

The spread of religions assignment



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Short Writing Assignment # 2 Topic: The Spread of Religions 11/20/2011

Question 1: How did Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam spread across the world, and why are they practiced so far from their origins? Answer 1:

Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam spread across the world by use of four common practices. Missionaries spread the faith to new areas. These missionaries adapted their message to the existing culture of the area and adopted elements of existing religious traditions.

Pilgrimage was encouraged and allowed the pilgrim to express devotion through the hardships of travel and expand their world-view. Through the use of relics, people were allowed a personal connection to the story of the religion. They are practiced all over the globe, far from their origins. One reason is forced conversion such as the conversion of the Saxons by Charlemagne under threat of death. Another is diaspora such as when the Romans expelled the Jews from Judea and they scattered all over the earth.

Question 2: How did these three major world religions change and adapt to diverse cultural circumstances? Answer 2: Buddhism adapted the Chinese culture in China and flourished there to an extent that China became the center of pilgrimage and dispersion even though India was the source. It adapted to Chinese culture easily because the Chinese idea of Wuwei was very similar to the idea of Nirvana as taught by Buddha. Christianity adapted to the indigenous religions in many ways.

Just a few: The Church of the Holy Sepulcher was once the site of a shrine to Aphrodite. Christmas is now the celebration of Christ's birth even though no one knows the day he was born. European Christians absorbed their old

pagan tradition of the celebration of Yule into the practice of their new religion. Sufi missionaries adopted local cultural practices into the practice of Islam to attract converts. Question 3: Why did Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam emerge when and where they did?

Answer 3: Each religion spread mostly in near proximity to its source:

Buddhism throughout eastern Asia from India to China then on to Japan and Korea. Islam spread from Arabia through western Asia and across North Africa. Christianity spread across the Mediterranean from Judea then through Europe during the dark ages when Europeans needed a sense of unity and stability after the loss of the same after the fall of the Roman Empire. Europeans then carried it with them when they settled the New World.

Question 4: How did Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam interact with, provide justification for, and conflict with various states and empires in Afro-Eurasia?

Answer 4: Buddhism became the state religion of China as the nobles embraced and patronized it. Christianity became the state religion throughout Europe after the nobles embraced it then forced the conversion of their subjects as in Kiev and the mass conversion of the Saxons under the threat of death. Islam supports trade so Arabian traders spread it throughout their travels.