

LESSON 9

EUROPE, NORTH AFRICA AND THE MIDDLE EAST

Europe

Western Europe has been considered the cradle of Christendom. Many mission organizations have been or are based in Great Britain or Continental Europe. But to allege that Europe has been a truly Christian continent from any given point in history would be less than accurate. Too often the churches have received less than the true gospel message. At times the Church was corrupt; wars were even fought in the name of Christianity. This present century has witnessed a de-Christianization of Europe. The rise of secularism, liberalism, Nazism, Fascism, and Communism, together with two world wars, have combined to change the face of Europe completely. Spiritual lethargy has descended upon the "Christian Population" except in a few areas where freedom of worship is restricted. Generally speaking, church services are attended by no more than from 3 to 6 per cent of church members, and 160 million Europeans make no profession of religion. Europe is a mission field!

Not only is Europe a mission field; it is a difficult field. Nominal Christians who depend upon church and works salvation, both Catholic and Protestant, resent the preaching of grace salvation which is experienced by personal commitment to Jesus Christ. Billy Graham's evangelistic campaigns in Europe and the International Congress on World Evangelization sponsored by him in Luusanne in 1974 have helped soften this attitude, but the mission task is still difficult.

Methods successful on other fields are not always in order here. Europe has developed educationally and socially to such a degree that literacy work, mission schools, and hospitals are virtually unnecessary. Radio is an effective tool. *Trans World Radio* broadcasting from Monaco, together with its German branch *Evangeliums-Rundfunk*, broadcast to Europe in thirty-one languages. Some sending bodies, especially interdenominational bodies, have majored on evangelization and church planting. Those bodies which have tried to reform the state churches from within have largely failed. Some bodies co-operate with their evangelical counterpart through financial aid and a minimum investment of missionary personnel. Among these are the *Assemblies of God*, who co-operate with the national brethren in Belgium, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland and Romania.

State at least four reasons why Europe can be considered a mission field.

(Compare your answers with the text.)

Europe is a _____ mission field.

(difficult)

Make a circle around the types of mission work being attempted in Europe.

Evangelization and church planting
Attempts to reform old line churches from within
Co-operation with an evangelical counterpart with money and limited personnel
Radio broadcast ministry

(All)

The *American Baptist Foreign Mission Society* co-operates with Baptists in Belgium, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, France, Germany, Poland, Norway, Russia and Sweden. The *Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.* co-operates with their brethren in Belgium, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Spain, Portugal, Italy, Hungary, West Germany, France and Czechoslovakia. The *Foreign Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention* has the most extensive work of any denomination with 153 missionaries. These work in co-operation with Baptists in Italy, Switzerland, Austria, Spain, West Germany, Portugal, Belgium, France, Greece, Romania and Yugoslavia. In the latter two co-operation consists of economic aid and fraternal visits.

The strategy which gives most promise at present is the training of national missionaries, evangelists and pastors. As Dr. Kane has aptly said: "If the people of Europe are ever to be reached with the gospel, it will be by Europeans themselves."¹ The *Greater Europe Mission* has Bible schools in France, Italy, Germany, Sweden and England. In 1944 *Southern Baptists* founded an International Baptist Seminary, of university level, near Zurich, Switzerland. It is now operated jointly with the Baptist bodies of Free Europe. Publication work is another valuable tool in the evangelization of Europe.

In this day when Communism exercises great strength in Europe, it is not always possible to classify a country as Communist, Catholic or Protestant. For example, in France, Italy and Portugal, some elections have been controlled by Marxist-oriented parties. In these lands where the population is predominantly Catholic it would appear that economic chaos has persuaded many to do lip service to another "saviour." Despite this confusing picture we will summarize mission work in Europe according to these three categories.

Catholic countries

Italy is 98 per cent Roman Catholic. Less than one half of one per cent is Protestant. Of the evangelical bodies the Pentecostals are the largest group, with the Waldenses in second place with 35,000 members. The Waldenses trace their origin to Peter Waldo in the twelfth century. *Southern Baptists* have worked in Italy since 1870. They have a radio and publication ministry in Rome. Only 30 of 84 churches are self-supporting. *Conservative Baptists* who came in 1950 have twenty-five missionaries. Pentecostal work began in 1908. Pentecostal bodies co-operate under the name of Assemblies of God in Italy.

In *France* 85 per cent of the 50,000,000 population is nominally Catholic. About 1,200,000 are Protestants, mostly Lutherans and of the Reformed Church. Some forty mission boards work in France. The largest in terms of missionaries in service are: *Christian Missions in Many*

Italy is _____ per cent Roman Catholic.

(98)

Choose the correct answer.

France is 85 92 97.5 per cent Catholic.

(85)

¹ J. Herbert Kane, *A Global View of Christian Missions* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, Revised 1979), p. 539.

Lands (44), Greater Europe Mission (32), Bible Christian Union (32), The Evangelical Alliance Mission (24), Un-evangelized Mission Fields (21), Baptist Mid-Missions (20), Southern Baptists (17) and Conservative Baptists (16). The Assemblies of God and Seventh-day Adventists are enjoying the fastest growth.

Spain in years past has greatly restricted evangelical witness. Persecution was common. The Religious Liberty Act of 1968 opened the way for broader evangelization. American Baptists worked in Spain briefly beginning in 1880. The Swedish Baptists came in 1881 and in 1921 turned their work over to the Southern Baptists. Thirty-nine of their missionaries work in relation to the Evangelical Baptist Union, which operates a seminary, book store and mission work in the Canary and Azores Islands. Baptists, Plymouth Brethren, and the Federation of Evangelical Independent Churches make up two-thirds of the approximately 50,000 evangelicals. Some twenty other Missions are represented in Spain.

Portugal's constitution promises religious liberty, but there are restrictions which hamper evangelical work. Eleven mission bodies have representatives in Portugal. Brazilian Baptists have had work here since 1908. Southern Baptists who came in 1959 have sixteen missionaries, a seminary, and a book store. Among others with long-established work in Portugal are: the Plymouth Brethren, the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A., The Evangelical Alliance Mission and Conservative Baptists.

Belgium is 70 per cent Roman Catholic. Protestants constitute less than 1 per cent of Belgium's 10,000,000 population. American Baptists and Southern Baptists have co-operated with the Belgian Baptist Union for many years. In recent years Southern Baptists have supplied missionaries upon request. Other groups represented in Belgium include: the Belgian Gospel Mission, the Assemblies of God, the French Bible Mission, Friends of Israel Missionary and Relief Society and the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A.

Greece is not Roman Catholic; it is 97 per cent Greek Orthodox Catholic. Mission endeavour is limited to those outside that faith. Non-Orthodox Catholic groups represented in Greece include: the Greek Evangelical Church (Presbyterian), Free Evangelical Church, Southern Baptists, Assemblies of God, the American Mission to Greeks and Greater Europe Mission.

Protestant countries

There are about 110,000,000 Protestants in Europe, of which 60,000,000 are Lutherans and 30,000,000 are Anglicans. In these state churches, although religion is on the decline, mission work is not welcomed. There are, however, some 700 North American missionaries at work in the predominantly Protestant countries.

In West Germany the Lutheran and Reformed Churches federated under the name of the Evangelical Church of Germany. Among the mission bodies with

The Religious Liberty Act of _____ opened the way for more evangelization in _____.

(1968, Spain)

Portugal's constitution promises _____ liberty, but restricts _____ work.

(religious, evangelical)

Choose the right answer.

Protestants constitute less than 1, 3, 7 per cent of Belgium's population.

(1)

Name the national religion of Greece.

(Greek, Orthodox)

There are also _____ in Europe.

(Protestants)

The Evangelical Church of Germany is in _____ Germany.

(West)

work in West Germany are: *American Baptists, American-European Fellowship, Baptist Mid-Missions, Bible Christian Union, Assemblies of God, Church of God (Tennessee), Eastern Europe Mission, European Evangelistic Crusade, Friends of Israel Missionary and Relief Society, Presbyterian Church, U.S.A., Slavic Gospel Association and Southern Baptists.*

The Netherlands has been considered Protestant, with the Dutch Reformed Church the principal evangelical body. Mennonites also have a sizeable membership here. Roman Catholics may have overtaken Protestants in recent years. Mission bodies with work in the Netherlands include: *Assemblies of God, Bible Christian Union, European Evangelistic Crusade and the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A.*

In Switzerland about half of the people belong to Reformed Churches. Evangelical work has recently shown signs of increasing vigour. Mission bodies with work here include: *American-European Fellowship, European Evangelistic Crusade, French Bible Mission, Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions, the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A. and Southern Baptists.*

In Denmark, Sweden, Norway and Finland the Lutheran Church is the state church, and includes about 95 per cent of the population. Baptists, Methodists, and five other small evangelical groups are represented. A total of about sixty American based missionaries work in these four countries.

Communist countries

Only in Albania has the Church been outlawed, but in all Communist controlled countries the Church is restricted in varying degrees. In Poland 80 per cent of the population is Roman Catholic. These have vigorously resisted Communism. In Austria 85 per cent are Roman Catholics and 15 per cent Protestants. In Hungary there are half as many Protestants as Roman Catholics. In East Germany about 80 per cent are Lutherans. In Yugoslavia about 50 per cent are Serbian Orthodox and 35 per cent Roman Catholic. Bulgaria is 83 per cent Greek Orthodox, the remainder mostly Muslim. In Romania there are about 10,000,000 Orthodox Catholics, 1,000,000 Roman Catholics and 1,000,000 Protestants. The number of evangelical churches in Romania has diminished since Communism entered: Baptist churches from 1,500 to 800, Seventh-day Adventist churches from 1,100 to 600, Pentecostal churches from 1,000 to 600 and Brethren Assemblies from 800 to 500.

In Russia the dominant church, the Russian Orthodox, with about 40,000,000 members, is subservient to the Communist government. In Latvia, Estonia, and Lithuania there are about 1,000,000 Lutherans. The overarching All Union Council of evangelical Christians-Baptists claims some 5,000,000 members in Russia. The Evangelical Christian and Baptist churches refused to register with the Soviet government. As a consequence many dissident pastors were imprisoned. Their leader,

The Dutch Reformed Church is the main evangelical body in the _____.

(Netherlands)

About half the people belong to Reformed Churches in _____.

(Switzerland)

Name four nations where the Lutheran Church is the state church.

(Compare your answers with the text.)

Write the name of the nation in the blank that best describes the following information.

outlawed _____

resisted communist control _____

15 per cent Protestant _____

80 per cent Lutheran _____

50 per cent Serbian Orthodox _____

83 per cent Greek Orthodox _____

(Compare your answers with the text.)

The Russian Orthodox Church is _____ to the Communist government.

(subservient)

Georgy Vins was released in 1980 and permitted to go to the United States. Worship is permitted only in authorized meeting places. Bibles are not forbidden, but are in short supply. Training of leaders is practically impossible since Sunday schools and Bible schools are forbidden. The evangelical churches, however, are dynamic, their meeting places filled to overflowing. And the gospel message is getting through the iron curtain by radio broadcasts from Quito, Manila, Seoul, Addis Ababa, and Monaco.

North Africa

North Africa, which during six centuries knew Christianity, became and has remained an Islamic stronghold. Egypt was the stage on which part of Israel's history was played out. Alexandria, at the mouth of the Nile, was for centuries a seed-bed of Christianity, seconded by the Christian centre of Carthage. By the time of Constantine there were about two thousand churches in North Africa. Then came the invasion of the Muslims in the seventh century. The Roman government fell before Arab conquerors. The Christian population had been largely Palestinian and European. They had done little to win the native Berbers. Most Christian colonists who were not killed, chose to depart, leaving behind only traces of their religion. Attempts to win the Muslims have been few and the results sparse. Muslims are extremely difficult to win. The very name Islam means submission, and Muslims are wholly submissive to their traditional tenets. The Arabs are also a tightly knit society, difficult to penetrate. Nevertheless, the Great Commission applies to them also, and light *is* able to penetrate darkness.

Morocco

Since 1956 Morocco has been an independent nation. Ninety-nine per cent of its 17,000,000 inhabitants are Muslims. For nearly fifty years Morocco, Algiers, and Tunisia were under the French, who showed special favours to the Roman Catholics. After six centuries of mission work in Morocco the Catholics report 100,000 adherants, most of whom are Europeans.

The first evangelical mission to Morocco was that of the *London Jews' Society* in 1875. There was a large colony of Jews here. The *North Africa Mission* came in 1882. It has a hospital and nurse's training school at Tangier. The *Southern Morocco Mission*, a Scottish society, came in 1888. It established six stations south of Casablanca, as far south as Agadir. In 1961 this Mission merged its work with that of the North African Mission. The *Gospel Missionary Union* entered Morocco in 1894. Its efforts were directed largely towards the 500,000 Europeans and 200,000 Jews.

The *Bible and Churchmen's Missionary Society* (Anglican) sent missionaries to the Tadla District in central Morocco in 1929. The first convert was baptized in 1940. Others with work in Morocco include: *Christian*

In Russia, _____ schools and _____ schools are _____.

(Sunday, Bible, forbidden)

Prior to the coming of the Muslims, there were about _____ churches in North Africa.

(two, thousand)

State two reasons it is difficult to convert Muslims to Christianity.

(Compare your answers with the text.)

Morocco is _____ per cent _____.

(99, Muslim)

Missions in Many Lands, and *Light of Africa Mission*. Southern Baptists have English-speaking churches at Rabat and Tangier, and operate a book-store which is authorized to sell Bibles and conduct Bible classes. The total number of non-Catholic believers in Morocco is about 3,000.

Algeria

Algeria, under France since 1830, received its independence just two decades ago. The 15,000,000 inhabitants are Arabs and Berbers, the latter of Hamitic stock. The Arabs imposed Islam on the Berbers thirteen centuries ago, but these have been at the best only half-hearted Muslims. When the *North Africa Mission* came in 1881 it established one field on the coast and another in the Kabylia district, among the Berbers. Some of these have become Christians. The British and Foreign Bible Society has provided the Bible in the Kabyle language. The *Methodist Episcopal Church* in 1908 employed two English ladies who had been in Algeria since 1891. Their small work became the Methodist Mission. The Methodists have primary schools, a hospital, evangelistic centres and seven small churches. Seventh-day Adventists claim a work of about the same strength. *Christian Missions in Many Lands* entered Algeria in 1910. Other Mission bodies at work here include: *Algiers Mission Board*, *French Evangelical Missions to the Kabyles*, *Eastern Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities*, and *Evangelical Baptist Missions*. Evangelical Christians number less than 3,000.

Tunisia

Tunisia was given its independence by France in 1956. Its 5,000,000 people are Arabs and Berbers, 95 per cent of the population are Muslims. Of its 250,000 Europeans, 200,000 are Roman Catholics. The *London Jews' Society* (Anglican) came here in 1829. With some interruptions it has continued since 1860. Its work is centred in Tunis. The *North Africa Mission* came in 1882. Its church, also in Tunis, draws largely from the European population, but Muslims are cultivated through Bible correspondence courses. The *Methodist Episcopal Church* has a church in Tunis, as does the *Church of God* (Tennessee). The *Church Mission to the Jews* works with the 60,000 Jews in Tunis. Protestants total less than 500.

Libya

Except for a thousand Roman Catholics, mostly Italians, Libya is virtually untouched by Christianity. Its 2,000,000 population is almost 100 per cent Muslim. Its constitution, written at its independence from Italy in 1956, declares Islam to be the state religion. Evangelism and distribution of the Scriptures is forbidden. The interdenominational *North Africa Mission* has work in all five countries of North Africa. It came to Libya in 1888. In view of the constitution, it limits its work to a hospital

The inhabitants of Algeria are mainly _____ and _____.

(Arabs, Berbers)

The Methodists in Algeria have _____ churches.

(seven, small)

In Tunisia, Muslims are cultivated through _____ courses.

(Bible, correspondence)

Libya is virtually untouched by _____.

(Christianity)

ministry in Tripoli. The *Seventh-day Adventists* built a hospital in Benghazi in the 1950s. *Southern Baptists* have cultivated an English-speaking church in Tripoli which was organized by oil workers and American military personnel in 1962. Missionaries related to this work withdrew in 1981.

Egypt

Egypt's 38,000,000 people are Arabs and Copts, 93 per cent Muslims. When the Arabs overran Egypt in A.D. 641 they tried to impose their religion and culture on the native Copts. Many of the Copts were Christians and refused to give up Christianity. The Coptic Church of Egypt, with six million and a half adherents, is the largest Christian church in the Muslim Belt. Their doctrine and practice have become so defective that some consider them a valid target for evangelism.

The *Moravians* had a Mission among the Copts for a while in the eighteenth century. The *London Jews' Society* made an abortive attempt to establish work in Cairo in 1847. The *Church Mission Society* sent five men to Egypt in 1825. Its work was suspended in 1869, but resumed after the British assumed control of Egypt in 1882. *W.H. Temple Gairdner* who came in the early 1900s was an expert in Arabic, admired by the nationals. In 1908 he founded the "Friends of the Bible," which conducted weekly studies. This became the Coptic Sunday School Movement.

In 1845 the *United Presbyterian church* began a work known as the *American Mission*. Unlike the C.M.S. which co-operated with the Coptic Church, the Presbyterians sought to win converts from among them. Within twenty years they had stations from Alexandria south along the Nile as far as Asyut. Some converts were made also among the Muslims, at the rate of about a dozen a year. The Presbyterian work, in 1958, became the *Coptic Evangelical Church of the Nile*, with more than 250 churches and 30,000 members. Besides this church, there are eight other smaller national evangelical bodies in Egypt.

The *Egypt General Mission*, founded in 1898, was the brainchild of Miss Annie Von Sommer, as was the *Nile Mission Press*, which prepared and distributed literature for use with Muslims. The *Assemblies of God*, which came in 1908, has a fruitful work, as does the *Church of God* (Tennessee), the *Canadian Holiness Mission* and *Christian Missions in Many Lands* (Plymouth Brethren). *Southern Baptists* since 1955 have had a fraternal representative working with eight Baptist congregations.

When Britain and France intervened in the Suez Canal crisis in 1956 the Egyptian government expelled British missionaries and took over British mission schools and hospitals. American missionaries did what they could to preserve the work of their British colleagues.

The Coptic Church of Egypt is the largest Christian Church in the _____.

(Muslim, Belt)

Is the following statement true or false?

The Church Mission Society and the Presbyterians sought to co-operate with the Coptic Church and made no attempts to make converts from among its members.

(false)

The Middle East

The Middle East embraces the territory west of Afghanistan and Pakistan, where the people are predominantly Arab and Muslim. In this study such countries in Africa are excluded. In the fourteenth century the Osmanli Turks began their invasions which resulted in the Ottoman Empire with its capital in Constantinople. Its dominion extended from Austria southward to Egypt and Ethiopia, and eastward to Persia (Iran). The cradle of Christianity in Palestine and Asia Minor was swallowed up by the Muslims. After the Turks' last attempt to penetrate farther into Europe in 1683 the Ottoman Empire declined. Greece won its independence in 1829 and other Balkan nations thereafter. Following World War I Turkey was reduced to what it is today. The Arab countries are independent, but not united. Their conflicts with Christians, including the Crusades, have not been forgotten. Resentment of both Jew and Gentile by Arabs runs high. The return of the Jews to Palestine in the 1930s and the formation of a Jewish state in 1948 sparked wars and continuing tensions. There is a resurgence of militant Islam in Iran, Syria and Libya. Communism is ever present to fan the fires of division. The Middle East is perhaps the most difficult part of the world for Christianity to penetrate.

There are some Christian bodies in the Middle East whose roots generally antedate the Ottoman conquest. Among these are the Greek Orthodox Church, the Nestorians of Assyria and Persia, the Syrian Orthodox, the Coptic Orthodox and the Armenian Church. There are also small branches of the Roman Catholic Church: Maronites, and Uniate Churches. Some of the missionary sending bodies elected to work within these Christian bodies to try to reform and rejuvenate them. Others have sought to win converts from among these Christian bodies. Still others have taken the extremely slow route of trying to cultivate and win the Muslims. The means most often used for softening up and winning the Muslims of the Middle East are: education, medical work, literature preparation and distribution and mass media. Wherever Islam is dominant, religious liberty is restricted or non-existent. Several of the Arab nations which joined the United Nations had to pay lip service to Article XVIII which guarantees freedom of religion, of worship, and the right "to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance," but in practice they do not permit evangelism, which they call proselyting. Progress among the Muslims is slow, but there is progress, a demonstration of God's power to save to the uttermost.

Turkey

The Republic of Turkey emerged after the breakup of the Ottoman Empire. Once Christianity was the prevailing religion here. Today less than 1 per cent of the population is Christian. About 99 per cent of Turkey's

Arabs have not forgotten the _____ in the Middle _____.

(Crusades, East)

The Middle East is perhaps the most _____ part of the world for Christianity to _____.

(difficult, penetrate)

List the Christian groups that have survived in spite of the Muslim domination of the Middle East.

(Compare your answers with the text.)

What methods have been used to win Muslims to Christianity?

(Compare your answers with the text.)

Less than 1 per cent of the population of _____ is Christian.

(Turkey)

45,000,000 people are Muslims.

The *American Board of Commissioners of Foreign Missions* sent *Pliny Fiske* and *Levi Parsons* to Smyrna (now Ismir) on an exploratory trip in 1820. *William Goodell* of this Board established residence in Constantinople (Istanbul) in 1834. Converts were made from the Armenian Church. When this Church excommunicated the heretics who had fallen away, these formed the Evangelical Church, which was given legal status in 1850. The American Board established Robert College in 1863, and the American College for Girls in 1871, both in Constantinople. These have exercised profound influence not only in Turkey, but throughout the Middle East.

The *Basel Evangelical Missionary Society* began work among German settlers in Turkey in the 1820s, later extending its work to include Muslims and Armenians. The *Church Missionary Society* sent missionaries to Smyrna in the 1830s. After the Crimean War of 1853, when religious liberty was established in Turkey, the C.M.S. moved its operations to Constantinople (Istanbul) to work with the Muslims. *Karl Gottlieb Pfander*, of the Basel Mission, headed up this dangerous work. Persecution followed, religious liberty was revoked, and with financial problems plaguing the C.M.S., this work was suspended in the 1870s. The *Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts*, also Anglican, likewise worked with Muslims in Constantinople after the Crimean War. The *London Jews' Society* worked among the Turkish Jews.

Other groups which have had work in Turkey include: the *American Baptists*, *Southern Baptists*, *Disciples of Christ*, the *Church of the Brethren*, *Seventh-day Adventists* and the *Boston Female Jews Society*. In 1980 missionaries were not officially permitted in Turkey.

Iran

Iran is a Muslim, but an Aryan, not an Arab country. It is the ancient Persia which changed its name to Iran in 1935. This is the cradle of Zoroastrianism, of which no more than 10,000 remain. Persia gave sanctuary to the Nestorians when Rome pronounced them heretics. At one time a strong church in Persia, they now have less than 20,000. The Muslims of Iran are of the Shiah sect, generally more tolerant than others of the Middle East. Until recently Christians had a degree of freedom in Iran. The Muslim Revolution of 1978-79 which deposed the Shah and elevated Khomeini as Muslim dictator of Iran has virtually divorced this country from the rest of the world.

We have earlier noted the heroic work of *Henry Martyn* in the early part of the nineteenth century. He gave his life to witnessing to royalty and providing the Scriptures in Persian. Nine years after the death of Henry Martyn in 1812, *Joseph Wolff* of the *London Jews' Society* visited Jewish communities in Iran. *Karl Gottlieb Pfander* of the *Basel Mission* came to Iran in 1829. His major contribution was a book entitled "The Balance of

Name two colleges established in the 1800s in Constantinople that have exerted profound influence throughout the Middle East.

(Compare your answers with the text.)

Is the following statement true or false?
Missionaries are not now officially permitted in Turkey.

(true)

Iran has been divorced from the rest of the world since _____ became its ruler.

(Khomeini)

Truth," written for Muslim consumption.

The first permanent work in Iran was established by *Justin Perkins* of the American Board of Commissioners in 1835. He was joined by a medical missionary, Dr. A. Grant, the following year. *American Presbyterians* worked with the American Congregational Board. In 1870 the Presbyterians took over this work, and opened stations in Teheran and Tabriz. The Presbyterians won converts from the "Christian" community and with these converts formed the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Iran. They used itinerant evangelists and distributed literature, finding Armenians and Jews more responsive than Muslims.

The *Church Missionary Society* came to Iran in 1869. *Robert Bruce* stopped for what he considered a temporary stay at Isfahan on his way to India. When nine Muslims asked for baptism, he secured permission to stay in Iran. The Anglicans minister to Muslims and Jews in southern Iran.

The *Iran Interior Mission* began as an industrial school and orphanage at Kermanshah in 1923. Five years later it was taken over by *International Missions, Inc.* *Seventh-day Adventists* came in 1911, and the *Christian and Missionary Alliance* in 1930. The *Assemblies of God* also have work here.

Iraq

Iraq is the ancient Chaldea or Mesopotamia from which God called Abraham. At one time the Nestorians flourished here. Today the 150,000 or so of Christians are mostly of the Ancient Eastern Churches. The state religion is Islam, and laws make it exceedingly difficult to reach Muslims with the gospel. There have never been many missionaries in Iraq, and there are practically none there now.

The first missionary effort in Iraq was by the *London Jews' Society* in the 1820s. It sent *Joseph Wolff* to visit the 120,000 Jews in the vicinity of Baghdad. Twenty years later *Henry Aaron Stern* made several visits to this area. This society continued visits for about fifteen years with some success. With the great exodus of Jews to Palestine not more than 5,000 Jews remain in Iraq. The *Basel Evangelical Missionary Society* founded a school for Armenians in Baghdad in 1830. The *American Board of Commissioners* reached southward from Armenia in the 1850s to work with Armenians in northern Iraq. Its station at Mosul was discontinued after a few years. The *Church Missionary Society* sent missionaries to Baghdad in 1882. Later it transferred its three small congregations to the *Jerusalem and East Mission*. Since the 1920s the *United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.*, the *Reformed Church in America*, and the *Evangelical Reformed Church* worked jointly in Iraq. These formed the *United Mission in Iraq*.

After the revolution in 1958, in which King Feisal was assassinated, there followed a new political orientation. Fourteen missionaries were expelled in 1959, and the

The American Board of Commissioners established the first permanent work in _____.

(Iran)

What brought the Church Missionary Society to Iran?

(Compare your answers with the text.)

The state religion in Iraq is _____. It is exceedingly _____ to reach _____ with the gospel.

(Islam, difficult, Muslims)

Not many Jews have remained in _____.

(Iraq)

remainder in 1969. The *Assemblies of God* work in Iraq is carried on entirely by nationals. Likewise a few other evangelical churches carry on under national leadership. Christian churches which have been here for centuries include the Nestorians, Syrian Orthodox, Syrian Catholic and Armenian Catholic churches and Syrian and Armenian Evangelicals. These total about 200,000 members.

The Arabian Peninsula

Most of the Peninsula is now occupied by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Yemen (now Yemen and Democratic Yemen). Along the Persian Gulf are small enclaves of semi-independent states such as Kuwait, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, and Oman. The inhabitants are Arabs; their religion, Islam. After two centuries of mission endeavour there are less than two hundred baptized Arabs in all the peninsula.

Arabia was visited by Paul after his conversion (Gal. 1:17,18). A Syriac manuscript dated A.D. 525 reveals that the Christian faith was established in South and Central Arabia by then. But in the early part of the seventh century Mohammed began to preach a new religion, and was able to unite the divided tribes in conquest of other religions. Medina and Mecca are still sacred cities in this cradle of Islam.

Henry Martyn arrived at Muscat, on the southeast tip of the peninsula, in 1811. During a brief stay here he gave himself to translation of Scriptures. Modern mission work began with *Ion Keith Falconer*. He was a noble-born Cambridge scholar. At his own expense he and his wife went to Sheik-Othman (near Aden, in Yemen) in 1885. After persistent bouts with fever, he died within two years. After his death the *Church of Scotland* took over the work and called it the *Keith Falconer Mission*. The news of Falconer's work and death reached America, and three theological students volunteered to take his place. The three formed the *American Arabian Mission*. The most renowned of the three was *Samuel Marinus Zwemer* (1867-1952). He went to Beirut in 1890 to study Arabic and there married a nurse on her way to Baghdad for missionary service. Dr. Zwemer gave sixty years to evangelizing Muslims and writing for and about them. He became the world's foremost authority on the Islam religion. After his retirement he was professor of missions at Princeton University, until his death at age 85. In 1894 the *Reformed Church of America* took over the *American Arabian Mission* which the three students had founded. The Reformed Church expanded the work, building hospitals at Bahram, Kuwait, Muscat and Basrah on the Persian Gulf. During an epidemic, Dr. *Paul W. Harrison* was called to the palace of King Ibn Saud at Riyadh. His ministry brought royal favour and opened doors to mission work. Much of the mission work is spearheaded by a medical ministry. *Southern Baptists* since 1964 have had a hospital at Jibla, in Yemen. The *Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions* has a small

Is the following statement true or false?

A few missionaries remained in Iraq after 1969.

(false)

Is the following statement true or false?

There are no baptized Arabs in Arabia.

(false)

The world's foremost authority on the Muslim religion was _____ M. _____

(Samuel, Zwemer)

work on the Trucial Coast (United Arab Emirates). The *Red Sea Mission* has two stations in Yemen. The *Danish Mission* has a book store in Adan (Aden), the capital city of Yemen, and circulates Scriptures produced by the *British and Foreign Bible Society*.

Jordan

The little Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan has about 3,000,000 subjects, almost half of which live in territory occupied by Israel. Jordan is a Muslim state, and missionary work, while restricted, is tolerated.

The *Church of England* has had work in Palestine for more than a century. It founded a hospital at Nablus (now occupied by Israel) and has a girl's school at Amman. The *Jerusalem and East Mission* has the Bishop's School for Boys in the capital city of Amman. The *Christian and Missionary Alliance* began work in Amman in 1949. *Conservative Baptists* have been here since 1956. *Southern Baptists* entered Ajloun in 1952 when an independent British doctor, facing retirement, turned the hospital over to them. In connection with the hospital the Baptists have a school of nursing. They have primary and secondary schools in Ajloun and Amman. Eight churches are related to this Mission. Other bodies with work in Jordan include: *Baptist Mid-Missions*, *Assemblies of God*, the *Church of God* (Tennessee) and the *Church of the Nazarene*.

Israel

The Nation of Israel was proclaimed May 14, 1948. With the creation of Israel millions of Jews poured into the country. The war of 1967 created a situation, subject to negotiations, in which Israel controls territory occupied by more than half a million Arabs. It is difficult, therefore, to differentiate between mission work in Jordan and Israel.

Roman Catholics have been in Palestine since the time of the Crusades. The Russian Orthodox came to Jerusalem in the latter part of the nineteenth century. The *London Jews' Society* entered Jerusalem in 1820. They built the Jerusalem Hospital in 1848. The *Church Missionary Society* began work in Jerusalem in 1851. Its work has been with the Arabs, with hospitals at Jaffa and Lydda, and an orphanage at Nazareth. The *Edinburgh Medical Missionary Society* has a hospital at Nazareth. The *Church Missionary Society* opened a hospital in Gaza in 1885 and in 1954 turned it over to the *Southern Baptists*. This hospital was returned to the Anglicans January 1, 1982. The Baptist church at Gaza had a revival in 1979-80 which resulted in several conversions. The *Christian and Missionary Alliance* came to Palestine in the 1890s and has work in Jerusalem, Hebron and Jaffa. *Southern Baptists* have had missionaries in Palestine since 1923. They have work in Ashkelon, Cana, Haifa, Hertzlia, Jerusalem, Nazareth, Netanya, Petah Tiqva and Raanana. Their work includes a farm, a conference centre, a student centre, a bookstore, and a

Is the following statement true or false?

Jordan permits mission-related schools and hospitals.

(true)

The State of Israel was proclaimed _____ 14

(May, 1948)

Given below are names of Christian groups who have work in Israel. STATE WHEN EACH began work in the blanks provided.

Roman Catholics _____
 Russian Orthodox _____
 The London Jews' Society _____
 Church Missionary Society _____
 Southern Baptists _____

(Compare your answers with the text.)

sizeable school for Arabs in Nazareth. Their church in Nazareth is used as a training centre for Arab Christian leaders. Other missions in Palestine include: *Seventh-day Adventists, Assemblies of God, Wesleyan Methodists, Mennonites, the Church of the Nazarene and Christian Missions in Many Lands*. The *British and Foreign Bible Society* and the *American Bible Society* have a joint agency in Haifa.

Syria and Lebanon

Lebanon is the smallest nation in the Middle East, cradled in the southwest corner of Syria. This region across the centuries has been under the dominion of Assyria, Persia, the Greeks, the Romans, the Mohammedan Arabs, the Mongols, the Ottoman Turks and Turkey. During World War I the British dislodged the Turks and Syria was mandated to France. In 1941 Syria was given its independence. Lebanon remained under French Mandate until 1944 when it received its independence. The Palestinian War of 1967 in which Lebanon did not participate has kept Syria, Lebanon and Israel in a state of turmoil.

Saul's journey to Damascus was to persecute Christians. The followers of Jesus were first called Christians at Antioch, now Antakya. Various branches of the Christian Church have managed to survive including Greek Orthodox, Uniates, Roman Catholics, Nestorians, Armenians, Maronites and Jacobites. The majority of the Syrians are Muslims; the majority of the Lebanese are either Uniates or Muslims. Lebanon is far more receptive to Christianity than is Syria.

Joseph Wolff, of the *London Jews' Society*, visited Jewish colonies in Syria in 1811 and 1823. *Pliny Fiske*, working with the *American Board of Commissioners*, came to Beirut in 1823. This work took the direction of educational missions. In 1824 the first girl's school in the Mideast was started at Beirut. The Syrian Protestant College founded at Beirut became the American College in 1920. It has prepared leaders who have distinguished themselves throughout the Middle East. The American Board moved its printing facilities from Malta to Beirut in 1824. In 1870 the American Board transferred its work in Syria and Lebanon to the *Presbyterian Church, U.S.A.* Since then the American Board has co-operated with two union institutions: the Near East School of Theology in Beirut and Aleppo College in northwestern Syria. The Presbyterians administer these schools and half a dozen others. They have two medical ministries in Lebanon and one in Syria. Theirs is the largest evangelical work in the two countries.

The largest independent Mission was started in the 1860s as the *British Syrian Mission*, now called the *Lebanon Evangelical Mission*. It too wins its converts through its schools, the principal ones being the Training School for Girls in Beirut, and the Lebanon Bible Institute in Shemlam. It has evangelistic work in Tyre, Baabek, Hasbeiya and Ainzahalta. Its only work in Syria, a boy's

List ancient Christian bodies still surviving in Syria.

(Compare your answers with the text.)

The first girl's school in the Middle East was started at _____ in _____.

(Beirut, 1824)

The largest work is carried on by the _____.

(Presbyterians)

Is the following statement true or false?
Schools have been one of the principal methods of mission work in both Syria and Lebanon. _____

(true)

school and a girl's school, was turned over to the local national church in 1959.

The *Church of God* (Indiana) entered Lebanon before World War I and has indigenous work both in Lebanon and Syria. *Southern Baptists* in Lebanon since 1948 report twelve churches. They have an elementary school, a high school and a seminary, plus a publication ministry and a radio ministry. Other newcomers to Lebanon include: The *Disciples of Christ*, The *Evangelical Alliance Mission*, the *Reformed Presbyterian Church of Scotland*, *Seventh-day Adventists* and the *Danish Mission*. Beirut is the Middle East headquarters of the *British and Foreign Bible Society*.

Home Study Exercise

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

1. Give four reasons for the de-Christianization of Europe.

2. Name the European countries considered to be Catholic.

3. Name the Protestant countries.

4. Name the Communist countries.

5. What success has there been in trying to reform old line Protestant churches from within?

Why? _____

6. What appears to be the most effective means for reaching Communist countries with the gospel?

7. How many churches were there in North Africa in the time of Constantine? What happened to them?

8. Compare the method of mission work of the Church Missionary Society with that of the Presbyterians.

9. What ancient "Christian" bodies have survived in spite of Muslim domination in the Middle East? Name seven.

10. Would you agree that the Middle East is the most difficult area of the world to penetrate with the gospel? Why?

11. What missionary tools have been most effective in the Middle East?

12. In what country or countries of the Middle East is evangelism permitted?

13. Consider prayer as a means of opening the Middle East to the gospel. List some steps for enlisting people for prayer in this area.

Supplementary activity (*Levels 2 and 3*). Read pages 275-318 and 535-553 in *A Global View of Christian Missions* by Kane, and answer the following questions.

1. For a thousand years Christianity was the dominant religion in Europe. List all the factors you can discover which contributed to converting Europe into a mission field.
2. How many American missionaries are assigned to Europe (according to Kane) and how are they distributed?
3. Looking at France, Spain, and Italy as examples, list some evidences that evangelistic proclamation can be successful in Catholic countries.
4. What is the state religion in each of the North African countries? What is the government attitude towards mission work? What means would you use to penetrate this Muslim empire?
5. What are the most promising fields in the Middle East, and why?

Advanced activity (*Level 3*).

1. Study the map of Modern Europe on page 537 of Kane. Paint the Protestant countries with one transparent colour, the Catholic countries with a second colour, and the Communist bloc with a third colour.
2. What strategy would you use to revitalize and expand the Christian community in Protestant lands?

3. What would be your primary purpose in Catholic lands and what means would you employ to attain it?
4. What can be done to encourage and strengthen the Christian communities within the Communist bloc?

Seminar Discussion

1. Is Europe a mission field, or is it three distinct mission fields? If the latter, how would you deal with each field?
2. Great Britain has about 6,000 overseas missionaries, Sweden 1,700, Norway 1,300, West Germany 1,300, etc. Yet there are missionaries from other lands working in each of these countries. Consider conditions in such countries which would warrant sending them missionaries. Would the type of mission activity in these countries be the same or vary?
3. Discuss types of suppression of Christianity in Communist-controlled countries.
4. Discuss immediate and long range effects of mass evangelism in Europe.
5. Discuss the need for Third World evangelism conferences, such as Antwerp '83 sponsored by Billy Graham.
6. Consider ways of penetrating the "Muslim Curtain" of North Africa.
7. Discuss means of softening up and winning Muslims in the Middle East.
8. Locate on the map the regions of the Middle East which have been scenes of wars or civil disturbances in recent years. How do these affect mission work?