he returned to Denmark, but sent Gauthert, Nithard, and other missionaries to Sweden. At this time Ansgar was made Archbishop of Hamburg. This city became the centre of his missionary operations in Scandinavia. Ansgar and some associates founded a new monastery at Westfalia and called it New Corbie. Danish and Slavic boys were brought to New Corbie and trained for mission work among their own people.

Denmark.-Ansgar returned to Denmark in 841 accompanied by other missionaries. Churches were planted, but vigorous opposition to Christianity erupted from time to time for a century. Following the death of Ansgar (865), *Rimbert*, his disciple and biographer, carried on the work in Denmark and Sweden. At the beginning of the tenth century King Gorm decided to banish Christianity from Denmark. He took pleasure in destroying churches and assassinating priests. The future of the Church rode with the favour or disfavour of the king. Harald Bluetooth, son of King Gorm, sought to restore Christianity. Under Harald's son, Sweyn, it languished. It was during the reign of King Canute (1019-35) that Christianity became truly rooted in Denmark. Son of Sweyn, Canute by 1016 conquered a large section of England and was made its king. Two years later, upon the death of a brother, he became king of Denmark also. As he grew older he became more pious; he sought to establish a Christian empire on both sides of the North Sea. Canute kept good relations with the pope, but since England was the centre of his realm, he provided Denmark with bishops consecrated by the Archbishop of Canterbury. Near the end of the century twelve missionary monks from England established monasteries in Denmark. An archbishopric was established in Denmark in 1104.

Sweden.-We have noted that Ansgar visited Sweden in 832 at the invitation of King Bjorn. On the occasion of his second visit in 853 the council of Gothenland approved the new religion. Notwithstanding this and the introduction of a few missionaries, paganism continued unabated until the beginning of the eleventh century. The first professed Christian king seems to have been Olaf Skotkunung (933-1024). Attempts to make his people Christian met stubborn resistance. The great pagan temple at Uppsala witnessed the sacrifice of animals and humans for another century. Olaf's son Anund Jacob (1024-66) saw Christianity spread throughout Sweden. It was not, however, until the reign of Sverker (1130-55) that Christianity finally became the dominant religion. Sverker imported Cistercian monks from southern Europe to insist on higher spiritual requirements than those introduced by missionaries from Germany and England. The first archbishop, Stephen, installed at Uppsala in 1164, was a Cistercian monk.

Norway.-In Norway, as in Denmark and Sweden, kings played a part in introducing Christianity. Haakan I

Christianity was truly rooted in _____ during the reign of King _____.

(Denmark, Canute)

Olaf Skotkunung (933-1024) was the first professed Christian king in _____. But Christianity did not become the dominant religion there until the reign of S_____.

(Sweden, Sverker)

Name three kings who tried to bring Christianity to Norway.

(914-61), reared in England where he became a Christian, sought to implant this religion in Norway, but met with opposition and proceeded slowly. His successor, Olaf Tryggvason (963-1000) was more successful. He also had become a Christian in England. He was not adverse to using force to convince members of the council to substitute the new religion for the old. Olaf Haraldson, like his father whom he succeeded, sought to make Christianity permanent in Norway. He relied greatly on bishops and priests whom he brought from England. Christianity became the religion of Norway, but it was greatly modified by persistent traditions of the Norsemen.

Iceland.-This remote land on the rim of civilization was colonized by families of Norsemen who took with them their gods Odin and Thor. An Icelander, converted in Saxony, took home with him a priest who tried to start a mission in 981. After seven years he was banished. Then King Olaf Tryggvason of Norway sent missionaries to Iceland. For a time it appeared the conflict between Christianity and the pagan religion would erupt in civil war. The dispute was referred to the wisest man on the island. He reported that Christianity was good, and should be accepted, but with some accommodations for the native religion. The islanders accepted this proposal. In time the accommodations were withdrawn and the island settled down to a more or less norm of medieval Christian life.

Greenland.-Erik the Red, twice banished from Norway and Iceland, is the reputed colonizer of Greenland. Erik's son Leif had been baptized in Norway in the time of Olaf Tryggvason and brought back a priest with him. In 1123 the first bishop was sent from Norway. Since the bishop was the best educated person in the colony he soon became both religious and civil authority. Recent archeological excavations in Greenland exposed a tiny temple surrounded by perhaps an hundred graves. It is supposed that this was the original church dating from the time of Leif.

Eastern Europe

Up to this point we have dealt with mission work in Western Europe, Britain, and Scandinavia. This work was for the most part related directly or indirectly to the Roman Church as represented by the pope. We now deal with mission work in an area that had been considered the domain of the Eastern Church. Pressure by the Turks had pushed some peoples, including the Slavs of the Balkans, Moravia, Bohemia and the non-Slavic Hungarians to the eastern borders of Western Europe. There were sharp differences between the Eastern and Western Churches. As mission work entered the buffer zone between the two, pressures from both sides were felt on these mission fields as we see in the cases of Moravia and Bulgaria.

Moravia.-In the ninth century both the Eastern and Western Churches began to show interest in the Slavic

(Compare your answers with the text.)

Kings played an important part in introducing Christianity in N _____, D _____, and S _____.

(Norway, Denmark, Sweden)

Mission work in western Europe, Britain, and Scandinavia was related largely to the R _____ C _____. The E _____ C _____, with headquarters in C _____, was hindered in its mission work by pressure from the T _____.

(Compare your answers with the text.)

Is the following statement true or false?

These two churches contested for the mission fields in the buffer zone between them. _____

(true)

people. The early apostles to the Slavs were two brothers: *Constantine*, who took the name Cyril (826-69), and *Methodius* (c. 815-85). They were natives of Thessalonica. Constantine had been a missionary north-east of the Black Sea. Before the year 852 there were nominal Christians in Moravia. Both German and Greek missionaries are said to have worked there briefly. About 861 the prince of Moravia, Rastislav, himself a Christian, asked the Byzantine Emperor in Constantinople for missionaries to instruct his people. On the recommendation of the patriarch Photius, Constantine and Methodius were invited. Apparently the brothers were familiar with some form of Slavic speech. They were convinced that the work in Moravia should be in the language of the people. So Constantine reduced the Slavonic language to writing and translated the Gospels and the liturgy of the Church. The Roman Church insisted that the liturgy be in Latin. A second point of friction was that of jurisdiction. The Archbishop of Salzburg insisted that his jurisdiction extend over areas inhabited by Slavonic tribes.

Constantine and Methodius decided to take these matters up with the pope. Pope Hadrian II was generally favourable to them. The work in Moravia was approved and the Slavonic liturgy was approved. Constantine died in Rome in 869. The pope named Methodius special legate with wide powers over the Slavonic areas of Pannonia and Moravia. The German clergy opposed Methodius because he had completed translation of the Bible into the Slavonic language and because they considered him an intruder. They imprisoned him in a monastery in Swabia; two and a half years later the pope freed him. After the death of Methodius in 885 everything changed. Pope Stephan V forbade the use of the Slavonic liturgy. Disciples of Methodius, including Clement, were expelled and carried the gospel to Bulgaria.

Bulgaria. King Boris of Bulgaria was baptized in 865. The churches of both the East and the West pressured him to adopt their form of Christianity. He bargained with both Rome and Constantinople to give Bulgaria an independent patriarch. He settled with Constantinople for a Bulgarian archbishop and ten bishops. Boris then established a monastery. Help from the disciples of Methodius for manning it was welcomed. The king proposed an amalgamation of the Bulgars with the Slavic majority of his subjects and therefore welcomed the Slavic Christian literature. *Clement of Ochrid*, one of the exiles from Moravia, was sent by Boris to Macedonia to establish a missionary training school. King Boris called a national council and persuaded the assembly to substitute Slavonic for Greek as the language of the Bulgarian Church. Under Boris' son, King Simeon, the Bulgarian Church enjoyed its golden age. He persuaded his bishops to make the Bulgarian Church self-governing and to elect a patriarch as its head. The

The early missionaries to the Slavs were two brothers: _____ and _____.

(Constantine, Methodius)

Constantine reduced the Slavonic language to _____. He translated the _____ and the _____ of the church.

(writing, Gospels, liturgy)

King Boris of Bulgaria bargained with both _____ and C_____. He wanted Bulgaria to have an _____ patriarch.

(Rome, Constantinople, independent)

Bulgarian Church was orthodox in doctrine, but independent in its administration. The seed sown by Constantine and Methodius, and watered by Boris, grew into a fruitful tree; the gospel spread from the Bulgars to other Slavic people, including Yugoslavia and Russia.

Russia.-Patriarch Photius of Constantinople sent missionaries and a bishop to Kiev about the middle of the ninth century. Kiev was then taken over by a pagan prince and Russia had to wait a century for the establishment of Christianity.

Princess Olga ruled in Kiev, after the death of her husband Igor, from 945 to 964. In 957 Olga went to Constantinople and received baptism from the patriarch. Her nobles rebelled and her son Sviatoslav who was anti-Christian wrested the government from his mother. He considered Islam as a possible religion for Russia. Had he embraced it, the course of Russia would have been vastly different.

Vladimir (980-1015), son of Sviatoslav, sent deputations to investigate different religions. They rejected Islam, Judaism, and the rituals of the Western Church. The splendour of the liturgy of the church at Constantinople appealed to them. Vladimir decided to align his people with the Christianity of Constantinople. He submitted to baptism in 988. From about A.D. 1,000 missionaries spread the orthodox doctrine throughout Russia. After his baptism Vladimir married a sister of the Greek emperor, thus confirming his Christian faith and cementing relations with the Byzantine Empire. Byzantine culture became firmly established throughout Russia. In Russia, even more than in the West, conversion was nominal.

Bohemia.-Bohemia appears to have first received the gospel from Moravia. A number of Bohemian chiefs were baptized at Ratisbon in 845. Vratislav, Bohemian ruler at the end of the century, was a nominal Christian. After his death there was a pagan reaction. Christianization of Bohemia came with the ascension of King Boleslav II in 967. He built some twenty churches and wanted them to have an independent organization. In this he was not successful. The Roman hierarchy placed a bishop in Prague, but under the archbishopric of Mainz, Germany. This Bishop of Prague, Adalbert, attempted mission work among the Poles and Magyars.

Poland.-The Christian history of Poland began with Duke Mieszka. He married a Christian lady, Dobrawa, a sister of Boleslav II of Bohemia, whose influence probably led him to conversion and baptism in 967. A bishopric was established in Poznan, Poland under the jurisdiction of Madgeburg, Germany in 968. After the son of Mieszka, Boleslav, who was called Chobry the Great, came to the throne in 992, Poland became the largest kingdom in eastern Europe. With Boleslav's support the Church prospered along with the state. After his death the ecclesiastical structure crumbled. Persecution followed and the clergy was expelled. A century later

The B _____ C _____ was
o _____ in doctrine, but i _____ in
its administration.

(Bulgarian, Church, orthodox, independent).

Which tenth century ruler in Russia did the following?
Went to Constantinople to receive baptism.

Considered Islam as a possible religion for Russia.

Sent deputations to investigate different religions and chose
that of the Eastern Orthodox Church. _____

(Compare your answers with the text).

B _____ received the gospel from
M _____ about _____.

(Bohemia, Moravia, 845)

Marriage played a prominent role in Christianity entering
_____.

(Poland)

Boleslav III (1102-39) restored political stability and ecclesiastical order to Poland.

Hungary.-The people of Hungary were Magyars, of Mongolian origin and with a language akin to that of the Finns and Turks. They appeared in Europe about the end of the ninth century, destroying inhabitants and desecrating churches. A defeat at the hands of Otto I near Augsburg stopped their western expansion in 955. In 973 Prince Geisa of Hungary married a Christian princess of Poland. Two years later he was baptized and set about to make Hungary Christian. In 995 a son, Stephen, married a daughter of Duke Henry II of Bavaria, and Hungary was brought into the orbit of the Western World. Under Stephen a hierarchy and monasteries were established. The king himself sometimes preached to the people, but he was not adverse to using other measures to impose his religion on them. After his death, opposition failed to undo his work. Christianity survived as the national religion of Hungary.

Baltic provinces.-These small countries which bordered the Baltic Sea were the last in Europe to embrace nominally the Christian faith. Pressure was applied to Pomerania to receive Christian instruction, both by Poland and by the Roman Empire. Otto, Bishop of Bamberg, went to Pomerania as a representative of Rome near the end of the eleventh century. Missionaries were also sent from Poland in the early part of the twelfth century. The Teutonic Knights, inspired by the crusades, tried to impose Christianity on Lithuania by force, but were only partially successful. Data is very meagre on the spread of Christianity in the Baltic provinces, but it is generally agreed that all of Europe had at least nominally accepted this faith by the end of the twelfth century.

In Retrospect

Monasteries occupied an important part in missionary training throughout this period.

Motivation for converting the pagans was not always compassion. Too often the Church was obsessed with extending its influence, and the state with extending its power.

Means of missionary penetration were varied. Missionaries sacrificed themselves to plant the gospel among unfriendly people. Pagan kings were often enlightened by a Christian wife or were converted in a Christian land to later impose their religion upon their subjects. Christian kings, upon conquering other peoples often required submission to the Church as a condition for peace. In the rare case of Russia, the ruler sent forth envoys to examine religions and then made a choice of religion for his subjects.

In most countries Christian penetration followed this pattern: (1) a degree of acceptance, whether voluntary or by imposition, (2) death of the Christian leader followed by a reaction of resistance to the religion introduced, (3) re-establishment and stabilization, (4)

In 973 Prince Geisa of H_____ married a Christian princess of P_____. Two years later he was b_____ and sought to make Hungary C_____.

(Hungary, Poland, baptized, Christian)

It is generally agreed that all of Europe had at least nominally accepted Christianity by the end of the _____ c_____.

(twelfth, century)

In most countries Christian penetration followed this pattern.

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____
- 4. _____

(Compare your answers with the text.)

followed by decline and perfunctory observance. Abnormal nominal Christianity too often became the norm.

Home Study Exercise

Basic activity (*Levels 1,2 and 3*). After reading the study guide, answer the following questions.

1. List two possible reasons why the period from about A.D. 500 to 1000 was called the Dark Ages.

2. Describe the Irish missionary thrust into Scotland and Northumbria.

3. Complete these statements about Rome's efforts to Christianize Britain:

(1) Pope _____ sent the first Roman missionaries to Britain in _____.

(2) Chief of these missionaries was _____.

(3) Two probable reasons why King Ethelbert of Kent embraced Christianity were: (a) _____ and (b) _____.

(4) Within a year after Ethelbert's conversion, Augustine reported _____ baptisms.

(5) Which of these two eventually prevailed in Britain: Celtic (Irish) Christianity or Roman Christianity? _____

4. In what three places in Europe did Columban and his companions found monasteries?

5. Who went to Frisia as a missionary in 690? Where did he found monasteries? What missionary purpose did they serve?

6. What dramatic act by Winfrid at Geismar resulted in the baptism of thousands of pagans?

Give two reasons why Winfrid (or Boniface) is known as the "Apostle to Germany".

(1) _____

(2)

7. When and how did Nestorians introduce Christianity to China? How do we know this?

When and how were Nestorians suppressed in China?

8. About A.D. 630 Mohammed began proclaiming Islam. The word Islam means:

Islam teaches:

Trace the conquest of Judaism and Christianity by Islam in the seventh and eighth centuries by countries.

Who stopped the march of Islam in Europe, where, and when?

When did Constantinople fall to the Ottoman Turks?

How did the occupation of Christian lands by Muslims affect the Christians?

9. How many "Christian" crusades against Muslims were there and in what period?

List two good and two bad results of the crusades.

Good:

Bad:

10. Who were the two earliest missionaries to the Muslims? Where did they minister?

11. What methods did Charlemagne use to "Christianize" the Saxons in northeast Germany?

12. Who was the pioneer missionary to the Scandinavians? Where and when did he work?

13. Name three kings who tried to implant Christianity in Norway.

14. Name the brothers who went to Moravia as missionaries in the ninth century.

What lasting contribution did they make to Christianity in this country?

15. After King Boris was baptized in 865, what kind of church was he able to establish in Bulgaria?

16. Tell how and when Vladimir of Russia chose the Greek Orthodox religion for his country.

17. Show how the marriage of Hungarian monarchs with royalty of Christian nations brought Hungary into the Christian orbit.

Supplementary activity (*Levels 2 and 3*). Read pages 37-55 in *A Global View of Christian Missions* by J. Herbert Kane and answer the following questions.

1. How did the coronation of Charlemagne as head of the Holy Roman Empire affect the Christianization of the Franks and Saxons?
2. Using the map on page 39 of Kane's text trace the three thrusts of Islam into Christian countries.
3. Summarize the effects of the crusades on subsequent mission endeavours.

Advanced activity (*Level 3*).

1. Name some monasteries in Scotland, Ireland, Britain and Europe which promoted mission work.
2. How did these monasteries promote mission work?
3. List as many missionary methods as you can which are mentioned in Chapter II of Kane.
4. Trace the pattern of Christian penetration on mission fields. Compare the last paragraph in Chapter II of Kane with that in the study guide.
5. Give your evaluation of coercion by rulers to "Christianize" countries. What was the normal response? What were the long range results?

Seminar Discussion

1. What event marks the beginning and what event the close of this period of A.D. 500-1300?
2. Why was the period from 500 to 1000 called the Dark Ages?
3. What were the important events which determined the course of missions in this period?
4. Discuss the Celtic Christian thrust from the north of Britain and the Roman thrust from the south: their methods, message and which prevailed.
5. Who was Columban and why was his work in Europe permanent?
6. Who was called the "Apostle to Germany"? Why did he try to organize the churches and relate them to Rome?
7. What historical evidences indicate that Nestorian Christians were in China by the seventh century?
8. Discuss the origin, teachings and purposes of Islam.
9. Who stopped the Muslims in western Europe? Where? When? What was the significance of this event?
10. What per cent of Christendom was situated in North Africa before the Muslim invasion? What happened to this work?
11. Discuss the good and bad results of the crusades, both short term and long term.
12. What effect did international marriages of royalty have on the spread of Christianity?
13. At what time, according to general consensus, was Europe considered Christianized?