

- **Latin America and Caribbean Region: 11 new countries in all, formed all from decolonization from 1973-2010.**
- **Oceania Region: 11 new countries in all, formed mostly through decolonization from 1970-2020.**
- **Asia Region: Eight new countries in all, formed with five of them forming in 1991 from the fall of the old Soviet Union, and three of them formed as part of decolonization from 1971-1984.**
- **Middle East Region: Seven new countries in all, with three formed from the fall of the old Soviet Union in 1991 and the other four new nations formed from decolonization.**

So, just two major world events - the fall of the old Soviet Union and decolonization - resulted in almost all of the new 64 countries forming over the last 50 years. Was it gradual and rare for new countries to form? The answer, again, was a resounding no. Just two movements caused the whole modern world to shift and re-form over the last 50 years. Just one single event, the fall of the old Soviet Union and its breakup, caused 17 new countries in three regions of the world to form in Europe, Asia, and the Middle East over just one year from 1990-1991. So, one world event led to 26.6% of all the new countries formed over the last 50 years. Is the world really as stable as you think it is when all these new countries just pop up out of nowhere from just two world events? What will the next 30 years bring, and how many other new countries will form? We discuss this point briefly in Chapter Eight of this book. Don't miss it.

So, my point in this little exercise is this. The world is constantly changing and re-forming with new countries popping up. This is a challenge for missionaries who have to see these new realities and adjust their strategy to reach people in these new countries. Some of the new countries might now welcome new missionaries, where previously they were closed to foreign missionaries and vice versa. So, we should be reading the news and following it closely, looking for where the gospel message might suddenly become more assessable. Then we send Christian missionaries there in mass when the

opportunity occurs. Again, as Jesus said, "Eyes to see and ears to hear."

The 10/40 Window and the Circle of Significance

Well, if looking at the world in a macro way or in a hemispheric manner doesn't seem too strategic for sending Christian missionaries to reach people, what is? Good question, and we have two answers for you. One you've probably heard of before is the 10/40 Window, and the other you probably haven't is the Circle of Significance. So, let's start with the one you probably know: the 10/40 Window.

So, for those of you not in the know, the 10/40 Window was created by Luis Bush (1946-present), an Argentinian-born missionary strategist, and it premiered at the Second Lausanne Congress in Manila in 1989 in front of 4,300 attendees from 173 countries. The 10/40 Window was a game changer for directing missionaries strategically into the mission field where they were most needed, both by population and Unreached People Groups. The 10/40 Window describes a box or "window" that is from 10 degrees North Latitude to 40 degrees North Latitude and sweeps across North Africa, the Middle East, and much of Asia. About 2/3 of the world's population lives there and about 95% of the Unreached People Groups were in this Window when it was created by Luis Bush back in 1989.

If you look at the color-coated map on the following page, you'll see a lot of green color on it, which represents Islam. You'll also see the two largest Hindu-majority countries of India and Nepal. You'll also notice some brown countries representing the Buddhist-majority countries of Asia. Right near the middle of the 10/40 Window, you see a tiny blue blotch on the map, and that is Israel, representing that Jewish nation. It's a tiny blue dot surrounded by a sea of green Muslim-majority nations. You can look at the map and see God's sovereignty in protecting this Chosen Nation.

What you don't see much of in the 10/40 Window is the color purple. This is the color representing Jesus and Christians. Thus, the 10/40 Window has served the modern missions' movement well by strategically

directing several generations of Christian missionaries sent out over the last 35 years. So, now you see that location, location, location, and context are key to where we need to strategically send the Christian missions force. See map on the following page to examine the 10/40 Window for yourself:

If you noticed the giant circle over most of Asia on the 10/40 Window map please note that isn't part of the original 10/40 Window. That is the Circle of Significance, and you can look at the map on the next page for more explanation. We'll give you some brief history for it here and then share some facts about it later. The Circle of Significance got its start in 2013, when Ken Myers, a Texas ESL teacher, posted a thread on the online platform Reddit about a circle that could cover 50% or more of the world. Myers posted his guess that it would cover an area similar to our Circle of Significance map but slightly different. He drew a picture of a circle on a map, covering Asia and submitted it for others to dialogue around. A few did dialogue about it.

Then, in 2015, Singaporean Macroeconomics professor Dr. Danny Quah (1958-present) took the time and do the math to see if Ken Myers' original claim was true. Dr. Quah verified that the circle did contain about 50% of the world's population, and he later created his own slightly smaller circle moving the center point, proving the same thing.

I discovered these Reddit posts and history as I was researching for this book, and I examined this circle for its implications to strategic Christian missions. I created my own modified Circle of Significance, again moving the center point, that back in 2019, and showed a few other Christian leaders to gain their feedback. I found out another friend of mine, fellow Christian researcher extraordinaire Chris Maynard (1955-present), from the UK, had come to the same conclusion about this circle before anyone else, back in the year about 1999. He showed me his PowerPoint he created about this after I had showed him the Circle of Significance. He came to the same conclusions of its strategic importance to missions about 20 years before I did and about a dozen years prior to Ken Myers' first Reddit post in 2013.

So, did I invent the Circle of Significance? It appears not. So, I take no credit, as all I've done

is discover it for myself and share its strategic value for Christian missions by giving it a face, name, and some statistics to try to popularize it for strategic missions. I don't pretend this will replace the 10/40 Window, nor do I expect it to. Not at all. I see it as a complement to the 10/40 Window for strategic Christians missions, just updated for 2019 and the future.

You can see the highlights on the "Circle of Significance" map and so I will not duplicate it all here, but I will highlight a few points for you now. First, the Circle of Significance only represents about 15% of the land area of the world, yet over 53% of the world is living in this relatively small land space containing a population of 4.2 billion people. You can read on the map that 67% of the remaining 7,000 Unreached People Groups live in the circle, so that is about 5,000 Unreached People Groups. You can see the extremely high populations of Hindus, Buddhists, Taoists, Sikhs, Jains, and 50% of all Muslims live in the Circle of Significance.

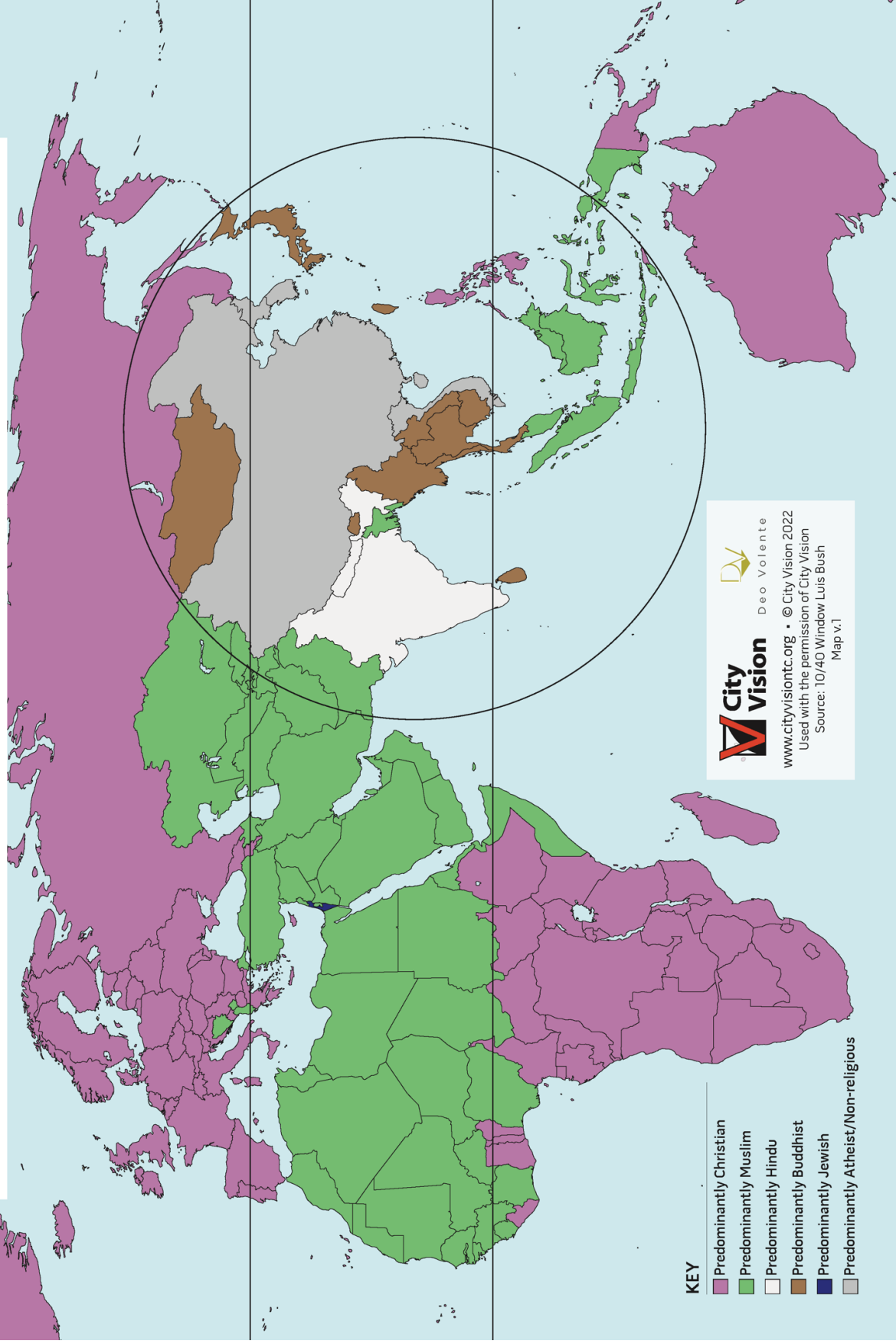
In fact, there are 2 million mosques in just four countries in the circle: Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, and Indonesia. Those four countries have more Muslims living there than the next 19 Muslim-majority countries combined. So, a huge concentration of Muslims lives in the Circle of Significance, more than any other geographic location, even though it is covering Asia, not North Africa or the Middle East.

The 29 dots on the map all represent megacities of 10 million+, and in just those 29 megacities of the world, there are over half a billion people, which is about 225 million more people than live in America. So, a huge concentration of megacities lies within the circle, with 29 out of 46 of the world's current megacities. So, now you can see why I named it the Circle of Significance for a variety of reasons.

However, the most important reason for the circle's name lies in the fact that there are 4.2 billion people living in the Circle of Significance, and only 4.2% of them are Evangelical Christians. So, this is the place to send the most missionaries in our strategic efforts. In fact, Chris Maynard, who I mentioned a few paragraphs ago, has done all the high-level math for the most strategic place for Christians to send from and where they

10/40 WINDOW showing the CIRCLE OF SIGNIFICANCE

MissionAsia24 in partnership with Seoul 2024



CIRCLE OF SIGNIFICANCE

MissionAsia24 in partnership with Seoul 2024

CIRCLE OF SIGNIFICANCE FACTS

I think you'll find what I call the Circle of Significance quite amazing for missions strategy and prayer.

- Over 50% of the world (4.2 billion people) live inside this small "Circle" of only 15% of the world's land area ("Circle" is only 2,224 miles in radius from center of the Circle).
- 67% of all the UPGs in the world are in the "Circle".
- 29 megacities in the "Circle" have 10 million+ people each" (These 29 megacities have 200 million more people living in them than the entire U.S. population).
- 99% of all the Hindus in the world are within the "Circle".
- 99% of all the Taoists in the world are within the "Circle".
- 98% of all the Buddhists in the world are within the "Circle".
- 92% of all the Jains in the world are within the "Circle".
- 78% of all the Sikhs in the world are within the "Circle".
- 50% of all the Muslims in the world are within the "Circle" (2 million mosques just in four countries: Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, and Indonesia).
- More Communists live in the "Circle" than live outside it.
- Java Island in Indonesia (small island-Minnesota is bigger) has 150 million people living on it, which is more than the entire Russian population.
- Only 4.2% of those living in the "Circle" are Evangelical Christian.

Pray for God to use the Circle of Significance for missions strategy, prayer, and strategic church planting moving forward. Thanks.

SOURCES: City Vision, Joshua Project, and Wikipedia

KEY

- Predominantly Christian
- Predominantly Muslim
- Predominantly Hindu
- Predominantly Buddhist
- Predominantly Atheist/Non-religious
- Megacity (10,000,000+ population)

SCALE

Approx. 1.51 inches = 1,000 Miles



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must be sent to. He concluded that African Christians, with over 600 million of them currently, need to be sent to the Asia Region and the 30 countries that lie in the Circle of Significance. He and I both feel that Asia cannot be strategically reached unless African Christians are sent there to preach the gospel as missionaries.

Yes, Africa needs to reach the rest of Africa; very true. But basically, if Africa doesn't try to reach Asia with the gospel message, then in all likelihood, Asia will remain largely unreached with the gospel. It is a reality we need to think and strategize about for the future of missions sending. If you look back at the map of the 10/40 Window and the Circle of Significance, you can see all the purple countries in Africa and their geographic closeness to Asia, etc. So, this is part of the Christian sending message for the 21st century that Chris Maynard and I have developed over the last several years, and hope others like you reading this book will have "eyes to see and ears to hear." Note: to connect with Chris Maynard about this very important strategic sending model he's developed, reach out to him at chris.maynard@transforminginformation.com. Thanks.

Major Religions Maps

The following eight maps all show how the major religions are distributed in various countries and regions. These are to act as representatives of other countries and regions, so learn from them even if you don't have a direct interest in these specific nations or regions, as the lessons learned can still very much apply to your own context. Let's examine and highlight each map separately for a few minutes, and we'll start with the biggest geographic area, of the Africa Region. See map on the following page.

As you can see on the map, Africa is made up of just four simple colors: green representing Islam, purple representing Christianity, dashed white and black lines representing Hinduism for the small island country of Mauritius, and finally, the thin red strip between the Islamic and Christian areas. This is labeled as the area regarding religious conflict where they most clash with one another. This map speaks volumes of the current and past conflicts between two different religious worldviews that are directly

opposed to one another, and Africa is on the front line of this religious conflict in worldviews.

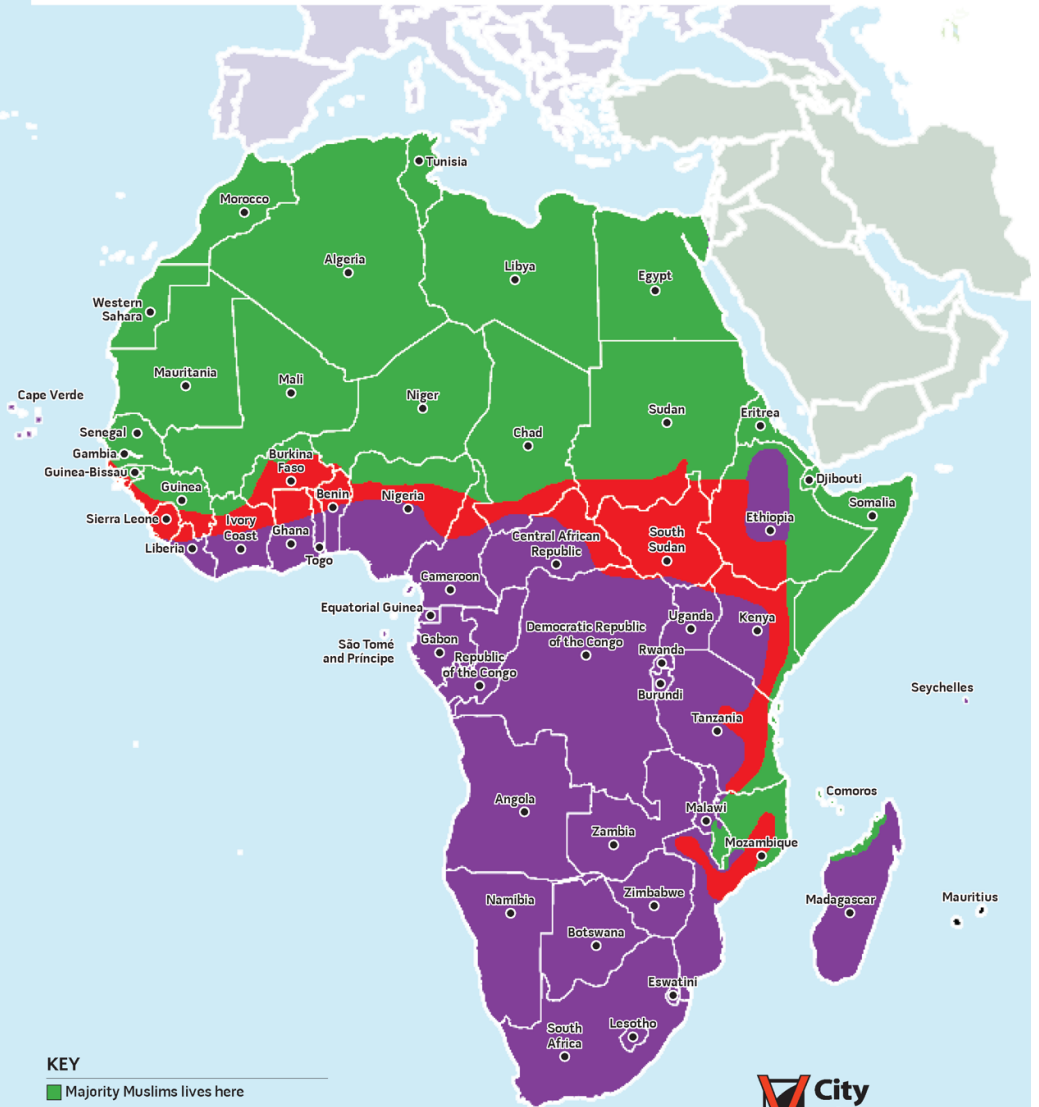
However, there is a bit more to the story, as the colors on the map indicate. The colors where the green ends and the red begins really show difference in geography. Also, the red indicates a region called the Sahel. The Sahel reflects a biodiversity transition zone between the great Sahara Desert of North Africa above it, and the purple on the map, which represents the biodiverse zones of Africa such as tropical rainforests and savannas, etc.

The Sahel in red is also where most of the recent coups have taken place and where many of the Islamic extremist terrorists reside and wreak their havoc. This region even has been recently dubbed by policymakers as the "Coups Belt" due to all the recent coups transpiring there. So, what just seems like a transition zone on a map between Islam and Christianity has a much more layered story totally effected by geography, weather, and location, location, location, where they all interplay together.

By the way, there are other factors in play here regarding the average age of people in this region, too. The average age is just 18 years old with some having multiple wives and children. It is a story of demographics playing out in Africa mainly between Islam and Christianity. Currently, Christianity has more people in this region of the world than any other region in the world, with over 600 million Christians in Africa. This story is still very much in play, as Islam is outpacing the Christians through birthrates and Sharia Law. For example, under Sharia Law, employed over just a few years' time in northern Nigeria, many more children were born to the Muslim families than to Christian families.

Christianity in Africa has had remarkable growth over the last 120 years, going from just 9% of Africa's total population in 1900 to 49% of the population in 2020. But the growth now is leveling off quickly, so by 2050, Christianity will only grow slightly to represent 52% of the total of the region. So, this is still very good news, but the growth rate over time in relationship to Islam is slipping drastically, and over time, this will make a big difference for the growth of Islam. So, what happens in Africa with this generation over the next 30

MAJOR RELIGIONS IN AFRICA



KEY

- Majority Muslims lives here
- Majority Christians lives here
- ▨ Majority Hindus lives here (Mauritius)
- Area of Religious Conflict



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Map v.2 • Source: City Vision

years will tell the story for centuries to come for both Islam and Christianity. Africa is now in the front line of all this change. Watch, pray, and invest in reaching Africa for Jesus.

I'll now use Nigeria as an example so you can see for yourself that this is the country in Africa where the macro trends are played out fully in the micro and in the present. You can see on the map, "Major Religions in Nigeria," green Islam covers the top half of the country, with 53.5% being Muslims. Christianity (purple) covers the bottom half of the country, with 44.6% being Christians. The Sahel cutting through Nigeria roughly follows the line between Islam and Christianity as we previously discussed. Also, in play here are the young age and the demographics playing out as we just stated. Additionally, Nigeria is both one of the ripest mission fields for the gospel message, and at the same time, one of the most persecuted places for Christians, churches, and the gospel message.

Extreme Islamic terrorists? Yep, they got them in abundance in Nigeria. Nigeria is also on the rise demographically; by 2050, it will slip into third place for largest countries in the world, replacing the USA, which has held that spot since the year 1885. Regarding megacities, Nigeria has one of the four in Africa with the Lagos Metro Area clocking in with a population of 21 million. By 2050, Kano, Nigeria will also become one of the new seven megacities in Africa during that same period. I think you get the picture for Nigeria. So goes Nigeria, so goes the rest of Africa. That's what I see taking place every day as this plays out in the next 25-30 years' time with the rise of the next generation.

So, now that you are getting the hang of "reading between the lines" on knowing how to view these maps, let's take a look at another country, Germany. Let's see if you have "eyes to see and ears to hear" while looking at this large European country. The first difference you'll notice is the colors look different from the other two maps we've just examined. Yes, correct, the orange color here represents Catholic Christianity, and the purple color here represents Protestant Christianity. Let's start there, and then we'll move on to the other two colors on the map.

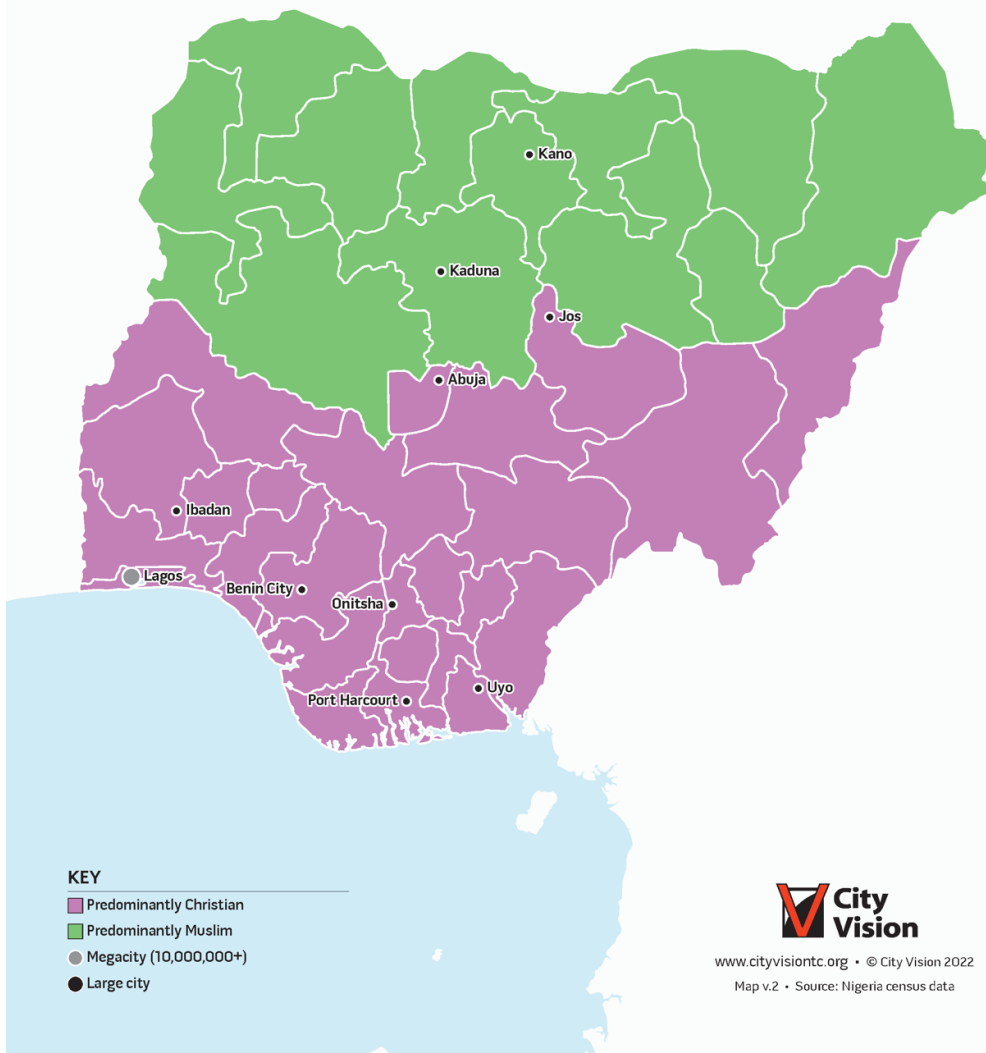
So, the western and much of the southern parts of Germany are more Catholic, and the middle and north of Germany are mostly Protestant in orientation. This has been that way now for over 500 years since the Protestant Reformation started by Martin Luther in 1517. So, all the changes and many wars - including two World Wars - and still the map looks the same religiously as it did 500 years ago.

Pretty remarkable. But, what about the other two colors? Ah yes, this is where the changes lie, and these are quick changes over a few generations. First there is lots of gray on the map of Germany around all the major cities and the whole eastern half of Germany. What's up with that? Why is there no purple or orange there? Well, the heavy black line demarcating almost all the gray color to the eastern side of Germany marks the old borderline marking the area of the old Soviet Union Communist-controlled East Germany. This remained that way until the Berlin Wall fell in 1989 when Germany became reunited again shortly after in 1990. So, from 1945-1989, during those 44 years, religion was strictly suppressed in East Germany, and as you can see on the map with all the grey areas, to this day still remains largely non-religious or secular. So, Communism wiped out 450 years of religion represented in Catholicism and Protestantism in just 44 years, and now 30 years later, it still hasn't even begun to recover in any meaningful manner.

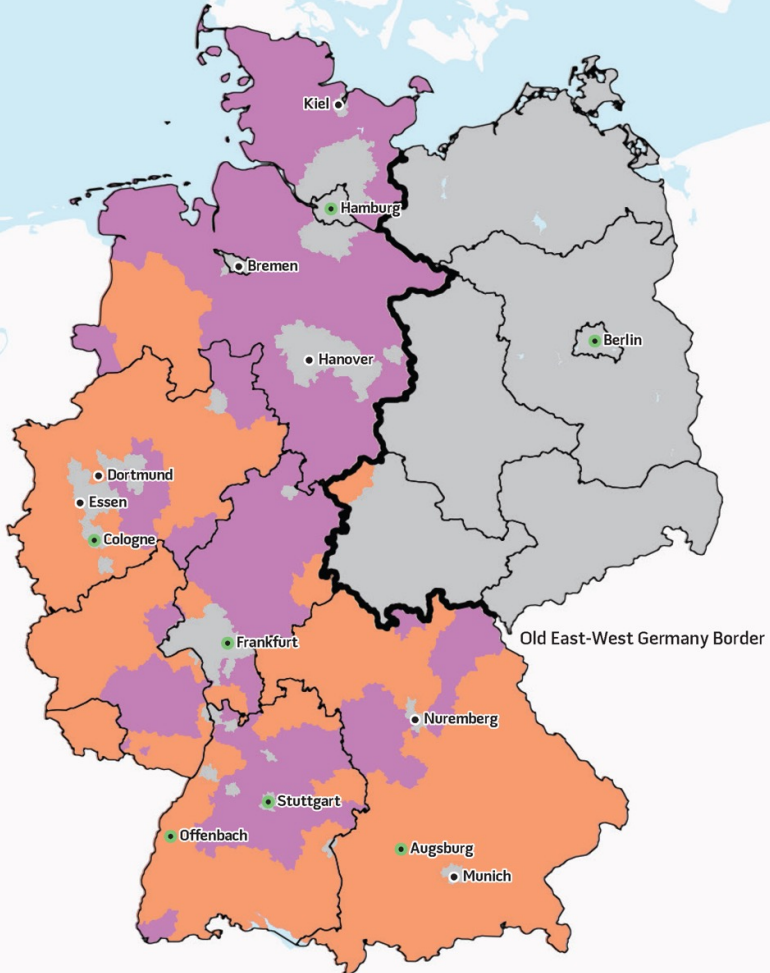
So, Germany is the tale of two pasts, religiously Christian with Protestant and Catholic, and the other purely secular under strict Soviet Communistic control. See the effects here? You should. Also, note that most of the major cities of Germany today are also little gray areas where secularism reigns and church attendance is very low. So, the map also shows an urban and rural difference that plays out religiously as well.

Notice the last color green on the map of Germany dotting the major cities. Yes, these are what I call "Muslim Pocket Cities" and Germany has about a half dozen of them. So, the Muslim population is gaining strength and living in the urban areas of Germany. These are all very interesting patterns and affect the gospel and how and where and to whom we target and preach to. The past 500 years also

MAJOR RELIGIONS IN NIGERIA



MAJOR RELIGIONS IN GERMANY



KEY

- Predominantly Protestant Christian
- Predominantly Catholic Christian
- Predominantly Non Religious
- Muslim pocket city
- Large city



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Map v.2 • Source: Statistical Offices of German States

intersects with the present and recent past to affect the current and future state of Germany for the gospel.

So, now that you are getting the hang of looking at and examining these religious maps, let's take a look at the "Major Religions in Russia" map on the next page. Now you can see some patterns right off the bat looking at the largest country in the world for land area, stretching from Europe all the way to Asia and the Pacific Ocean. It also has Arctic regions in the north with borders of Central Asia and the Middle East on the south. There are some new colors on the map to look at and examine.

The first color you see a lot of on the map is dark gray, which represents Russian Orthodox Christianity. You can see it isn't all evenly distributed, with breaks of the other big colors represented on the map - a darker orange color, which represents spiritual but not religious. This might include local tribalistic, animistic, and other versions of this religion. Many of these areas in Siberia and other places are remote and haven't had much influence from the outside world for many centuries now.

Another new color represented on the map of Russia is a gold color representing Buddhism. These Buddhist areas of Russia are all on the border areas of the Middle East and Central Asia and represent the remnants of the Mongolian Buddhist Empire under Genghis Khan (1162-1227) and Kublai Khan (1215-1294) as they spread across Asia into the Middle East and Europe, creating the largest land empire in Earth's history. Yes, larger than the Roman Empire or Alexander the Great's Greek Empire, etc. So, 800 years later, we see the effects of these remnant Buddhists scattered across the border areas of Russia. Again, history and geography tell the story that religion plays into. The political tides have changed over 800 years of political shifts, but their Buddhist religion didn't really shift much. Interesting to learn from.

Ok, the color green popping up on this map is again representing Islam. Again, look at where the Muslim areas of Russia are, and they are nearest to the Middle East and to Muslim nations in Central Asia. Again, these pockets of Islam have remained unchanged for centuries. There are other small purple-colored box cities representing Protestant cities, with four of

them. Again, they are all appearing very near to the rest of Europe. Finally, in Russia we see a small blue colored triangle shape representing Jewish pocket cities and there are six of them all located very near Europe, with one past Moscow near all the Muslim areas in Central Asia.

Notice the one outlier Jewish pocket city near Vladivostok on the border of China in Asia. This is also a unique accident of history. This is the city of Birobidzhan in the Jewish Autonomous Oblast (JAO), which was established by the Soviet Union in 1934 for Jews to live in. At its peak in 1948, about 50,000 Jews lived in the JAO, which was about 25% of the population. But now it has decreased greatly, with just 4,000 Jews left living in Birobidzhan, which is just 5% of the 75,000 population that live there.

So again, reading the "Major Religions in Russia" map is reading modern Soviet Union history, covering 90 years of history and layers of older history covering 800 years of Buddhism and 1,000 years of Islam. Reaching all these vast places and peoples and religions of Russia will take many different tactics and strategies. One size will not fit all in Russia, and it never has until this day.

Next, we'll switch over to Asia and take a look at the "Major Religions in Indonesia" map on the next page. Indonesia is unique in several ways. First, it's the fourth largest country in the world for population, just after the USA with over 273 million people. So, we should expect some religious diversity, so we get that on the map, and we'll start with that discussion. Second, Indonesia is the largest Muslim country in the world with over 237 million Muslims, and it's the country with the most mosques at 900,000 of them. You can see all the green colors on the majority of the map, so that indicates the Muslim areas.

But you also see some of the purple and orange areas on the map, which indicate Christian areas in the form of Protestant (purple) and Catholic (orange) areas. Indonesia is actually 10.6% Christian in 2020, and it ranks eighth for all countries for most churches, with over 94,000 of them scattered throughout Indonesia's 18,000 islands. We clearly see this on the map, with pocket areas of Christianity in different regions and on different islands.