

## Figure 10.2.15. III-considered missionary activity

Database: World Problems and Issues

Link type: aggravates problems

Network nodes: 43

UIA database: <http://db.uia.org/scripts/sweb.dll/uiaf?DD=PR&CL=2&DR=F3370>



Background: Buddhism, Zoroastrianism and Judaism were once missionary religions. Christian missionary activity began in the early years after the death of Christ. It spread to all parts of the Roman Empire. Christian missionaries pressed eastwards into Russia and Asia as far as China. From the 15th to the 18th century Roman Catholicism became a world religion with the thrust of Spanish and Portuguese colonialism. From 1750 to 1815 the Catholic missions were in decline. Protestantism was slow to undertake missions but this changed with British imperialism and continued to expand during the 19th and 20th centuries. Islam spread from Southeast Asia to the Atlantic coast of Europe and from central Europe to both coasts of central Africa by the middle ages. It currently has missionaries in Europe, the Americas and Africa.

Claim: Christianity, and Islam are contemporary missionary religions. Missions are widespread, having followed or preceded colonialism. Missionary zeal has been the cause of colonial expansion and acted as pretext for war. When colonists arrive, they have the Bible and the indigenous people the land; before long, the situation is reversed.

Counter-claim: Missionaries show selfless dedication to the lives of the people to whom they preach and minister. Christian missionaries were active in Europe extirpating paganism up to the 11th century, although their work had largely been completed during the Dark Ages. The indigenous peoples of Europe, speaking many different languages and divided into numerous tribes, gave up human sacrifice and tribal wars when they embraced Christianity, and they went on to raise the greatest of civilizations with its help. Islam, Judaism and Buddhism in their own missionary zeal advanced social conditions wherever they penetrated. In some war torn areas the only foreigners to stay to offer aid are missionaries.