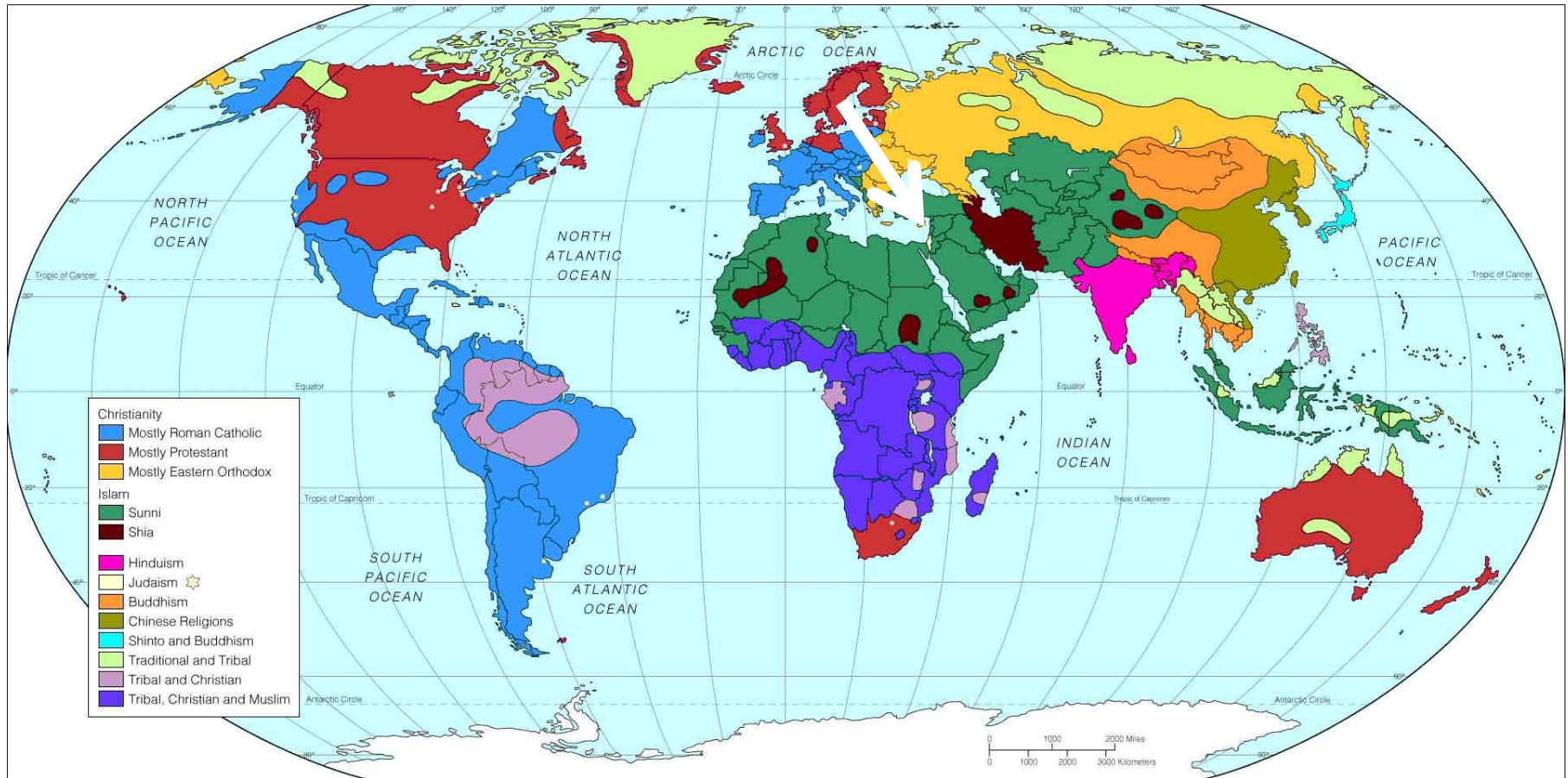


# Wedgewood Baptist Church Celebrating Christmas around the World





- It takes 13 hours to get to Syria by plane from Charlotte
- Average temperature in Syria during Christmas time is 46 degrees compared to average of 53 degrees in Charlotte during Christmas
- The time in Syria is 7 hours ahead of Charlotte

Jesus was born here

I grew up here

Syria is not far from where Jesus was born



4 hour drive from my home town to Bethlehem





- 10% of the population in Syria is Christian or Orthodox
  - The majority of the population is Muslim
  - Muslims believe Jesus is a prophet or messenger sent by God (not the son of God – as believed by Christians)
  - I was raised Muslim but also have Christian relatives. My father worked for a British company in Syria so we also celebrated Christmas as we celebrate here– all I remember are the gifts . . .
- Neighboring country Lebanon has the largest population of Christians in the Middle East. Approximately 35% to 40 % are Christian

## Christmas in Syria



- In Syria, the camel is the Christmas season gift bringer. There is a Nativity story about a young camel blessed by the baby Jesus.

The legend states that it was the youngest camel who had the honor of bringing the Magi to Bethlehem to see the new baby Jesus.

- The trip was very long and after delivering the Wisemen to where the baby Jesus lay, the youngest camel fell down in exhaustion.

The baby Jesus blessed the animal and bestowed upon the camel the gift of eternal life.

- The camel travels the world (like Santa Claus) bringing presents to Syrian children on New Year's Eve (instead of Christmas Eve).

St. George's Syrian Orthodox Church in Zaidal, Syria



Holiday lights in Syria



Christmas tree in Homs, Syria - where my Aunt lives



Head of the Coptic Orthodox Church in Lebanon and Syria, prays on bread during Christmas Eve mass at a Coptic church in Jisr al-Bacha, near Beirut, January 6, 2011.



Coptic Christianity – broke from Catholic church A.D 451  
Coptic Christianity is very similar to Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy