

Comparative Religion I **World Religions**

RELIGION IN GENERAL

What is Religion?

Religion is "The obedience, service, or adoration rendered to the object of one's worship." (Is God Real to You? Booklet by H.W. Armstrong)

Religion is "The belief in a divine or superhuman power to be obeyed and worshipped." (Webster's Dictionary)

Religion is "A system of holy forms providing an all-embracing life orientation." (PATHS OF FAITH, Hutchinson)
Religion is "The belief that life has purpose is the beginning and essence of religion." (WHAT THE GREAT RELIGIONS BELIEVE, Gaehr)

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FIVE THEORIES OF THE **ORIGIN OF RELIGION**

- Animistic The belief that spirits are in things and creatures
- Nature Worship Elements of nature and creation were worshipped since they were not understood (i.e. Sun, thunder, lightning, moon
- Original Monotheism The belief in one Supreme God above all
- Magic The belief in magical forces that control the forces of nature. Certain people have magical powers

 Wish Fulfillment The belief that there are really no gods at all and that man makes up gods to fulfill his wishes. Man shapes his god his

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Sigmund Freud believed that religion evolved from GUILT.

Marx said that man makes religion not religion makes man.

Religion says that man is sick and each one has its own diagnosis and prognosis. All religions seek to focus on who man is and what is the meaning of life. (Hutchinson)

All religions realize the need to restore man to a higher spiritual state.

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FOUR STRUCTURES OF RELIGION

- Myth How beliefs and practices are transmitted orally, or written - legends, traditions, lore
- Ritual Symbolic actions of believers showing reverence and devotion - example - baptism
- Morality The set of rules do's and don'ts
- Community How the believers interact with one another in a common bond

These structures are the foundations of religion according to Hutchinson.

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Expressions in Religion

- Theoretical How religion expresses itself what is said
- Practical What is done or what adherent is asked to do
- Sociological How that religion interacts with other

Robert Ellwood in MANY PEOPLES, MANY FAITHS brings these points out.

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The Objects (Goals) of Religion

- Within the World Looks for fulfillment in the context of this present world - Examples: Taoism, Tribal
- Beyond the World Looks for fulfillment outside of this present world. Resist the temptations of this world and achieve final release - Examples - Hinduism, Buddhism
- Within and Beyond the World Focus attention on both. Live decently now with hope for tomorrow. Examples -Christianity, Judaism, Islam

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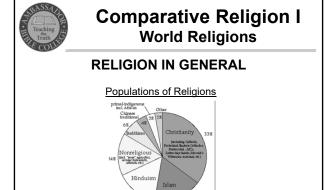
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Similarities in Religions

- Belief in a Supreme Being
- Claim of Divine Incarnation
- Claim of Supernatural Origin of the Founders
- Claim of Divine Revelation
- Claim of Inspired Scripture
- Reports of Miracles
- The Community of Believers is Sacred
- Principle of the Golden Rule
- Hope of a Universal Religion
- 10. Belief in an Afterlife

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RELIGION IN GENERAL Populations in Numbers

- Primal Religions 245 Million
- Hinduism 900 Million
- Buddhism 360 Million
- Chinese Traditional 225 Million
- Shinto 4 Million
- Judaism 14 Million
- Islam 1.3 Billion
- Christianity 2 Billion

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RELIGION IN GENERAL

Three Geographical Locations

The major religions sprung from three general locations in the world

- India Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism (Not in ABC course)
- Far East (Orient) Taoism, Confucianism, **Shinto**
- Near East Judaism, Christianity, Islam

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Biblical Overview of Religion

Genesis 1:1 - Original Monotheism in the beginning

Genesis 1:31 - Everything made was good

Genesis 2:1 – God had guidelines for humans Genesis 2:3 – A day of worship established

Genesis 4:1-4 - A child, Cain is born and sacrifices offered

Genesis 3:1 - Satan, as the serpent, influences Eve - false religion is introduced with Satan as god. Man determines what is good for himself and what is not. He makes God in his image.

II Corinthians 4:4 - Satan has blinded the minds of individuals

Ephesians 2:2 - He is the prince of the power of the air

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Biblical Overview Continued

Revelation 12:9 - Satan has deceived the whole world

II Corinthians 11:13-15 - Satan has his ministers

II Corinthians 11:4 - Another Jesus

Galatians 1:6-9 – Another gospel

Matthew 15:9 - There can be false worship of Christ

Romans 6:16 - Whomsoever you submit to, you are his servant

Revelation 17:1:6,9 - The great mystery religion that intermixes with world

Isaiah 59:1-2 - God did not depart from man, but man from God

Matthew 13:67-17 - Blessed are your eyes 'cause you can see!

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ESSAY QUESTION

What does "Religion" mean to you?

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