**Vladimir I,** **Saint Vladimir** or **Vladimir the Great**

He was born c. 956 in [Kiev](http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/317542/Kiev) (now Ukraine) and died July 15, 1015. He was the grand prince of [Kiev](http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/317542/Kiev) and first Christian ruler in [Kievan Rus](http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/317574/Kievan-Rus), whose military conquests consolidated the provinces of Kiev and [Novgorod](http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/421188/Veliky-Novgorod) into a single state, and whose Byzantine baptism determined the course of [Christianity](http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/115240/Christianity) in the region.

Vladimir was the son of the Norman-Rus prince Svyatoslav of Kiev.He was made prince of Novgorod in 970. On the death of his father in 972, he was forced to flee to [Scandinavia](http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/526461/Scandinavia), where he enlisted help from an uncle and overcame Yaropolk, another son of Svyatoslav, who attempted to seize the duchy of Novgorod as well as Kiev. By 980 Vladimir had consolidated the Kievan realm from [Ukraine](http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/612921/Ukraine) to the Baltic Sea and had solidified the frontiers against incursions of Bulgarian, Baltic, and Eastern nomads.

Among the churches erected by Vladimir was the Desiatynna in Kiev that became the symbol of the Rus conversion. The Christian Vladimir also expanded education, judicial institutions, and aid to the poor.

Vladimir’s memory was kept alive by innumerable folk ballads and legends.

Source: <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/631547/Vladimir-I>