

## Lesson Three

# Mass Conversions, Monastics and Papal Missions



500-1000



# Mission representatives of the Period



**Methodius and Cyril/Constantine:** In the height of the Dark Ages, launched into a frontier with no “cultural” Christianity to build on and no knowledge of Church (i.e. Latin), and during the beginnings of the East/West difference (despite Irish and British missionaries already present and with a concern for integrity of message and form) they tested Papal limits and became Apostles to the Slavs.

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# **The essence of Cyril and Methodius**

Heart languages are important

Long term commitment

In translating you understand not only the culture but the hearts of the people

Need for indigenous translation must involve the people – literacy

# Highlights of Methodius' story

(815-885) Archbishop of Moravia,  
Apostle to the Slavs. Originally was not a “success”

Born in Thessalonica;

(brother Cyril-Constantine 10 years younger  
and died at 42)

educated, right family and brilliant

Methodius was a civil servant monk

Imprisoned; charged with heresy and recalled

Named patron saints of Europe

by Pope John Paul II in 1980

# Highlights of Cyril-Constantine's story

Founder of Slavic literature

Born in Thessalonica; (brother Methodius); (826-869)  
classical education  
called the Philosopher  
librarian at Hagia

Sophia

Plotinus's best friend

Active in theological disputes:

engaged in lengthy dialogue with Muslims on the Trinity  
images vs. iconoclasts – were they idolotrous by nature

Became monk in 869 (highest level)

died two months later

# Highlights of Methodius and Cyril's story

Petition presented in 862 to the Byzantine Emperor Michael III by Ratislav of Moravia:

- Moravia was central to the split

- Felt pressure from Germany desired them to send missionaries to Greater Moravia

- Beginning of East West split of Church but still unified

Translated liturgy into Slavic:

- Byzantine liturgy into Old Church Slavonic

- A controversial and innovative way to evangelize

- A way to fully incorporate gospel. Started with liturgy then to the gospel

Created Glagolitic alphabet (not Cyrillic)

- Translated Bible into Slavic

Opposition in 863

- Political factor of power and territory: intertwining of politics and doctrine

- Trilingualism – Latin, Greek and Hebrew (holy trinity of languages) developed to control

Sought and received papal permission for Slavonic liturgy in 867-868

- Discovered St. Clement relics and took to Rome

- Pope gave permission to use Slavonic in Liturgy

After Cyril died and was buried in Rome, Methodius went back to Moravia

- Not satisfied Bishop Wichung and Methodius was imprisoned

- The Franks lost control of the territory and imprisoned Methodius in 870 in Swabia

- Pope John VIII secured his release but on condition of curtailing Slavic Liturgy

- Used in Bulgaria and later brought gospel to Russia

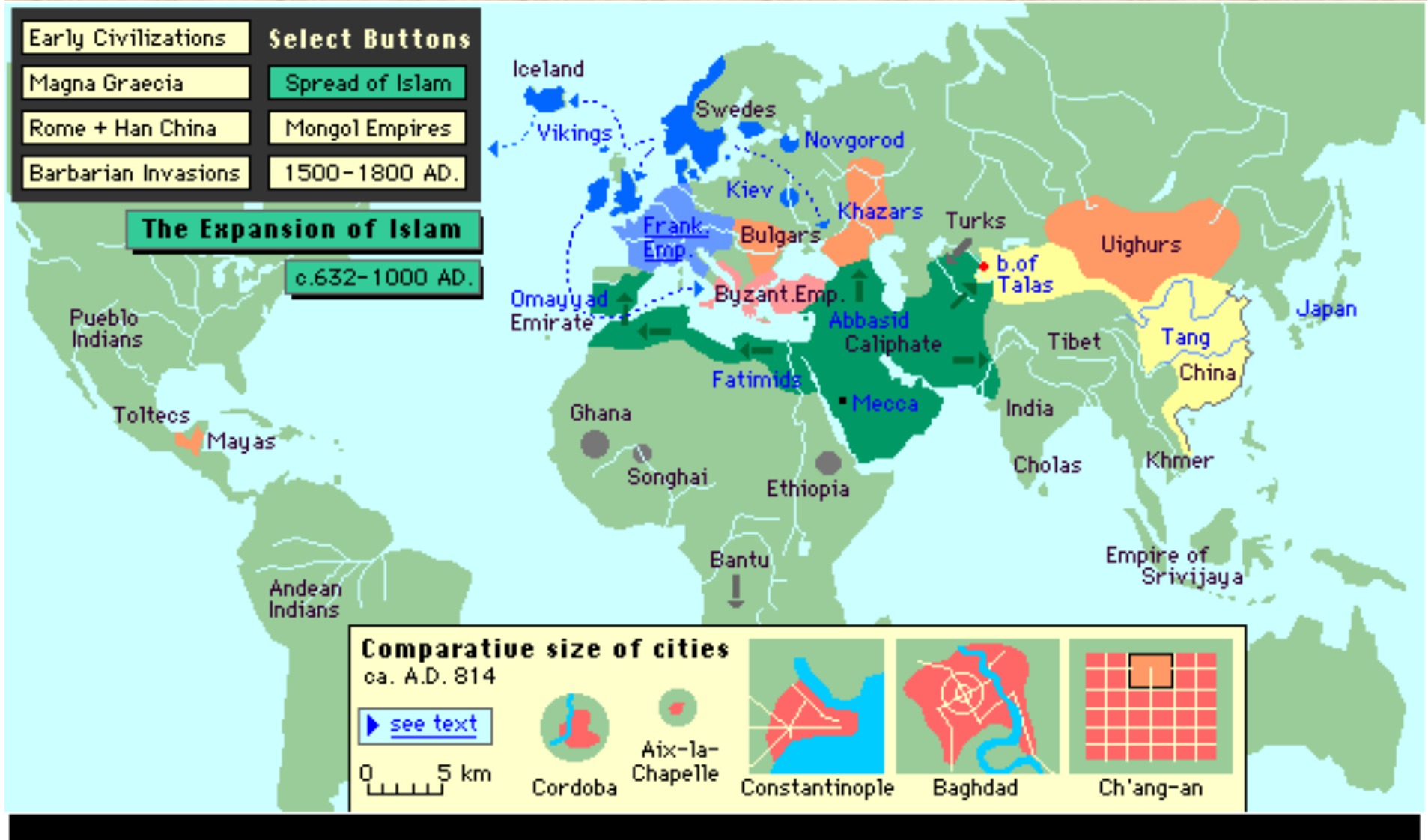
Methodius returned to Constantinople in 881 and finished Slavic translation of Bible begun by his brother.

- The Mission continued among the Poles, Bulgars, Bohemians, and other Slavic peoples.

# Historical Highlights of 500-1000 AD

Book Text : The Middle Ages Graphics from the World History Chart	
<b>America</b>	Peru : Tiahuanaco center (Lake Titicaca) Huari Empire (Central Peru) Huari and Tiahuanaco abandoned <b>Maya Old Empire</b> Map Temple centres in Uaxactun, Copan and Tikal Maya culture disintegrates Maya calendar discontinued Maya migrate north to Yucatan
<b>Europe</b>	<b>F R A N K S</b> Frankish Kdms under Merovingians (Neustria and Austrasia) (cap. Paris) (cap. Reims) Rise of Carolingians b. of Poitiers Papal state establ. Empire of Charlemagne West Frankish Kdm East Frankish Kdm (Germany) Kdm of France evolves Holy Roman Emperors <b>Visigothic Kdm in Spain</b> Ostrogothic Kdm in Italy Justinian re-conquers the West Italy : Langobards struggle with Byzantines Avar Khanate (betw. Volga and Danube) until 796 Bulgar Khanate (former 'Huns') Magyar raids into Europe • Kdm of Hung. <b>Vikings :</b> Danelaw in England Establ. of Norman states • Kiev • Normandy Vikings discover America Map
<b>Roman Empire</b>	<b>East Roman Empire</b> Gothic War Wars with Persia Cross Christi War <b>BYZANTINE EMPIRE</b> (cap. Constantinople) East Roman Empire renamed Byzantine Empire Moslems in Sicily Orthodox Church breaks with Rome Byzantine culture penetrates into Balkans and Russia <b>Moors</b> Omayyads establish anti-Caliphate in Spain (cap. Cordoba) (Moors in Granada until 1492) <b>Khazar Khanate in Southern Russia</b>
<b>Middle East</b>	<b>Sassanides</b> Neo-Persian Empire (until 650) Rome defeats Sassanides Elected Caliphs (Mecca) <b>CALIPHATES</b> Map Islamic Science Intrusion of Turkish peoples who form Palace Guard and exercise political power Shiite Persian dynasty dominates Caliphate <b>Omayyads</b> cap. Damascus <b>Abbasid Caliphate</b> cap. Baghdad Arab language predominant since translation of Koran prohibited <b>Fatimids</b> in Egypt
<b>Egypt</b>	Egypt part of the East Roman Empire Egypt Pers. <b>Conquests from Spain to India</b>
	500 600 700 800 900 1000
<b>India</b>	<b>Hunnish Invasion</b> Harsha's Empire in n'India Moslems conquer Sind Pala kings rule E'India (Bengal) Nepal independent of Tibet Disruption of Indian civilization Struggle over central India exhausts the major kdms (Hindu Princes accept Barbarian <b>Rajputs</b> as nobles) Rajput states arise
<b>S'India</b>	Pallava Period Tamil kdms of Pallava and Chalukya struggle for domination Vedanta reform by <b>Shankara</b> Chola Kingdom dominates the South
<b>China</b>	Mongol Juan-juan (Central Asia) Second unification <b>SUI</b> Chinese advance into Turkestan and Tibet b. of <b>Talas</b> (Arabs defeat Chinese) Buddhism repressed Khitan (Mongols) rule over Manchuria <b>Age of Disunity</b> School of Buddhism founded <b>T'AI TSUNG</b> Civil War Peoples from Vietnam to Korea acknowledge Chinese sovereignty Cultural flowering Great poetic revival Gunpowder discovered <b>Revolution</b> Period of 5 Dynasties Northern <b>SUNG</b> (cap. Kaifeng)
<b>Japan</b>	Japan* Buddhism introduced State modelled after China ( <b>Taika</b> reform) <b>Nara Period</b> <b>Heian Period</b> (cap. Heian-kyo = Kyoto) dominated by the <b>Fujiwara</b> clan
<b>Africa</b>	Kdm of Ghana (4-13th cent.) Aksum (Ethiopia) becomes great power Establishment of sub-Saharan Islamic states Haussa Kdms evolve (Niger river area)

# World view – expansion of Islam





# Mission Highlights 500-1000 AD

The Dark Ages

Era of mass conversion project (330-1200)

Nestorianism- became the recognized form of Christianity in the Persian Empire. Spread across Asia, China, and India

Monasticism: monastic orders focusing on education, mission and humanitarian work - Celtic, Benedictine, Cluniac, Cistercian, Dominican (focussed on preaching the word and converting the heathens), Franciscan (ministered to the poor and focussed on joy and simplicity) and Jesuits (global outreach focus)

Synthesis of Politics and Religion/ institutionalized church – power of the Church - emphasis on establishing bishoprics that served as powerful centers of Christian faith and disallowed indigenous leadership. In addition, corruption in the church was rising.

The increase in Muslim expansion threatened mission growth.

# Contemporaries of Cyril and Methodius 500-1000 AD

**Columba** – 550's - born in Ireland - missionary to Scotland and Ireland

- Used Celtic approach – preached the Gospel truth rather than to attack the religions of the people and expose their errors
- established a monastery on the island of Iona from which he launched his work
- used 'power encounter' – ie; theology of miracles vs. ethics & creeds

**Gregory the Great** – 580's - Bishop of Rome - first papal mission effort to Britain

**Augustine** – c. 580's - missionary to Britain sent by Gregory

**Boniface** – c. 718 – 753 - Benedictine monk from Britain – mission to Germany pagans

- Described as the “greatest missionary of the Dark Ages”
- vigorous to rid the land of altars and idols - chopped down the Oak of the Thundergod
- He used a language they could understand, recruited woman and taught agriculture

**Charlemagne** 747-814 - military campaigns brought movements of resistance not only to empire but also to Christianity

**Anskar** – c. 820's AD - 'Apostle of the North' - earliest RC missionary to Scandinavia

## **Uniqueness of this mission period**

During the Dark Ages , the rising monastic mission work which surfaced through church renewal focused on cultural/ language relevance as a missional tool which set the stage for future outreach.

## **Thread through the Macro mission story**

In a time when Islam was rising in power and expanding and the church/state was beginning to use force for conversions and was dealing with corruption, missionaries were reluctant to reach out because of fear. The seeds of monastic orders which were courageous and focused began to grow and set the stage for the next major period of growth.

# Scriptural foundations for Cyril and Methodius' approach

But in a church meeting I would much rather speak five understandable words that will help others than ten thousand words in an unknown language.

1 Cor. 14:19 (NLT)

For we never came with flattering speech, as you know, nor with a pretext for greed—God is witness

1 Thes. 2:5 (NASB-U)

Having so fond an affection for you, we were well-pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God but also our own lives, because you had become very dear to us.

» 1 Thes. 2:8 (NASB-U)

## Further Research Highlights

From Cyril and Methodius of Thesolonica – The Acculturation of the Slavs, Anthony-Emil N. Tachiaos, 2001, St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, Crestwood, NY

... the Khazars' leader, khan, sent representatives to Emperor Michael III; they told him that their people followed an ancient religion which required them to worship the rising sun and to observe certain other customs, but that now the Jews were inviting them to adopt Judaism, while the Arabs were pressing them with tempting gifts to convert to their own religion, The Khazars were therefore seeking the Byzantines' advice: asked They asked that an educated man be sent on a mission to their land, and promised if he succeeded in refuting the Jews' and Arabs' arguments they would convert to Christianity. The Emperor promptly sent for Cyril and charged him with mission to the land of the Khazars and the accompanying theological debate, 'explicitly declaring: "no one else is capable of doing this properly." Cyril was to take his elder brother Methodius with him as his assistant. (p. 39)

**On translation:** We know that the Slavs did not have a script of their own Cyril devised it for them (p. 42)

**On overcoming syncretism:** It was thus that they came to the city of the Phullae. These people, though they had converted to Christianity still clung to some of their heathen customs, and in fact worshipped a tree, which they called alexandron and which the women were not allowed to approach. Cyril discussed the matter with them, preached a sermon, and eventually persuaded them to fell the tree and burn it. He then offered them the Gospel which was kissed first by the leader and then by the whole tribe; and in this way the Christian faith was restored to the Phullae. (p.48)

This nation (Modern Germany), by a solemn embassy addressed themselves to the emperor Michael III and his pious mother Theodora, begging that some priests might be sent to instruct them in the faith: the empress sent for St. Ignatius the patriarch, and by his advice and authority St. Cyril was charged with this important mission. This happened in the year 848 ... That Cyril understood the Sclavonian Greek, and Latin languages, is clear from the two histories of his life... In a short time he instructed and baptized him and his whole nation, and having settled his church under the care of able pastors, returned to Constantinople, absolutely refusing to accept any part of the great presents with which the prince would have honored him.

The saint's second mission was to the Bulgarians, in which his devout brother Methodius, a monk, was his chief assistant. The Bulgari were a Scythian nation, not of the Huns, but of the Sclavi, whose language was quite different from that of the Turci and all the Huns.

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Augustine, in his catalogue of the bishops of Olmutz[8] and Dubravius,[9] says St. Cyril was ordained first archbishop of the Moravians. This latter relates that Boriwav, or Borivorius, duke of Bohemia. was converted by hearing Cyril and Methodius preach the faith, and, being baptized by the latter, he called him into Bohemia, where his wife Ludmilla, his children, and a great part of his people received the sacrament of regeneration, which, according to Cosmas of Prague, in his chronicle, happened in 894. St. Methodius founded at Prague the church of our Lady, another of SS. Peter and Paul, and many others over the kingdom.

From this testimony of John VIII and the ancient lives of St. Cyril, it is evident that the Sclavonian alphabet was invented, not by St. Jerome, but by those two apostles of that nation;[11] which is also related by an ancient author, who wrote in 878, published by Freher. Cyril and Methodius translated the liturgy into the Sclavonian tongue, and instituted mass to be said in the same.

- St. Methodius planted the faith with such success, that the nations which he cultivated with his labors became models of fervor and zeal. Boigoris or Michael, the first Christian king of Bulgaria, renounced his crown about the year 880, and putting on the monastic habit, led an angelical life on earth. Stredowski, in his *Sacra Moravim Historia*, styles SS. Cyril and Methodius the apostles of Moravia, Upper Bohemia, Silesia, Cazaria, Croatia, Circassia, Bulgaria, Bosnia, Russia, Dalmatia, Pannonia, Dacia, Carinthia, Carniola, and of almost all the Slavonian nations. 1997 Catholic Information Network (CIN)

# Mission Innovations of Cyril and Methodius:

They made the Bible and the Liturgy available in the language of the people

Translatability: Christian message capable of entering all cultural idioms

1. Culture relativized
2. Culture destigmatized

The effects of translation: before: attempts to Latinize  
during: failure in Moravia, success in rest of Slavic culture  
after: acceptance and mission growth.

## Movie clip illustrating the principle

Show the clip from Black robe when the priest demonstrates to the native Americans that written language can bridge the communication barrier.



## **How can Cyril and Methodius' Principles be applied to the YoungLife mission?**

The gospel needs to be spoken to teenagers, particularly the unchurched in a vernacular that they can understand (There needs to be further translation based on age: ie. Middle school, vs. High school).

We need to be committed to stay with kids. If we stay with kids long enough, they will stay with us.

## **So What and Now What?**

How can you actively translate the gospel into a language your YoungLife kids will understand without compromising the message.

How can you be better prepared for the emergence of the new Dark Ages for teens with the rise of Paganism, the rise of Islam and the ever widening distance between the language the church speaks and the language kids speak?

What ingredients of monasticism are reproducible and productive for 2004?

# Recommended Reading

Jones, Tony

(2001), *Postmodern Youth Ministry*,  
Grand Rapids, MI, Zondervan