

Understanding World Religions

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Dr. Stanley Fleming

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The Instructor

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Gate Breaker Ministries focuses on teaching, equipping, apologetics, missions, and mercy ministries. GBM has started two churches in Pakistan and twenty-three schools for disadvantaged women and slave children.

Dr. Stan is also the mission's director at Capital Christian Center in Meridian, Idaho. In 2009, he helped start Kenya College of Ministry located near Nairobi in which he serves as the dean of academic affairs. He is the author of several books which train Christians about world religions, cults, and the history of the early church.

Kathleen, his wife, currently teaches in public school. They have been happily married since 1980 and have children and grandchildren. Dr. Stan's search for the truth in the early 1970's took him through mind-altering experimentation with drugs, hippie life-style, the occult, and various religious experiences until he found the Lord Jesus Christ. He identifies with the verse in Jeremiah 29:13 "You will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart."

Lesson One

Biblical Christianity and World View

Christianity is unique among the religions of the world. And the reason for its uniqueness lies in the historical figure who stands at its center – Jesus Christ.¹

Alister McGrath

If the Christian's hope is in a dead Christ who was martyred because He threatened the existing religious establishment, then the Christian is in the same boat with the Muslim, the Buddhist and the followers of Confucius. Mohammed is dead. Buddha is dead. Confucius is dead. But the Bible affirms that Christ is alive; and because He lives, the Christian will live also, eternally.²

Fritz Ridenour

INTRODUCTION

A. The word “_____”.

1. “Christians” - Acts 11:26
2. “Christian” – Acts 26:28; 1 Peter 4:16
3. (5546) Christianos (khris-tee-an-os) - a Christian, i.e. follower of Christ. From (5547) Christos (khris-tos) – anointed, i.e. the Messiah, an epithet of Jesus. From (5548) chrío (khree'-o) – to smear or rub with oil, i.e. (by implication) to consecrate to an office or religious service. (References from Strong's Concordance)

B. The word “_____”.

1. *Byblos* – Ancient Phoenician city from which papyrus was exported.
2. *Biblos* – Greek word for book; *Biblia* – books.
3. “It is believed that the Greek word *Biblia* was first applied to the sacred books by John Chrysostom, patriarch of Constantinople from A.D. 398 to 404.”³

¹ Alister McGrath, *A Passion for the Truth: The Intellectual Coherence of Evangelicalism* (Downers Grove, IL: Inter Varsity Press, 1996), 25.

² Fritz Ridenour, *So What's the Difference?* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 2001), 21.

³ John D. Davis, *Davis Dictionary of the Bible – Fourth Revised Edition* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1977), 100.

C. Biblical Christianity:

1. “‘Biblical’ means that the Christian believer searches seriously and carefully for the meaning of the Bible on its own terms, not changing its meaning to fit the times. Biblical Christians approach the Bible with reverence and respect, because they believe it is true and authoritative – that it contains God’s very words.”⁴
2. Romans 12:2 “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind”.

SIZE OF WORLD RELIGIONS

INFLUENCES OF RELIGION

- A. Thinking / world view
- B. Rituals / customs
- C. Education / life goals
- D. Science / industry
- E. Laws / social action
- F. Art / literature

TRUTH ISSUES

- A. Moral truth issues:
- B. Domestic truth issues:
- C. Objective truth issues:

⁴ Ridenour, 14.

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE ESSENTIAL DOCTRINAL TRUTHS?⁵

1. The inspiration of Scripture and the inerrancy of the Bible.
2. The Trinity
3. The deity of Jesus Christ.
4. The virgin birth of Jesus Christ.
5. The substitutionary atonement of Jesus Christ's death.
6. The literal resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.
7. Salvation is a gift which comes through faith in Christ alone.
8. The literal return of Jesus Christ (The Second Coming).

There are other scriptural truths that Christians believe which are too time-consuming to outline here. Some examples are the existence of Heaven (Matt. 5:12); the existence of Hell (Matt. 25:34, 41); Eternal Judgment (Heb. 9:27, Heb. 6:2); Repentance from Dead Works (Heb. 6:1, 2:38); Water Baptism (Acts 2:38, Mt. 3, Acts 10:47), the Baptism of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:2-4, 8:15-17, 19:6); the Gifts of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12:1-6), and others.

Note: While Christians vary in some areas, there is a general sense of agreement about the essential doctrines of Christianity highlighted in this lesson. Christians need to stop arguing about when the rapture will occur or the baptism of the Holy Spirit or other important - but non urgent issues - and start concentrating upon defending and promoting the main tenets of the Christian faith.

The various streams and schools of thought within Christianity were once thought to be strength. However, in today's climate of diversity the strength of Christianity is in what unites us rather than what separates us. We need to once again bring to the forefront of Christianity the essential doctrines that make us Christians.

CHRISTIAN IMPACT

- A. Statistics
- B. What is Christianity?

RELIGIOUS IMPACT

- A. The 10 / 40 Window
- B. The spread of religion

⁵ S. F. Fleming, *Gate Breakers: Book One: Answering Cults with Prayer, Love, and Witnessing* (Columbus, GA: TEC Publications, 2003), 10-15.

Lesson Two

The Authenticity of the Bible

"When we say the Bible is the Word of God, we do not mean that all the words are God's words. Some are the words of men, angels, demons, and even Satan. However, it is in its entirety the Word of God in the sense that God, through the agency of the Holy Spirit, divinely directed and inspired the writings of it and supernaturally controlled its overall construction, design, and recording of contents. In other words, it is not the product of human devising, manipulation, or imagination, but God was the author and architect behind its creation from the beginning."⁶

-- W.R. Kimball

INTRODUCTION

- A. Psalm 68:11 "The Lord gave the word; great was the company of those who proclaimed it."

I. WHY IS THE BIBLE SO UNIQUE?

- A. Time Span:
- B. Various Writers:
- C. Where and When:
- D. Languages:
- E. Survival:
- F. United Message:
- G. Popularity:
- H. Fulfilled Prophecy:

II. IN WHAT WAY DOES THE BIBLE ITSELF SAY THAT WE ARE TO REGARD IT??

- A. As _____ by God:

- 1. 2 Timothy 3:16-17

⁶W. R. Kimball, "Is The Bible The Word of God," a tract published by Christian Equippers International, S. Lake Tahoe, CA, 1985, p. 3.

B. As _____ by the Holy Spirit:

1. 2 Peter 1:20-21
2. 2 Samuel 23:2

C. As the _____ Word of God:

1. Isaiah 40:8
2. Matthew 24:35

D. As the _____ Word of God:

1. Deuteronomy 4:2
2. Jude 3
3. Revelation 22:18-19

E. As intricately tied together with the _____ of the Lord God Himself.

1. John 1:1, 14
2. Revelation 19:13

III. WHY IS FAITH SO NECESSARY FOR BELIEVING THE WORD OF GOD?

A. Christianity is built on Faith:

B. The Bible is one long story about Faith and Faithfulness or the lack of them:

C. The Bible tells us the importance of mixing the Word with Faith: Hebrews. 4:2

IV. HOW ACCURATE IS THE BIBLE?

A. One of the central doctrines of Christianity is that the Bible is the inspired Word of God and that Scripture is infallible. Yet, what does this really mean? The Bible is certainly inspired by God. As 2nd Timothy 3:16 says,

“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God.” It can be used for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, etc. There is no other book like it in the entire world. It is the Word of God. There are no mistakes in the Bible when it comes to doctrine, revelation and Scriptural authority in the life of the believer. However, there are some scribal errors that have been passed down from the original autographs, yet the Bible was infallible and without error when it was originally received from the Spirit of God to the writers of the manuscripts. That being said, Christians should think about how they represent the Bible to an unbeliever or someone from a different religion when it comes to the issue of infallibility. Once again, it was infallible when it was first delivered, but men have made mistakes. There are very few, but it would be unwise to say that there are none. Consider the following:

The word inerrant means infallible, but Christians need to be careful how they represent the Bible. When we say the Bible is “God breathed” and thus infallible, we mean at its origin. People made mistakes in copying, grammar, spelling, translation, and handing it down over the thousands of years. The mistakes are minimal, but it would be unwise not to admit them. A well trained cultist can embarrass and possibly confuse a Christian who dogmatically says “no errors.” They may simply turn to an isolated verse in which an imperfection does exist and demand an explanation.⁷

- B. The example of 2 Chronicles 21:20 - 22:2 and 2 Kings 8:26 in the King James Translation. (Age of the king)
- C. The example of 2 Samuel 15:7 (Years of Absalom’s rebellion)
- D. The example of Matthew 27:28 and John 19:2. (Color of Jesus’ robe)

Note: None of these scribal errors or differences have anything to do with doctrine, revelation, or the authority of Scripture in the life of the believer.

V. HOW CAN WE DEFEND AGAINST ACCUSATIONS OF CONTRADICTIONS?

- A. *“What constitutes a contradiction?* The law of non-contradiction, which is the basis of all logical thinking, states that a thing cannot be both *a* and *non-a* at the same time, in the same place, and in the same manner. It cannot be both raining and not raining at the same time and in the same location”⁸

⁷ S. F. Fleming, *Gate Breakers: Book One* (Columbus, GA: TEC, 2003), 35.

⁸ Josh McDowell, *A Ready Defense*, (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1993),

B. Some common mistakes:

1. Not giving the author the benefit of the doubt.
 - a) Example: The Gospel writers emphasize various aspects of the resurrection because they reported on what was important to them.
2. Failing to distinguish between a contradiction and a difference.
 - a) Example: The two aspects of how Judas died in Matthew 27:5 and Acts 1:18 by those who knew him suggest that there was more to his death than we realize.
3. Forgetting the limitations of translation.
 - a) Example: The supposed contradiction of Acts 9:7 and Acts 22:9 is cleared up when we investigate the Greek word "akouo" because it is constructed differently in the two accounts.

VI. WHAT IS THE MANUSCRIPT AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE FOR THE OLD TESTAMENT?

A. The recorded accuracy in copying by the Jewish scribes:

1. The Talmudist Period (AD 100 - 500): The Talmudists were Jewish scribes that have been praised for their almost perfect accuracy of copying manuscripts to be passed on to future generations. While there are currently no known "complete" manuscripts of the Old Testament from this period, the fragments that exist from the O.T. as well as other products (copies of ancient Egyptian books, for example) show the most expert skill of the Talmudists for minor detail
2. The Massoretic Period (AD 500 - 900): Before the discovery of the Dead Sea scrolls in 1947, the oldest complete manuscript of the Old Testament (Hebrew Bible) was dated A.D. 900. Since the Old Testament was completed in about 400 B.C. this gave about a 1300 year gap. The manuscript from A.D. 900 is known as the "Massoretic Text" because it was the product of the Massorites, a group of Jewish scribes that are respected for their skills of proofreading and their highly developed system of safeguards against scribal errors. The Hebrew Massoretic Text was copied from a manuscript dating about A.D. 100. Since the A.D. 100 copy no longer existed, the question of accuracy was raised prior to the discovery of the Dead Sea scrolls. (Massora is the Hebrew word for "tradition").⁹

⁹ S.F. Fleming, *Gate Breakers: Book One*, (Columbus, GA: TEC, 2003), 26-27.

- B. The Dead Sea scrolls: (150 B.C. - A.D. 70). In 1947 a wandering Bedouin goat herdsman discovered caves in the side of the cliffs west of the Dead Sea. It has been called the greatest archeological discovery of the century. The caves were storage units for pots containing leather scrolls.

The scrolls revealed a Jewish communal society called Qumran that existed from about 150 B.C. to A.D. 70. It was much like a monastery. They farmed the land, and they spent their time studying and copying the Hebrew Scriptures. When they realized that the Romans were going to invade their land, they put the scrolls in pots and hid them in the caves. There were approximately 40,000 inscribed fragments discovered. From these fragments more than 500 books have been reconstructed. Fragments of almost every book of the Old Testament were discovered. The most outstanding find was the earliest manuscript copy yet known of the complete book of Isaiah, dating approximately 125 B.C.

The significance of this find to the authenticity of the Old Testament is dramatic. Before the discovery of the Dead Sea manuscripts, the Massoretic manuscript (A.D. 900) was being criticized for authenticity and accuracy. However, the Dead Sea scrolls — being 1,000 years earlier — proved the exactness with which the Talmudists and Massorites copied the Scriptures. The changes in a thousand years were minor and basically had to do with spelling (natural language progression) and conjunctions.¹⁰

- C. The archeological evidence

VII. HOW DOES THE BIBLE BEAR WITNESS TO ITSELF?

- A. Through the referral to many Old Testament scriptures:

- * Matt. 19:4 "Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning . . ."
- * Matt. 21:42 "Jesus said to them, 'Have you never read in the *Scriptures*'"
- * Matt. 22:29 "Jesus answered . . . 'You are mistaken, not knowing the *Scripture*'"
- * Matt. 24:37 "But as the days of Noah were . . ."
- * Matt. 26:54 "How then could the *Scriptures* be fulfilled?"
- * Matt. 26:56 "But all this was done that the *Scriptures* of the prophets . . ."
- * Luke 24: 25-27,32 [Jesus talking to the two men on the road to Emmaus]
- * John 5:39 "You search the *Scriptures*, for in them . . ."
- * John 7:38 "He who believes in Me, as the *Scripture* has said, out of his heart. ."
- * John 10:35 "and the *Scripture* cannot be broken"
- * Acts 17:2 "Then Paul . . . reasoned with them from the *Scriptures*"
- * Acts 17:2 "and searched the *Scriptures* daily to find out whether these things"
- * Acts 18:28 "refuted the Jews publicly, showing from the *Scriptures* that Jesus"

¹⁰ Ibid., 27-28.

- * Rom. 1:2 "which He promised before through . . . the *Holy Scriptures*"
- * Rom. 4:3 "For what does the Scripture say? 'Abraham believed God,'"
- * 1 Cor. 15:3 "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures"

Other Examples: Rom. 9:17, 10:11, 11:2, 15:4, 16:26; Gal. 3:8, 3:22, 4:30;
1 Tim. 5:18; 2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20, 21.

- B. Through the connection of theme.

- C. Through the fulfillment of prophecy.

VIII. WHAT IS THE MANUSCRIPT EVIDENCE FOR THE NEW TESTAMENT?

- A. Over 24,000 manuscripts from the early centuries after Christ: 5,300 Greek, 10,000 Latin Vulgate, and 9,300 other early versions.

- B. The writings of the second and third century church fathers. They quoted the books of the New Testament so much that all but eleven verses can be collected together from their writings.

- C. Discoveries of fragments of Greek documents potentially from the New Testament book of Timothy found among the Dead Sea Scrolls.

IX. HOW DID THE NEW TESTAMENT CANON GET CHOSEN?

- A. "The example of the Old Testament 'canon' encouraged the gradual collection of a list of Christian writings which should constitute the standard or rule of the churches These were the books read publicly in the congregations and regarded as having special authority."¹¹

- B. The gathering and clarification of authenticity took place over several centuries. Around AD 200, a group of books, known as the Muratorian Canon, arose. These included many of our current N.T. books. By the early third century a consensus had been reached as to the authenticity of most of the canon. By AD 300, the only books still disputed were James, 2 Peter, 2 and 3 John, Jude, and the authorship of Revelation. By this time, the church had spread so far that there was, in a sense, an Eastern Church and western church. By AD 367, the Eastern Church canonized the twenty-seven books of the New Testament as we know it

¹¹*Eerdman's Handbook To The History of Christianity*, ed. Tim Dowley (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdman's Publishing Co., 1977), p. 105.

today. In the West the canon lists were approved by the African Council of Hippo in AD 393 and then at the church council of Carthage in AD 397.

X. WHAT ARE OTHER EVIDENCES?

- A. Archaeological accuracy:
- B. Scientific accuracy:
- C. Historical accuracy:
- D. Testimonies of Great men and women // martyrs:
- E. Its transforming power to change lives:
- F. The Resurrection of Christ:
- G. The Witness of Scripture to our human spirit:

Lesson Three

Eastern Philosophies and Religions

Later on in the ministry, the lady suddenly brought up the fact that for two years she had practiced Qi Gong (pronounced Chi Gung; a Chinese Taoism-based system of deep breathing exercise which is demonic) for health reasons. She recalled feeling the same energy force movement in her chest while practicing Qi Gong in the past. Now, we knew the evil spirit was forced to show its presence under the power of the Holy Spirit. Thus, we prayed a deliverance prayer for her. At first, we prayed for the Lord's forgiveness for her sins in practicing Qi Gong. Then in the name of the Lord we drove the demon out. At that moment, she felt a stream of energy leaving her body through her head. We then prayed for the filling of the Holy Spirit in her. A few moments later, her chest pain was gone. Instead, she could feel a warm stream flowing gently throughout her body. We gave thanks to the Lord. The Holy Spirit had delivered this young woman from demonic bondage and filled her up with life and love. That night started a new page in her life. She saw the light of the Lord!¹²

Pastor Dennis Balcombe

INTRODUCTION

A simplistic, yet generalized understanding of religion in China is this: The term for religion in China is *tsung-chiao* (meaning lineage of teachings). The common people of China have traditionally held these three lineages of teachings: the _____ system of ethics for public life; the _____ system of rituals and attitudes towards nature; and the _____ system of salvation concerning the afterlife. The teachings of these three have highly influenced the masses of China and have been incorporated into the social system. The teachings have also gained wide approval in other Asian countries and cultures as well. Confucius regulates the rites of passage and moral behavior in public life. Taoism regulates the festivals celebrated in village and urban society, and offers prayer for the distressed. Buddhism regulates funeral rituals, thoughts of the after-life, and persuades people to gain meritorious karma.¹³

I. CONFUCIANISM.

A. Confucius: Life and Times.

1. Just prior to the time of Confucius, China was immersed in barbaric warfare. An earlier period of social harmony called "The Ritual-

¹² Dennis Balcombe, "Woman at a Dead Alley Sees the Light of the Lord", *The Challenge of China* – Ministry Report of Revival Christian Ministry, Hong Kong (October 2000): 3.

¹³ The concept is partially from Michael Saso, "Chinese Religions", in John R. Hinnells, editor, *A Handbook of Living Religions* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, 1987), 344. Yet, in Saso's piece, he tends only towards positive aspects of these influences and not any negative or demonic strongholds.

Music Culture” had deteriorated into various armies killing hundreds of thousands of innocent men, women, and children.

2. _____ (551–479 BC) was born the youngest of 11 children into a humble family that lived in the principality of Lu, the modern day site of Shantung. At age 15 he went on a quest for learning. His marriage at age 20 eventually ended in divorce, but it produced a son and daughter. He became a teacher in his early twenties and disciples were attracted to his wisdom. He became committed to the rites of The Ritual-Music Culture and sought to restore its tenants within society.¹⁴ When 50 years old, he became the Prime Minister of Lu and instituted moral reforms that became an immediate success. Unfortunately, after a falling out with superiors, he resigned and traveled for 13 years around China trying to implement his political and social reforms. He spent the last five years of his life writing about individual _____ and the potential for harmony in society. He died at age 73 having become the most important teacher in Chinese culture.
3. Meng-tzu (Mencius – Latin; 372-289 BC) became a devout follower of Confucianism and second only to Confucius in his teachings. After studying with Confucius’ grandson, Tzu-ssu, Mencius traveled from state to state, like Confucius had done previously, trying to rally support for Confucianism. A key doctrine that he developed was *hsin-hsing* (_____), which refers to the original goodness of man.¹⁵ He compared the potential goodness of man to the natural flow of water. Water flows downhill naturally, but it can be forced uphill or splashed on one’s head as a result of external pressure. In the same way, man’s nature is basically good but can be forced into being bad by external pressure.

BIBLICAL INSIGHT: ORIGINAL SIN

- Psalm 51:5 “Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me.”
- Job 14:1,4 “Man who is born of woman is of few days and full of trouble . . . who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? No one!”
- John 3:6 “That which is born of flesh is flesh.”

¹⁴ The Ritual-Music Culture succeeded for the first four centuries of the Chou dynasty and basically referred to the customs of society. They should be in accordance like harmonious music. See A. C. Graham, *Disputers of the Tao: Philosophical Argument in Ancient China* (La Salle, IL: Open Court, 1989), 11.

¹⁵ Through inner reflection and cultivation, a person can supposedly realize his or her good nature and strive for heaven in the heart and mind nature; Thomas I. S. Leung, “Confucianism”, a chapter within Dean C. Halverson, editor, *The Compact Guide to World Religions* (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House Publishers, 1996), 73.

- Romans 5:12 “Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned.”

B. History.

1. 551–479 BC: Life of Confucius.
2. 372-289 BC: Life of Mencius.
3. 206 BCE-220 AD: Han Dynasty embraced Confucianism.
4. 124 BC: Imperial college established to teach Confucian Code and its doctrines. Culture and politics integrated with Confucian thinking.
5. 2nd Century AD: Buddhism introduced to China. By 500-850 AD, it is severely challenging Confucianism in the ruling class.
6. 960-1368: In the Sung Dynasty a movement known as Neo-Confucianism became dominant. This integrated Buddhist teaching into Confucianism. This existed until the twentieth century.
7. 1911-1976: Anti-Confucius campaigns birthed by intellectuals involved with the Republic of China (1911), the May Fourth Movement (1919), the revolution and establishment of the People’s Republic of China, and the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) attempted to destroy Confucianism from Chinese life and society.
8. 1980-present: Scholars reaffirming Confucianism, especially in areas of work ethic and family loyalty.

C. The _____ of Confucius: The following shows worship of Confucius scattered throughout Chinese history: 195 BC - The Emperor offered animal sacrifice at the tomb of the dead teacher; 1 AD - Confucius was given the title “Duke Ni, All-complete and Illustrious”; 57 – Regular sacrifice ordered at Imperial and provincial colleges; 89 – Given the imperial rank of Earl; 267 – More elaborate sacrifices decreed four times a year; 492 – Canonized as “The Venerable, the Accomplished Sage”; 555 – Sacrifices ordered at every prefecture capital in China; 740 – Statue of Confucius moved to stand beside ancient kings; 1068-1086 – Confucius raised to rank of full emperor; 1906 – Imperial decree raises Confucius to rank of Co-assessor with the deities of Heaven and Earth.¹⁶

D. Sources and Books: Nine books were written either by Confucius, Mencius, Tzu-Ssu or various disciples and have become the core for understanding it. *The Analects* is considered the most important relating sayings of Confucius and his disciples. *The Book of Changes (I Ching)*, written by Confucius has become famous but is more of a secret, unsolved riddle.

¹⁶ The information for this comes from Robert E. Hume, *The World’s Living Religions* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, revised edition, 1959), 117-118. However, not all would agree that Confucius was ever actually given the rank of deity. For instance, one encyclopedia specifically says, “The man Confucius never became divinized.” See, John Bowker, editor, *The Oxford Dictionary of World Religions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 232.

E. Teachings of Confucius.

1. _____: This is the golden rule or rule of reciprocity of Confucius. Do not do anything to others that you would not have them do to you. This addresses a man's need to be good, humane, and benevolent to others.
2. Chun-tzu: Translated, this means to be a gentleman, a superior man, or a man-at-his-best. It couples the idea of Jen in that it answers the "how" of the golden rule.
3. Cheng-ming: It is the concept of rectifying (setting people right). For a society to be properly ordered, everyone must act his part.¹⁷ Confucius said, "Let the ruler be a ruler, the subject a subject, the father a father, the son a son . . ." (*The Analects*, XII:3)
4. Te: The word means power (to rule), but Confucius meant more than the physical might. Rather, it is to include the _____ that inspires obedience through noble example.
5. Li: This term has a variety of meanings depending upon application: propriety, reverence, courtesy, ritual, or an ideal standard of conduct.
6. _____: The arts of peace that include art, music, and poetry are virtuous and should be integrated throughout society.

F. Is it a Philosophy or Religion? In the strictest sense, Confucianism is both a religion and a philosophy, but it is not a religion in the Western sense. It appears Confucius did believe in a Supreme Being, but his interest was more with answering the question: What should people do to live correctly with each other? Some of his concepts were humanistic and fit with humanism of today. Those who worship Confucius obviously made a religion out of it but went beyond what Confucius taught.

BIBLICAL INSIGHT: EVANGELISM HINTS

- You can agree that God originally created people and all creation to be good (Genesis 1:31). However, today we see not only the good in humanity but we also see the results of sin.
- One graphic example of the bad in mankind was the incident at Tiananmen Square on June 4, 1989 in which the Communist government of China crushed the demonstrations for democracy. Regarding it, a Chinese student responded, "Christianity is a very

¹⁷ Josh McDowell and Don Stewart, *Understanding Non-Christian Religions* (San Bernadino, CA: Here's Life Publishers, Inc., 1982), 86.

realistic religion because unlike our traditional Chinese religions, it starts from the premise that what is wrong with the world is mankind, not circumstances – this attracts us!” A Chinese professor added, “June 4 impressed upon the people that man is bad; but all the Chinese religions teach that man is good, so they have to turn to Christianity. It is the only realistic religion.”¹⁸

- Humanity’s core problem is separation from a righteous, all-good, omnipotent God because of sin and iniquity (Isaiah 59:2). However, we can be reconciled to God through His Son Jesus Christ. (2 Corinthians 5:18; Colossians 1:21-22)

Question Corner:

- (1) The teachings of Confucius were a reaction to what within society?
- (2) Why is it that people deify someone like Confucius?

II. TAOISM (ALSO DAOISM)

A. Lao-tzu and Chuang-tzu: Lao-tzu was a contemporary of Confucius. Little is known of him and some suggest he was a myth. Legend has it that he once confronted Confucius. He was opposed to Confucius’ teachings and the ancient Ritual-Music Culture of the Chou dynasty, thinking these were responsible for the current chaos in China. Although Lao-Tzu was also interested in societal harmony, he felt that imposing external moral could not produce it. Rebellion would be a natural reaction. He wrote the *Tao Te Ching* (also known as *Lao-tzu*), a short book that became the central teaching of Taoism. The philosophical view was at odds with Confucianism. Whereas a Confucian might ask, “What should I do?” the Taoist would ask, “What [?]”¹⁹ Chuang-tzu (399-295 BCE) became the chief promoter of Lao-tzu and Taoism, as Mencius did for Confucius and Confucianism. He wrote 33 books and placed emphasis on the mystical nature of Tao and the individual’s ability to transform himself or herself.

B. Impact: Like Confucianism, the teachings of Taoism greatly influenced Chinese and Asian thinking. Also, various rulers promoted Lao-tzu to rank of emperor and offered sacrifices, but others banished Taoism or put it second to Confucianism. However, aspects of Taoist teachings degenerated into magic, alchemy, quack medicines, and seeking islands where the pill (or herb) of immortality could be found.

C. Teachings.

¹⁸ Ron MacMillan, “China’s University Students Embracing Christianity,” *News Network International*, Santa Ana, CA (January 17, 1990): 3.

¹⁹ *The Oxford Dictionary of World Religions*, 951.

1. _____: In Confucianism, it was simply the teaching or “the way” that people should follow, but in Taoism it has much more emphasis. It is the original source and stability of all things, the un-produced Producer, and the inexpressible way of ultimate reality by which one should live. Paradoxically, the *Tao* is to be sought but is virtually unknowable.
2. The Te: Within each object is a pattern of uniqueness and individuality that connects with the *Tao*. By finding it, we realize the nature, order, and stability in our own life and society. As we are true to it in our lives, we find harmony. We should resist trying to impose our will upon others or being conformed by theirs.
3. Wu-Wei: This is the principle of inactivity. Since the *Te* within resists imposed conformity to another’s will, we should take no unnatural, coercive action but allow nature (the *Tao*) to take its own course. We take the action of active inaction and this will produce harmony.
4. The Yin Yang: The two opposing yet balancing forces of nature. Examples might include: female / male; cold / hot; weak / strong; dark / light; good / evil; etc.
5. Other teachings made popular in various neo-Taoist revivals: (1) Inner Hygiene – includes not only diet and gymnastics but working with deities to control one’s body functions; (2) Proper breathing (*Chi*) and circulation of breath which can bring with it the forces of the cosmos; (3) Appropriate sexuality techniques can retain energy; (4) Alchemy; (5) Moral behavior in harmony with the *Tao*; and (6) Searching for the Isle of the Blessed wherein lies immortality.
6. The Five Elements of the Tao:

The Tao gave birth to the One. (T’ai-chi or primordial breath)
 The One gave birth to the Two. (Yin and Yang)
 The Two gave birth to the Three (Watery underworld, earth, & sky)
 The Three gave birth to myriad creatures.

BIBLICAL INSIGHT: JESUS IS THE WAY

- a. John 14:6 “Jesus said to them, ‘I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.’”
- b. Ephesians 2:17-18 “And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near. For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father.”
- c. Hebrews 10:19-20 “Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living

way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh.”

D. Falun Gong:

1. Modern day cult.
2. Li Hongzhi teaches *Qi*, circles of inner energy, people becoming gods, supernatural occult miracles, and aliens running the earth.

E. Feng Shui: (Wind Waker) the use of geomancy (divination) incorporated with the five elements of the *Tao* to the best site for buildings, graves, temples, or design of such. The geomancer is supposed to identify the best topographical sites where the positive and negative forces of *Yin / Yang* come together to most benefit the customer. Inclusive is the idea of the vital breath (*Chi*) that circulates through the landscape or building.

Question Corner:

- (1) How do Confucianism and Taoism differ in approach to human chaos?
- (2) What does Buddhism add to Asian cultures that these religions or philosophies do not?

BIBLICAL INSIGHT: EVANGELISM HINTS

- Although Taoists teach that the *Tao* is unknowable, they also believe that its morality cannot be coerced upon someone. They say the way of *Tao* is “soft.” Christians then can use the *soft* approach of Jesus. When He was arrested, tried, persecuted, and even crucified, He did not resist, but asked the Father to forgive his persecutors (Luke 23:34). Even though He went with the flow of things and did not resist, he still accomplished everything on our behalf.²⁰
- With regard to being able to personally know God or even the Way, point out to the Taoist that one of the founders of their religion even struggled with concepts while seeking for truth. The answer to his inquiry would be the Lord Jesus Christ, born several hundred years later. Chuang Tzu wrote the following:

If there is no other, there will be no I. If there is no I, there will be none to make distinctions. This seems to be true. But what causes these varieties? It might seem as if there would be a real Lord, but there is no indication of His existence. One may believe He exists, but we do not see His form. He may have reality, but no form.²¹

²⁰ Kent Kedl and Dean C. Halverson, *The Compact Guide to World Religions*, 231.

²¹ Yu-Lan Fung, *Chuang-Tzu* (New York: Paragon Book Reprint Corp., 1964), 46.

Lesson Four

Hinduism

In July, right as I was getting more deeply involved with the ashram, I had a very extraordinary experience. On one of those hot, humid Indian nights filled with mosquitos, I was sitting in my hotel room and reading Rabi Maharaj's book, Death of a Guru. Suddenly I saw a brilliantly shining being standing in the hotel room, and He said to me with a mighty voice, 'I want you to become my disciple.' I immediately understood that Jesus had called me, yet I really didn't know what to do with it. I went to Rajneesh and told him what had happened to me. As I was talking to him about this experience, I could feel a kind of very warm energy or light radiating from me and I saw that Rajneesh was very irritated, and even startled as he looked at me. He was unable to speak. At that moment I could see that he was not a master like Jesus Christ, as he claims. It was at this time I decided to become a disciple of Jesus.²²

Eckart Flother

INTRODUCTION

I. THE SIZE AND STRENGTH OF MODERN HINDUISM.

II. THE FOUR PERIODS OF HINDU HISTORY.

- A. Pre-Vedic Period (3000 – 1500 B.C.): Dravidians, the earliest known settlers of the Indian Peninsula practiced animism. A form of idol worship similar to witchcraft.
- B. _____ (1500 – 500 B.C.): Aryan invaders brought their religion known as Vedism.
 2. Oral Texts written down: Example is the Rig-Veda containing 1,028 hymns, prayers, and chants.
 3. _____:
 4. Emergence of a Social Caste System: It was outlawed in 1949, but it still poses a great problem.
 - a. Brahmans – priests / scholars.
 - b. Kyhatriyas – warriors / soldiers.
 - c. Vaishyas – farmers / merchants.

²² Walter Martin, *The Kingdom of the Cults* (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House, 1985), 360.

- d. Sudras – peasants / servants.
- e. Harlyan – outcasts / untouchables.

C. Upanishadic Period (700 – 200 B.C.): Rebellion against the Brahman caste and the Vedic system of salvation.

1. The Upanishad writings.
2. Emphasis on philosophic monism.
3. Emergence of guru / disciple relationship.
4. _____ Teachings of Karma, Dharma, Transmigration (similar to reincarnation except one might return as an animal instead of a person), Samsara, and Moksha tell the people that everyone, regardless of caste or position of birth, can attain salvation and unite with Brahman.

D. Revival of Vedanic Literature (200 B.C. – 200 A.D.): The old theology and new theology mixed together into new teachings and literature.

1. Formation of the Trimutri: Three gods arise from the literature to take dominance over the lesser deities. Brahma the creator, Vishnu the preserver, and Shiva the destroyer. One Hindu priest told me that they all work together in the process of life: “It takes a creator to create sperm & ovum. It takes a preserver to preserve the baby growing in the womb. It takes the destroyer for pain in child birth showing god’s power.”²³ Each of these gods has his own followers in Hinduism, but it is Vishnu that gains the most followers. Hinduism teaches that Vishnu has appeared to men in nine different incarnations at various times and that there is one more coming. It was when he was supposedly incarnated as the Lord Krishna that he captured the heart of most Hindus. It is the Lord Krishna (Sri Krishna), then, that actually has become the main deity of Hinduism.
2. _____: This was created as a portion of a larger work called the *maha bhanta*. The *Gita* is considered the most revered book of Hinduism. Basically, it is a long poem explaining a lengthy conversation between the warrior Arjuna and his charioteer, Krishna. Arjuna is perplexed because he is pitted against his own kinsmen in the battle. Arjuna explains to Krishna that he has decided not to kill his kinsmen in war, but Krishna proceeds to exhort him to forsake personal feelings and do what is right (DHARMA). The overarching motif in the Bhagavad-Gita is intense spiritual devotion, an idea most prevalent in Hinduism today. This

²³ Essel, Hindu Monastery of Africa, Accra, Ghana, 2003.

spiritual devotion to Krishna is called bhakti and is one of the main paths of salvation in Hinduism.

BIBLICAL INSIGHT: DOCTRINE OF CHRIST

- 2 John 9 “Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son.”
- John 7:16 “My doctrine is not Mine, but His who sent Me.”
- John 8:31-32 “Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, ‘If you abide in My Word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.’”
- All doctrine must be evaluated in comparison to the doctrine of Christ because only through this can one have the Father and the Son.

III. MODERN IMAGES OF HINDUISM.

A. Pictures and Statues of Idols are Everywhere:

B. Reverence of Animals: Example: Cows and all their products (milk, curd, clarified butter, urine, and dung) are considered holy. In the sacred city of Banaras, people feel that each cow atom contains 330 million gods. Cow feces are daily used to clean floors. In Bengal, diluted cow dung is used to replace sacred water from the Ganges. Dung ash is smeared on the bodies of Hindu ascetics. The spiritual strength of Shiva’s consort (wife) is transferred to the individual wearing ash. It is not rare to see a person, reach out and wet their hand while the cow is urinating and bring it to the lips and rub it through their hair. Cow urine is used to remove tumors, cure spirit diseases, and other supposed purifying medicines. The great paradox is that feces from any other animal would be considered pollution, but not that of the sacred cow.²⁴

BIBLICAL INSIGHT: IDOLATRY

- Isaiah 45:20a-22 “They have no knowledge, who carry the wood of their carved image, and pray to a god that cannot save . . . Look to Me, and be saved, all you ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other.”
- Jeremiah 7:18 “The children gather wood, the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead dough, to make cakes for the queen of heaven; and they pour out drink offerings to other gods, that they may provoke Me to anger.”
- Jeremiah 10:8 “A wooden idol is a worthless doctrine.”
- Romans 1:20-25

²⁴ Frank J. Korom, “Holy Cow! The Apotheosis of Zebu, or Why the Cow is Sacred in Hinduism,” *Asian Folklore Studies* vol. 59, no. 2, (2000): 181-203.

IV. WHY DO WESTERNERS HAVE DIFFICULTY UNDERSTANDING HINDUISM?

- A. Hinduism has a Fundamental Different Worldview:
- B. Hinduism Sees Time as _____.
- C. Hinduism has No Single Concept of God but Strives to Encompass All Religions.

BIBLICAL INSIGHT: THE NARROW GATE

- Isaiah 43:10 “Before Me there was no God formed, nor shall there be after Me. I, even I, am the Lord. And besides Me there is no savior.”
- C. S. Lewis wisely observed that at the end of all religious quests one must choose between Hinduism and Christianity; the former absorbs all others and the latter excludes them.
- Matthew 7:13 “Enter by the narrow gate.”

V. KARMA AND HINDU SALVATION:

- A. Jnana Marga (The path of _____): Thinkers can look deeply into the mysteries of life, and through mystical insight and intuitive awareness, gain self-realization.
- B. Karma Marga (The path of _____): Doers can upgrade their caste positions in future lives by faithfully following their dharma (Cast Laws) or duty in life.
- C. Bhakti Marga (The path of _____): Lovers can achieve self-realization through ritualistic sacrifice, discipline, and a close adherence to one or more gods.
- D. _____ is the law of retributive justice. It determines one’s place in samsara (the cyclical wheel of life through rebirth). The actions of life, whether good or bad, will determine what a Hindu will be in the next life, whether a Brahman, an outcast, a pig, a frog, or one who actually breaks through to _____, which is the triumphant merging with the universal oneness that the Hindus hope to gain.

BIBLICAL INSIGHT: JUSTIFIED BY GRACE

- In a restricted sense, the idea of karma is like the principle of reaping and sowing found in Galatians 6:7-9, but the Bible also teaches that we only have one life (Hebrews 9:27) and that we are not righteous enough to save ourselves.

- Titus 3:4-7 (NIV) “When the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life.”

VI. THE HISTORY AND PROCESS OF YOGA TOWARDS SALVATION.

A. The History and Goal: Patanjali in the Yoga Sutras incorporated The teachings and techniques of yoga into the Hindu religion about 100 BC. Yoga became one of six schools of thought regarding salvation through the path of knowledge (Jnana Marga). Each of the six schools has their peculiar views on the best way to attain knowledge. Yoga and with the closely related school of Samkhya are dualists (seeing spirit and matter at war with each other). Their ultimate goal is isolation from "evil" matter by entering into moksha and becoming like God in his timeless unity that is never affected by matter or nature. Yoga means "yolk or union with God." God is the Impersonal All and Universal Soul to which they want to yolk themselves.

BIBLICAL INSIGHT: THE TRUE YOLK

- Matthew 11:28-29 “Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yolk is easy and My burden light.”
- B. The Process: In the Western world, yoga is often thought of as simple isometric exercises, but it is much deeper than that. Yoga has become the leading method for Hindus to learn to transcend this world of illusion. The union with their God that a yogi (one who practices yoga) hopes to achieve is supposedly reached only after living a moral life, gaining inner and outer purity, and training the body through various exercises and postures. Yoga is actually an eight-step process. The first five are called "Hatha Yoga" and deal primarily with isometric and breathing exercises whose aim is to help the mind overcome the illusion of maya. The last three steps are called "Raja Yoga" and work through the steps of dharama (concentration), dhyana (meditation), and samadhi (absorption). It is said that at this last stage the yogi has an overwhelming sense of radiant light and disconnects with maya to unite his soul (atman) with the universal soul Brahman in what is called "Brahman-Atman.”

BIBLICAL INSIGHT: THE WRONG PATH

- Proverbs 14:12 “There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death.”
- Proverbs 14:15 “The simple believes every word, but the prudent considers well his steps.”

- Romans 6:21 “What fruit did you have in the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death.”

Question Corner:

- (1) Why can polytheism lead to so many paths of salvation?
- (2) Does polytheism promote unity or disunity? How about monotheism?
- (3) Is unity of doctrine counter productive to diversity and individuality?

VII. HINDU INFLUENCE IN THE UNITED STATES AND HOW THEY VIEW JESUS:

- A. The Vedanta Society – 1895; Swami Vivekananda:
 - Jesus is the special manifestation of the absolute, but still one of many.
- B. The Self-Realization Fellowship – 1920; Paramahansa Yogananda:
 - Jesus is a past yoga master.
- C. ISKCON (Hare Krishna) – 1965; Swami Parbhupada:
 - Jesus is an enlightened vegetarian teacher who taught meditation.
- D. Transcendental Meditation:
 - Jesus discovered his higher self while most others have not.
- E. Formal Hinduism:
 - Jesus is a guru, a teacher, or even an avatar of Vishnu.

BIBLICAL INSIGHT: PRAYING WITH MEANING

- Matthew 6:7 “And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do. For they think that they shall be heard for their many words.”
- Ecclesiastes 5:2 “Do not be rash with your mouth, and let not your heart utter anything hastily before God. For God is in heaven, and you on earth; therefore let your words be few.”

F. Reincarnation.

1. The *Bhagavad-Gita* teaches "Never have I not existed, nor you, nor these kings; and never in the future shall we cease to exist. Just as the embodied self enters childhood, youth, and old age, so does it enter another body" (2:12-13).
2. What is the foundational doctrine of Hinduism? _____ What would happen if this doctrine were destroyed? _____.

3. The whole idea of reincarnation and karma is simply a glorified system of works that plays into the hands of humanism. The Bible teaches in many places that reincarnation is a false doctrine. In Philippians 1:21, 2 Corinthians 5:8, and Acts 7:59 we see that dying brings one into the presence of Christ. Luke 23:43 teaches us that the thief goes into paradise instead of receiving his just rewards in the midst of a bad karma situation. 1 John 3:2 shows that when we do meet God he will be a personality and not some nebulous impersonal force in the universe. John 9:1-3 shows a blind man who was blind not due to any past karma, but so that the power of God could be manifest in healing. Hebrews 9:28 tells us that we only die once [physically] before facing the judgment, and in Hebrews 6:2 we find that the judgment is eternal. Christians believe in resurrection freedom not reincarnation bondage.

BIBLICAL INSIGHT: EVANGELISM HINTS

- Focus on Jesus' forgiveness: Since forgiveness for sins is not available in Hinduism, many want to hear. A convert and Indian evangelist named Bakht Singh said, "I have never yet failed to get a hearing if I talk to them about forgiveness of sins and peace and rest in your heart."²⁵
- Use the Sermon on the Mount teachings and Laws of Love because emphasis of devotion (*bhakti*) to God is important.
- Use 1 Corinthians 8:4-6 to show that the little "gods" are illusion but Jesus is reality.

VIII. JAINISM AND SIKHISM (SEE APPENDIX)

²⁵ David Hesselgrave, *Communicating Christ Cross-Culturally* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1978), 169.

Lesson Five

Buddhism

When I was a Buddhist, it was like I was drowning in a big lake and I didn't know how to swim. I was going under for the third time when Buddha walked up to the edge of the lake and began to teach me how to swim. Buddha said, 'start moving your hands and kicking your legs, but you have to make it to shore yourself!' Then Jesus Christ walked up to the edge of the lake, but He did not stop there! He dove into the lake, swam out, rescued me, and brought me to shore. After He brought me to shore, then He taught me how to swim, so I could go back and rescue others!²⁶

Former Buddhist from Thailand

INTRODUCTION

I. THE SIZE AND STRENGTH OF MODERN BUDDHISM.

II. THE ORIGINS OF BUDDHISM.

A. _____: The founder of Buddhism. Much of what we know about him is enshrined in legends and myths since the texts containing his words were not written until about two centuries after his death by anonymous author. There were strong oral traditions in India about Buddha and these also become a kind of commentary on his teachings.

B. Time sketch of his life:

1. 563 BC - Birth: Siddhartha was born in the Kshatriya (soldier) caste to a rich ruler. His father was Suddhodana and his mother Maya, but she died shortly after his birth. A seer gave a prophecy that Siddhartha would help mankind find salvation.
2. 547 BC – Marriage: At 16, he married Yasodharma who bore Rahula, their son.
3. 534 BC - _____: At 29, various sights of suffering affected Siddhartha. After seeing sickness, old age, death, and poverty with bliss, he left his wife and child and renounced the throne to discover the reason for suffering.

²⁶ Ron Carlson and Ed Decker, *Fast Facts on False Teachings* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 1994), 29-30.

4. 528 BC – _____: After six years of searching through the teachings of Hinduism and then the asceticism of the monks, Siddhartha sat under a Bodhi tree in a city called Bodh Gaya for a period of time (accounts vary from 1 to 49 days) to attain enlightenment. After resisting the temptation of Mara (death; feminine Buddhist tempter of sensual pleasure; "the personification of all evils and passions"), he attained nirvana. Buddha called his path to enlightenment the Middle Way, because it avoided the extremes of both affluence and asceticism, both of which had only caused him to suffer. Eventually, thousands followed his teachings.
5. 483 BC – Death: Buddha died at the age of 80, probably as a result of food poisoning.

BIBLICAL INSIGHT: SALVATION IN CHRIST ALONE

- John 4:22 (NASB) “You worship that which you do not know; we worship that which we know; for salvation is from the Jews.”
- Luke 2:30-32 “For my eyes have seen Your salvation which You have prepared before the face of all peoples, a light to bring revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of Your people Israel.”
- Acts 4:10, 12 – There is salvation in no other name but Jesus Christ.

C. Buddha’s Four Noble Truths:

2. Life consists of _____ (dukkha) in an illusory existence.
3. Suffering is caused by _____ for illusory things. (Clinging to body, feeling, perception, disposition, and consciousness).
4. Liberation comes through elimination of all these desires.
5. These desires are eliminated, by following the eight-fold path known as the middle way.

D. The Eight-Fold Path:

1. Right Understanding.
2. Right Thought.
3. Right Speech.
4. Right Action.
5. Right Livelihood.
6. Right Effort.

7. Right Awareness.
8. Right Meditation.

E. Right Understanding – _____: The foundation to the Eight-Fold path is the first step, that of right understanding. There are three parts to right understanding. They are anicca, dukkha, and anatta. 1) Anicca is the doctrine or teaching that everything is changing and impermanent. Desire changes and pleasure is fleeting. 2) Because of this, man is constantly suffering (dukkha). 3) Our only hope is to gain anatta, which is *no self*. The term is confusing, to say the least. It has caused major divisions within Buddhism and various sects have arisen over disputes. Theravada Buddhism takes this to mean that people have no soul, whereas Mahayana Buddhism teaches the theory that everything is empty or has "non-ego".

BIBLICAL INSIGHT: THE PROBLEM WITH SIN

- All have sinned (Romans 3:23; 6:23) and abide in a state of death until they accept the free gift of eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.
- Buddha sees man's selfish desire and blames suffering upon this. But the truth is that men are much worse than that. Mankind not only ate the forbidden fruit (Genesis 3:6), but in doing so, also rejected God.
- Buddha might have been a great psychologist of self-helps, but he did not deal with the root problem, namely, sin. He did not teach about sin because he did not believe in sin.
- The Bible says, "*If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.*" (1 John. 1:8)
- Although, there is a measure of accuracy in Buddha's words, they fall short of complete truth because he misunderstood man's real problem of alienation from God our Creator.
- Regarding desire, the Bible clearly shows that some is appropriate. (Psalm 145:19; Proverbs 10:24)

III. DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THERAVADA AND MAHAYANA.

- A. Characteristics of Theravada: Full-time monks; conservative; must help self in the universe; God is unimportant or does not exist; key virtue is wisdom; striving to cease from desire, follow middle path, accrue karmic merit, and become arhat thus attaining nirvana; main holy books are *Tripitaka* (three groups of books emphasizing discipline, teaching, and metaphysical).
- B. Characteristics of Mahayana: All Buddhists other than monks; liberal; other greater beings can help in the universe; polytheists; key virtue is compassion; striving to become aware of Buddha-nature within and become bodhisattva, thus attaining nirvana; hundreds of holy books.

C. What is the key difference?

D. How does this influence their belief system?

Question Corner:

- (1) What human dilemma did Buddhism address that Hinduism missed?
- (2) How do the two branches of Buddhism differ in approach to answer this human condition?
- (3) Compare Theravada to atheism?
- (4) How do both branches differ from Christianity? Any similarities?

IV. VARIOUS SECTS OF MAHAYANA BUDDHISM:

- A. Pure Land: Shinran started it in the thirteenth century. Today, it is the largest sect of Buddhism in Japan. It centers on a figure called Amida Buddha. When he experienced enlightenment and became a Buddha, Amida took steps to fulfill his previous bodhisattva vows to establish a paradise or 'western kingdom.' Today, his followers can gain nirvana by thanking him, praying to him, and trusting in him. They chant: "Hail to Amida Buddha."
- B. Zen: Two schools of Zen began in Japan. Eisai originated the Rinzai sect in 1191 A.D. and Dogen founded the Soto sect in 1227 A.D. Both these schools look back to the ancient Indian Buddhist sage, Bodhi-Dharma (480-528 A.D.), who practiced "wall meditation" after going to China to influence Emperor Wu with his technique. It is said he sat in a cave for nine years and stared at a wall. The word Zen is derived from a Sanskrit word meaning "meditation". Zenists do not look to a higher "god" to save them. Zen's special flavor as compared to other sects is the idea that in Zen an awakening to a higher state of being is something quite natural and can happen at any time. Whereas much of Buddhism places the focus of achieving "nirvana" in some future place, Zen believes that it captures Gautama Buddha's true teaching -- that it can be achieved instantaneously and now.
- C. Nichiren Shoshu: On April 18, 1253, Nichiren Daishonin of Japan chanted the words "Nam-Myoho-Renge-Kyo" meaning "Hail to the Lotus Sutra" and supposedly fulfilled a prophecy by Buddha that a special teacher would come forth in the thirteenth century A.D. This form of true Buddhism is supposed to eventually unite the world and bring peace to all mankind. Nichiren taught that this new chant, never before heard, was to replace the Pure Land Buddhism chant "Hail to Amida Buddha". Although his teaching had little impact in the thirteenth century, it has had a dramatic one in the twentieth with the formation of *Soka Gakkai* (Value Creation Society) in 1930.

Arriving in the United States after WWII, this has grown to become the largest Buddhist body in the country.

- D. Tantra: Started in Tibet by Padma Sambhava in 747 A.D. Tibetan Buddhism is only partially related to Mahayana in certain aspects. Some because of its emphasis upon occult technique to gain spiritual power consider it an entirely different branch of Buddhism. It is called Vajrayana (Vehicle of the Thunderbolt) or Tantrayana (Vehicle of specialized ritual). The Dalai Lama is the current leader and thought to be the fourteenth incarnation of a famous bodhisattva. One of the major Tibetan Buddhist texts is *The Tibetan Book of the Dead* that emphasizes demons, spirits, and powers of witchcraft. These agents of the darkness are to be avoided and appeased.
- E. Folk Buddhism: The term "folk" applies to animists. Involvement in folk Buddhism can be very different than formal Buddhism. Animism is the idea that all things in the universe are inherently invested with a life force, soul or mind, even things like a stone or a tree, etc. In animism, things like accidents, sickness, or problems don't just happen; there is a spiritual reason behind all of it. Although an animist might believe in a supreme God or belong to a world religion, he is mainly concerned with the local spirits (demons) that need to be appeased. He lives in fear of offending a local powerful spirit or dead ancestor. Animists might use any variety of divinations to find out why they are having a problem, who threw the curse at them, how they can counter-curse, and how to resolve the problem they are having. They often see objects as having magical powers (charms). They might wear these for protection against spirits or perform rituals of homage to keep the spirits happy. Some experts estimate that 40 % of the world's population has animistic tendencies.

V. THEIR WORLDVIEW OF SAMSAARA AND KARMA.

- A. Although Buddha himself concentrated on the here and now, much of Buddhism has evolved into the following complex system of theology.
 - 1. The universe is made up of one billion world systems.
 - 2. Time is cyclical: The age of the universe is 432 billion years old, but this time frame is made up of cycles of 432 million years. Each of these cycles has four ages.
 - 3. _____: Within the great time cycles and world cycles, life forms in the world system are recycling by reason of karma.
 - 6. Karma, the force of energy created by human thoughts, words, and deeds, determines the life forms' future physical and mental capacities,

sex, and social status. Karma is of two kinds: meritorious (good) or demeritorious (bad).

7. Six life form results of karma: gods, humans, demons, hungry ghosts, animals, or inhabitants of hell. People with meritorious karma are reborn to greater pleasure as gods or humans. Those with demeritorious karma are born to greater displeasure as demons, hungry ghosts, animals, or inhabitants of hell.²⁷

BIBLICAL INSIGHT: SEEKING THE RIGHT THING

- 2 Timothy 3:6-7 (NASB) “For among them are those . . . always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.”
- Isaiah 55:6-9 “Seek the Lord while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the Lord, and He will have mercy on him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon. ‘For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways,’ says the Lord. ‘For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.’”

II. NIRVANA.

- A. It is a difficult term. However, it is basically the place of existence where karma is _____. It is total cooling down of passions connecting one to this world, a complete reorientation to this world.
- B. In Theravada, individuals must attain nirvana by becoming arhats, but in Mahayana, those close to nirvana, called bodhisattvas can choose not to enter in until after sharing their stored up meritorious karma for the benefit of others. Theravada places emphasis on cravings being “extinguished” in nirvana, but Mahayana places emphasis on what is gained, namely, the further shore, the harbor of refuge, the cool cave, the holy city, etc.

BIBLICAL INSIGHT: EVANGELISM HINTS

- For Mahayana Buddhism use the concept of bodhisattva as a bridge to sharing what Jesus Christ did for us all.
- Explain that suffering is a part of the curse, but that true peace can be found today through Jesus Christ our Lord. They do not have to wait for nirvana someday.
- Share your experience about a personal relationship with God, but realize that in Buddhism emotions are something to escape. When Christians speak of a personal God who shows love, anger, hope, faith, etc., it might confuse them. Go slowly through the concepts.

²⁷ Robert C. Lester, *Buddhism: The Path to Nirvana* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1987), 58.

- The following story from Buddhist literature can be used as a bridge to explain the meaning of Christ's crucifixion:²⁸

Prince Mahanama, of the Shakya clan and a cousin of Buddha, had great faith in the teachings of Buddha and was one of the most faithful followers. At the time a violent king named Virudaka of Kosala conquered the Shakya clan. Prince Mahanama went to the King and sought the lives of his people, but the King would not listen to him. He then proposed that the King let as many prisoners escape as could run away while he himself remained underwater in a nearby pond. To this the King assented, thinking that the time would be very short for him to be able to stay underwater. The gate of the castle was opened as Mahanama dived into the water and the people rushed for safety. But Mahanama did not come up, sacrificing his life for the lives of his people by tying his hair to the underwater root of a willow tree.²⁹

VI. JAPANESE SHINTOISM (SEE APPENDIX)

²⁸ For more excellent insights into witnessing to Buddhists see Dean C. Halverson, *The Compact Guide to World Religions* (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House Publishers, 1996), 64-67

²⁹ *The Teaching of Buddha*, (Tokyo: Buddhist Promoting Foundation, 1966), 254-255.

Lesson Six

Judaism

We were taught that Christians blamed us for killing their Savior, Jesus Christ. And it was Christians, we were told, who had persecuted Jews through the centuries. The Crusades, the pogroms of Russia, the Spanish Inquisition and ultimately the Holocaust all were done in the name of Christ and Christianity. We understood that we were born Jews and that we should die as Jews. And Jews did not believe in Jesus! In fact, I had no idea that Jesus was Jewish. I thought that Jesus Christ was the son of Mr. and Mrs. Christ. I thought he was born in Rome and grew up in the Vatican. I didn't know that the apostles were Jews who were born and raised in Israel or that Paul had been a Jewish rabbi. I was shocked to learn that Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses and other great patriarchs of Jewish history were mentioned in the New Testament. I had no idea how Jewish the New Testament was. I was taught that to believe in Jesus a Jew had to convert to another religion and abandon his people. In reality, this is not the case. When Jews believe in Jesus, they are not converting to another religion. Rather, they are returning to the God of Israel and the promised Messiah of the Jewish people.³⁰

Messianic Jewish Rabbi Jonathan Bernis

INTRODUCTION

I. THE SIZE AND STRENGTH OF JUDAISM TODAY.

II. SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES WITH CHRISTIANITY.

- A. Similarities: Some view Christianity as the daughter religion of Judaism, but others see it as a sister where both stemmed from the same roots. One author says, "Christianity does not supplant Old Testament Judaism, it is the fruition of it."³¹ No matter how one sees the relation between these two religions,

³⁰ Jonathan Bernis, "Have You Hugged a (Messianic) Jew Lately?" *Charisma and Christian Life* (April 1997): 63-64.

³¹ Josh McDowell and Bill Wilson, *The Best of Josh McDowell: A Ready Defense* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1993), 296.

there are certain things that Christians and Jews hold uniquely in common. We both believe in _____ the Father and hope in His salvation. We see Him as being all powerful, all knowing, and all present. We are made of dust and yet in the image of God. We are to uphold the greatest commandment, namely to love God and our fellow man. Furthermore, we both believe in the accuracy and divine authorship of the Old Testament. While Jews look back to Abraham as their father through a natural lineage, Christians look back to Abraham as their spiritual father through faith.

- B. Differences: There are various movements within Christianity that vary in degree to how close they are to today's Judaism. For instance, the number of Messianic Jewish congregations is growing. These are Jews who have accepted Jesus Christ as their Messiah, and would be the closest to Judaism. Then there are the issues dividing Catholics and Protestants. One Jewish apologist, Trude Weiss-Rosmarin, admitted that Protestants are closer to Jewish beliefs than Catholics are because of Catholicism's veneration for a pantheon of Saints, relics, and worship of Mary. However, he still sees a gulf of separation between historic Christianity and Judaism because of the Christian view of Jesus Christ.³² This view of a gulf is accurate because all Christians, whether Messianic Jews, Catholics, or Protestants, follow Jesus as Lord.

III. BRIEF HISTORY:

- A. Ancient Jews. They were called _____, a name derived from their ancestor *Eber* (Genesis 10:21). He descended from Shem, a name from which comes the word *Semitic*.

- B. Time Line of Jewish History:

2000 BC	God calls Abraham, a descendant of Eber.
1400	Moses leads the Hebrews out of Egyptian bondage.
1360	Joshua brings Israel into the Promised Land.
1220	Judges begin rule over the nation.
1000	King David begins to reign.
967	Solomon begins to build the temple.
922	Kingdom divides: Israel (North) and Judah (South).
722	Northern kingdom falls to the Assyrians.
586	Jerusalem destroyed, Babylonian exile. <i>Diaspora</i>
536	Zerubbabel leads back first group of captives.
458	Ezra leads back second group of captives.
444	Nehemiah brings back third group. Rebuilds wall.
168	Antiochus IV Epiphanes begins slaughter of Jews.

³² Trude Weiss-Rosmarin, *Judaism and Christianity: The Differences* (Middle Village, NY: Jonathan David Publishers, Inc., 1993), 24-25.

- 167 The Maccabaen revolt defeats the Syrians.
- 63 Roman general Pompey makes Israel a vassal state.
- 33 A.D. Jesus is crucified, buried, and resurrected.
- 70 Rome destroys Jerusalem. Jews are scattered.
- 90 Council of Jamnia; Major Reconstitution. Jews reject Christian sect.
- 135 Rome crushes Jews at Bar Kokhva Rebellion (2nd War).
- 200 *Mishnah* compiled.
- 325 Rome adopts Christianity. Jews considered accused.
- 550 *Gemara* added to *Mishnah* to complete the *Talmud*
- 1100's Moses Maimondes creates Jewish statement of faith.
- 11-13 Cent. Many Jews killed in Crusades.
- 15-16 Cent. Spanish Inquisition – Jews persecuted.
- 19 Cent. Russian Pogroms – forced conversion, slaughter.
- 1896 Theodore Herzl writes *The Jewish State* and lays groundwork for Zionism.
- 1917 England' Balfour Declaration – grants Jewish Palestine.
- 1948 May 14 – Country of Israel formed; War of Independence.
- 1956 Egyptian ruler Nasser prompts war; Suez Conflict.
- 1967 Six Day War – Jerusalem regained after 2,000 years. Thousands convert to Christ as Messiah.
- 1973 Yom Kippur War.
- 1995 Israeli Prime Minister Rabin assassinated by Jewish radical.
- 2002 Operation Defensive Shield: Israel responds to suicide bombers.

IV. THE MAIN BRANCHES OF MODERN JUDAISM:

- A. Orthodox: This is the _____ Judaism, and it was the only form until the eighteenth century. Orthodox Jews carefully study the holy books and strive to follow the letter of the Law. These can include the traditional ceremonial and dietary laws. While all the branches of Judaism tend to keep the Sabbath day, the Orthodox Jews will also wear phylacteries, put *mezuzah* on their doorposts, and kosher foods. Also, the practice of rituals such as circumcision, *bar mitzvah*, weddings, and mourning rites may occur in all the branches of Judaism. One ultra-Orthodox movement called *Hasidic Judaism* or Hasidism has grown out of this Orthodox branch. Hasidic groups are separatists that identify with a leader who strictly follows the laws of Moses and certain mystical teachings.
- B. Conservative: This branch is more lenient. It was established in the nineteenth century as a midpoint between the Orthodox and Reform branches. It grew rapidly in Germany and the United States. It seeks to emphasize the importance of the Law, the Hebrew language, and the traditions of Judaism but not to the level of orthodoxy. It is more concerned with form than

doctrinal content. One offshoot of this branch is called *Reconstructionist Judaism* and has taken hold in America. This group emphasizes the need to adjust to the social climate

- C. Reform: As the liberal branch of Judaism, it arose in the eighteenth century during the Enlightenment as a reaction to _____. Doctrinal and religious beliefs vary greatly. With the exception of the Sabbath, there is little observance of dietary or other laws. The main focus is on cultural (ritual) and racial heritage. There is a mixture of humanism, ethics and the precepts of the prophets. It's interesting that the three Jewish branches could be compared to the liberal-versus-conservative-elements of Christianity. However, there's no counterpart to a Biblical Christianity that accentuates personal relationship with God.
- D. Messianic: This is a growing branch of Judaism that represents those who have accepted Jesus Christ as Messiah and Savior. Praise the Lord! In the last couple of decades, more Jewish people have come to know Jesus as their Messiah than ever before. Hundreds of Messianic congregations have sprung up. These people often celebrate the festivals and customs that are popular within Judaism, but they do so through the eyes of being "new creatures" in Christ Jesus. They have accepted the atonement of His shed blood on their behalf and the new resurrection life that comes to those who believe. They understand that Jesus is the Son of God. Although they see Christians as being their brothers and sisters in the Lord, to them the term "Christian" generally implies a converted Gentile. Therefore, they refer to themselves as messianic - as Jews who have had the veil removed from their hearts (2 Corinthians 3:16).

BIBLICAL INSIGHT: THE PASSOVER LAMB

- Exodus 12:21 (NASB) "Then Moses called for all the elders of Israel, and said to them, 'Go and take for yourselves lambs according to your families, and slay the Passover lamb.'"
- John 1:29 "The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, 'Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.'"
- Revelation 5:12 "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom, and strength and honor and glory and blessing!"

V. THE HOLY BOOKS OF JUDAISM.

A. The Sacred Text:

B. The Talmud:

VI. CONCEPTS AND DOCTRINES THAT CLASH WITH CHRISTIANITY.

A. The Trinity:

B. The Way:

C. The Messiah:

D. No Original Sin:

E. Atonement by Works:

VII. HOLY DAYS.

A. The Sabbath: The holy day of rest lasts from sundown on Friday until sundown on Saturday.

B. _____: The Jewish New Year is celebrated in September or October and begins a ten-day period of high holy days.

C. Yom Kippur: The Day of Atonement is celebrated ten days after Rosh Hashanah. It is the _____ day of the year and is sometimes celebrated with the reading of Isaiah 58:5-7.

D. Sukkot: The Feast of Tabernacles is celebrated five days after Yom Kippur and commemorates the ingathering of the harvest.

- E. _____: This festive holiday last for eight days in November or December and commemorates the victory of the Maccabees over the Syrian armies of Antiochus Epiphanes around 164 BC.
- F. Purim: This holiday is celebrated in February of March to recount the story of the book of Esther.
- G. Passover: This most popular of all Jewish holidays is celebrated in March or April and lasts a week. On the first two nights, there is a “Thanksgiving-like” atmosphere around a ceremonial dinner called a *Seder*. The events of the book of Exodus are retold at the Seder that symbolizes the Feast of Passover. Unleavened bread is eaten all week. (Exodus 12)
- H. Shavout: The Feast of Weeks comes in May or June, seven weeks after the Passover, and commemorates the giving of the Ten Commandments.
- I. Jubilee: God told Israel that every fiftieth year was a very special time of rejoicing (Leviticus 25:8-17). The new state of Israel celebrated fifty years of statehood in 1998.

VIII. TEN-POINT PROPHECY MADE BY MOSES.

- A. Long before the Jews were driven from their land, Moses prophesied what would happen to them. The passages of Deuteronomy 4:23-31 and 30:1-6 form the points of the prophecy.³³

- | | |
|---|---------------|
| 1) The Jews will break the covenant. | Deut. 4:23-25 |
| 2) God will drive them from their land. | Deut. 4:26 |
| 3) God will scatter them among the nations. | Deut. 4:27 |
| 4) Jews will be few in number among the nations. | Deut. 4:27 |
| 5) Jews will serve other gods. | Deut. 4:28 |
| 6) God will preserve a remnant for the latter days. | Deut. 30:1-2 |
| 7) God will bring the Jews back to their land. | Deut. 30:3-6 |
| 8) The Jews will go through distress ("tribulation?") | Deut. 4:30 |
| 9) The Jews will return to God. | Deut. 4:30 |
| 10) God will remember His covenant. | Deut. 4:31 |

Question Corner:

- (1) Why do you suppose Judaism changed so much after the life of Jesus?
- (2) What precepts overlap between Judaism and Christianity?
- (3) Should the views of Jews about Christianity affect us more than those of other religious adherents?

³³ This ten-point prophecy is well laid out in Richard Booker’s book, *Blow the Trumpet in Zion* (Shippensburg, PA: Destiny Image Publishers), 1992), 39. According to Booker, it appears that the first seven points have occurred. The last three points can only be concluded through speculation.

BIBLICAL INSIGHT: EVANGELISM HINTS

- Psalm 122:6: This exhorts us to be praying for the peace of Jerusalem. Christians around the world should be doing so. We can also use our prayer for it in dialog with Jews. We are praying for a city special to them and to us.
- Don't try to convert them to "Christianity." Rather, convert them to the Messiah Yeshua (Jesus). Be careful about using Christian slang. Use "Yeshua" instead of Jesus, and "Redeemer" instead of Savior. Point out the "Jewishness" of the New Testament Gospels. Show the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies in the New Testament Christ. Use the Old Testament images that point to the New Testament suffering of the Messiah (For instance, Isaiah 53). Use the book of Galatians to show them God's plan for Jews and Gentiles.

Lesson Seven

Understanding Islam in the Modern World – Part One

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. Recent tragedies that hit close to home:
- B. These and other attacks have been carried out by Islamic terrorist organizations like ISIS, Al-Qaeda, Al-Shabaab, etc. in order to spread confusion and fear.
- C. The world is full of confusion, political posturing, and manipulation

II. WHAT CHRISTIANS NEED

- A. Christians need:
 - 1. Proverbs 4:5, 7
 - 2. Colossians 4:5-6
- B. And, Christians should know that:
 - 1. 1st Corinthians 14:33
 - 2. 2nd Timothy 1:7

III. A MODERN PORTRAIT OF ISLAM

- A. Statement about Islam
- B. Map of Islam concentrations in the world.
- C. Islam in the United States

IV. AMERICA REMEMBERS

V. PRAYER MIRACLE

VI. THE BASICS

A. Basics of Islam

i. Definitions

1. _____ means to “recite.”
2. *Islam* means “_____.”
3. _____ means “one who is submitted.”

ii. Who do Muslims worship?

iii. The name of Allah

VII. THE COMPLEXITIES OF ISLAM

A. Islamic State: On July 29, 2014, it announced a new caliphate. Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi was named the Caliph, known as Caliph Ibrahim.

i. ISIS and ISIL

ii. Caliphate: definition and examples

1. Definition: A caliphate is an Islamic state, under Sharia Law, which is led by a supreme religious and political leader, known as a Caliph, who considers himself a successor of Muhammad, the founder of Islam.

iii. Barbarism in modern times:

B. Who was Muhammad?

- i. Muhammad – 7th century Arab whom they revere as a prophet. He descended from Ishmael, Abraham’s son with Hagar.
 1. Ancient Prophecy about Ishmael – Genesis 16:12

2. Genesis 17:20-21

3. Ishmael's descendants

- a. Twelve sons became twelve princes, dwelling to the east (Gen. 25:13-18).
- b. They became known as Ishmaelite and Midianite. They bought Joseph & sold him to Potiphar.
- c. They became enemies of Israel (Psalm 83:6).
- d. Josephus called them *an Arabian nation*.

ii. Muhammad's Life

1. 570: Born in Mecca
2. 576: Mother died, making him an orphan.
3. 595: Married Khadijah & ran business.
4. 610: 1st Revelation in a cave on Mt. Hira.
5. 622: Moved to Medina to lead the town.
6. 624-627: Three battles.
7. 630: Conquered Mecca.
8. 632: Muhammad died. Abu Bakr elected as the first Caliph. Islamic warriors began to sweep through Africa and Asia.

iii. The Koran

iv. The Five _____ of Islam

1. The Shahadah
2. The Salat
3. The Zadak
4. The Sawm
5. The Hajj

v. The Jihad

1. *Jihad* literally means "efforts on God's path," but it is roughly translated as "holy war."

2. Greater Jihad –

3. Lesser Jihad –

vi. Militant Jihad in the Koran

C. Suicide Wars

VIII. HOW CAN CHRISTIANS HELP MUSLIMS FIND CHRIST?

A. Show the love of Christ

B. Show compassion

C. Learn what the Koran says about Jesus

D. Support Missionaries with finances:

Lesson Eight

Understanding Islam in the Modern World – Part Two

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. Sad truths of Islam
- B. Testimony of Mark Gabriel, a former Muslim

II. JESUS CHRIST, THE SAVIOR OF THE WORLD!

- A. Luke 2:10-11

- B. Acts 4:10, 12

- C. Titus 2:11-14

III. THE MIDDLE EAST CONFLICT – GOING DEEPER

- A. _____ and _____ Differences:

Majority: 80 – 85%	Minority: 15 – 20%
Leadership: Community elects best leader	Descendent of Muhammad
Orthodox (Sunnah = traditions)	Radical (Followers of Ali')
Imams: Any teacher or leader of a mosque members	Special appointed family
Fatalistic: everything predestined by Allah	Free will to choose Allah
They tend to separate religion from politics powers	Question earthly political

IV. THE DEMISE OF THE ARAB CIVILIZATION

V. CLASH OF IDEOLOGIES

VI. MODERN ISRAEL

Psalm 122:6-7

A. Moses' Prophecy Fulfilled – Deuteronomy 30:3-5

B. Israel's Conflicts

C. Cohabitation in the Old City between Jews, Muslims, and Christians

D. The Wailing Wall and Temple Mount

E. Islam teaches that on the Day of Judgment, it will be Jesus, not Muhammad, which will come again.

1. A bridge to witness: Muslims are not taught that Jesus died on the cross for our sins, but they do believe that He ascended to heaven and will one day return. Some Muslims believe that when Jesus comes again, He will destroy the anti-Christ and lead the whole world to embrace Islam. He will get married, have children, die after forty years and be buried in Medina, next to the tomb of Muhammad.³⁴

IX. Gate Breaker Ministries in Pakistan (2009 – 2020)

X. The World Needs Jesus

A. Jesus in the Koran

B. The bridge of Jesus the Word

³⁴ John Gilchrist, Nuzul-I-Isa: The Second Coming of Christ <accessed 1/24/15> www.answering-islam.org

- i. Sura 4:169 “The Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, is only an apostle of God, and his Word which he conveyed into Mary, and a Spirit proceeding from himself.” John 1:1 “. . . And the Word was God.” John 1:14 “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.”

C. Jesus was born to a virgin

- i. Sura 19:20-22 “She (Mary) said, ‘How shall I have a son, when man has never touched me? and I am not unchaste.’ He said: ‘So it shall be. Thy Lord hath said: ‘Easy is this with me;’ and we will make him a sign to mankind, and a mercy from us. For it is a thing decreed.’ And she conceived him.”

D. Jesus had a special mission

- i. Sura 2:81 “To Jesus, Son of Mary, gave we clear proofs of his mission, and strengthened him by the Holy Spirit.”

E. Jesus is the Messiah

- i. Sura 3:40 “His name shall be, Messiah Jesus the son of Mary, illustrious in this world, and in the next, and one of those who have near access to God.” Al Masih Isa

IX CONCLUSION

A. What can you do to help Muslims?

1. Asking the Lord, “What would you like me to do?” He can lead. He can direct. The Holy Spirit will answer if you ask.
2. Education: He may tell you to get better education and equipped for some future plan that He has. – Perhaps, you should buy my book on Islam.
3. Witness: He may show you how to be a Christian light to a Muslim that you know, or He may show you how to encourage a Muslim or be a bold witness.
4. Prayer: He may give great insight in how to pray for Muslims or for missionaries or for ministries to Muslims.
5. Support: He may ask you to get financially involved with ministries or missionaries that work with Muslims.
6. Volunteer: Perhaps the Lord would want you to volunteer with World Relief or some other organization that helps Muslims who are relocating to the U.S. Relationship is a key to witnessing.

7. Other: He also might ask you to wait or to make your focus on some other people group or mission.
- B. Pray for the church and the people that they may know how to get involved.

Lesson Nine

Shining Christian Light

A pastor in Michigan went for a haircut one day. He had a conversation with his barber, who was a young Muslim woman. He informed her that he was a pastor and would be presiding over a funeral later in the day. The woman said, "Once I was supposed to cut a dead man's hair. They were going to pay me \$150.00, but I wouldn't do it." The pastor asked, "Why not?" and she responded, "I don't like to touch the dead. I'm afraid they'll sit up." At this, the pastor remarked: "I know one who did." "Ugh! You're kidding," she said. "No, I'm not," he replied. Then he proceeded to tell her about Jesus Christ. When the haircut was done, she asked him, "Are you going to keep coming here?" He replied, "Yeah, I'll come back." She finished with, "I'd like to know more."³⁸

INTRODUCTION

I. THOUGHTS ABOUT INDIVIDUAL STRATEGIES FOR OUTREACH.

A. Evangelism Concepts:

1. "He who wins souls is wise" – Proverbs 11:30
2. Evangelism is one beggar telling another beggar where he found the bread.³⁹ – D. T. Niles
3. The word *evangelism* is *ev-angel-ism*, the prefix *ev* meaning good, and the word *angel* meaning messenger. So the word literally means *good-message-izing*.⁴⁰ But how we share the good message is individual

³⁸ Wallace Hostetter, "Communicating to Contemporaries," *Leadership Journal*, (Spring 1991): 23.

³⁹ Robert J. Morgan, *Nelson's Complete Book of Stories, Illustrations, & Quotes* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2000), 777.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.* 778.

and often unique. The Lord did not create clones but individuals. Our temperaments help determine our approach to our manner of witness. Francis of Assisi taught that sometimes the gospel is preached through our actions and walk and not necessarily our words. Others find ways of humbly proclaiming their faith by words in their various occupations. One elevator operator in a Nashville hospital was heard to say, “I’m just a nobody telling everybody about somebody who can save anybody.”⁴¹

4. Learning to have empathy for others: “If you would sell John Smith what John Smith buys, you must see John Smith through John Smith’s eyes.” – Old proverb among sales representatives

B. Individual Styles:

1. One evangelist tells Christians to find their style of witnessing by noting the different styles used by various biblical characters based upon personality, temperament, talents, and background:
 - Confrontational approach: Peter was bold, direct, and to the point.
 - Intellectual approach: Paul was well educated. He could be confrontational, but he could also reason from Scripture, explaining and proving Jesus Christ.
 - Testimonial approach: The blind man in John 9 didn’t know a great deal about theology but he could say, “One thing I know: I once was blind and now I see.”
 - Invitational approach: The Samaritan woman left her water jug at the well and invited her friends to come and hear a man “who taught me everything I ever did.”
 - Interpersonal approach: Matthew put on a banquet (Luke 5:29) for his tax-collecting friends in an effort to expose them to Jesus. (Friendship evangelism)
 - Service approach: Dorcas witnessed by serving others in Jesus’ name, making clothes for the needy and poor (Acts 9).⁴²

II. THOUGHTS ABOUT CHURCH STRATEGIES FOR OUTREACH

A. Methods of Influence:

1. Equipping: Educate Christians about the beliefs of various non-Christian religions through seminars, book studies, testimonials, etc. Make sure that the education is done through a biblical worldview.

⁴¹ Ibid. 777.

⁴² Mark Mittelberg, “Discover Your Evangelism Style,” *Discipleship Journal*, Issue 95 (September / October 1996).

Some pastors have made the mistake of inviting leaders of non-Christian religions to share their beliefs in hopes of equipping the congregation. But this is dangerous, normally counter productive, and violates 2 John 9-10.

2. Financial aid: Support native evangelistic ministries in countries that have large populations in non-Christian religions.
3. Missions: Support missionaries to unreached people groups. Participate in short term missions programs that advance the Kingdom of God through evangelism, Bible distribution, prayer walks, building projects, and mercy ministries.
4. Sponsoring Refugees: Contact the World Relief Organization and get involved with their Refugee Resettlement program. Christians can have a very influential and positive impact on welcoming immigrants from non-Christian backgrounds. World Relief Headquarters: 7 East Baltimore Street, Baltimore, MD 21202; (443) 451-1900; worldrelief@wr.org
5. Foreign Students: Many students come to the United States from backgrounds that embrace non-Christian religions. Churches can be influential by getting host families or participating in campus ministries.

III. LONG TERM THINKING

- A. Non-Christian religions have *not* become entrenched in societies overnight, but through decades and centuries. Countries are not won to Christianity in a moment of time, but through generational outreach that gradually brings renewal and Christianizes culture.
- B. Church planting in non-Christian societies can help produce long term fruit whose seed eventually bears more and more.
- C. Long-term relationships with non-Christians often provide a basis for them to examine your life's fruit and then opportunity for witness. R. A. Torrey once said, "I waited and watched fifteen long years to get my chance to speak with one man. Never a day passed in all those fifteen years that I did not speak to God about that man. At last my chance came, and it was my privilege to lead him to Christ."
- D. Commitment to Persistent Prayer:
 1. "We read that His disciples came to Him, and said, "Lord, teach us to pray." It is not recorded that He taught them how to preach. I have

often said that I would rather know how to pray like Daniel than to preach like Gabriel. If you get love into your soul, so that the grace of God may come down in answer to prayer, there will be no trouble about reaching the people. It is not by eloquent sermons that perishing souls are going to be reached; we need the power of God in order that the blessing may come down.”⁴³ - D. L. Moody

2. “Perseverance counts much with God as well as with man. If Elijah had ceased at his first petition the heavens would have scarcely yielded their rain to his feeble praying. If Jacob had quit praying at a decent bedtime he would scarcely have survived the next day’s meeting with Esau. If the Syrophenician woman had allowed her faith to faint by silence, humiliation, repulse, or stop mid-way its struggles, her grief-stricken home would never have been brightened by the healing of her daughter. Pray and never faint, is the motto Christ gives us for praying. It is the test of our faith, and the severer the trial and the longer the waiting, the more glorious the results.”⁴⁴ – E. M. Bounds

IV. CONCLUSION.

⁴³ D. L. Moody, *Prevailing Prayer: What hinders it* (Chicago, IL: The Bible Institute Colportage Association, 1885), 12-13.

⁴⁴ E. M. Bounds, *Purpose in Prayer* (New York, NY: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1920), 60.

APPENDIX

WHAT IS JAINISM?

Jainism is an offshoot of Hinduism that has many similarities but also some striking differences. It began with its founder Vardhamana Mahavira, a contemporary of Buddha, who lived from 599 to 527 BC. At thirty years of age, he left his life as a member of the Hindu warrior class (Kyhatriyas) and became a beggar who refused to own any possessions. After more than twelve years of renunciation and detachment from physical needs and comforts, he claimed complete understanding of the nature of the universe. Although Mahavira opposed the worship of a supreme being, his followers later deified him.

Some of his doctrinal differences with Hinduism are that he taught (1) the independence and autonomy of the individual soul, (2) the need for a casteless, democratic society, (3) an emphasis on harmlessness toward all living things, and (4) rigid asceticism.

Today, Mahavira is worshiped by Jains as the 24th Tirthankara, the last and greatest of the savior beings. Jainism has monks and nuns who are very ascetic but also a lay community who are not as strict. Mostly, Jainism is found in India where there are several million followers. However, some Jain influence came to the United States through Bhagwan Rajneesh who had a commune in Oregon in the 1980's. Rajneesh did not stick with strict Jainism but incorporated sexual promiscuity and elements from many religions to create his own syncretic religion. He was deported from the United States back to India in 1985 and died in 1990.

WHAT IS SIKHISM?

Sikhism is a strange mixture of Hinduism and Islam that was begun by an Indian named Nanak who was born in 1469 AD in the village of Talwandi (now called Sahib). When he was thirty-three, he wandered off into the woods for three days where he supposedly had a revelation of God, the primal Brahma, who gave him a cup of nectar to drink and pronounced that Nanak was the divine Guru. When he returned home, Nanak announced, "There is neither Hindu nor Muslim, so whose path shall I follow? I shall follow God's path. God is neither Hindu nor Muslim and the path which I follow is God's." Nanak's religion gained a following in Punjab where people became his Sikhs (disciples). He died at age seventy at which time Guru Angad became his successor. Eight other gurus succeeded Angad.

The teachings of Sikhism are a syncretism of the doctrines of Islam and Hinduism. Their holy book, Guru Granth Sahib, was composed by several dozen Sikhs and includes different languages and dialects all in the same book. The most distinctive teaching of Sikhism is its doctrine of guru-ship. They teach that all people need to learn from gurus, but especially from the greatest guru who is God. Yet, their God is not considered personal but an abstract principle of eternal truth or reality that gives inner guidance.

Other doctrines include karma and transmigration, a salvation through submission to God which breaks the cycle of karma and transmigration in the individual, the importance of repeating prescribed prayers, and reverence for their scripture. Today, there are about 23 million Sikhs in India and throughout parts of the world.

WHAT IS SHINTOISM?

Shintoism is purely a Japanese religion and one of the oldest religions in the world. The actual origins are forgotten, but the myths elevated the station of the Japanese people to those who were descended from gods, greater than any other people on earth.

According to the creation myth found in one of the sacred books entitled the *Kojiki*, the marriage of two *kami* (gods) named Izanagi (male) and Izanami (female) preceded the creation of Japan. Accordingly, these two went down to the ocean, thrust a spear into the waves, and pulled it out. Each place that drops of the brine fell from the spear, a Japanese island appeared. Izanagi and Izanami then descended to the islands and eventually produced other *kami*. Several generations later, Amaterasu, the sun goddess, was born. She eventually became the great-grandmother of Jimmu, the first emperor. Hence, the emperors are supposedly descended from their ancestor Amaterasu. The Japanese name for their country is Nippon, which means *sun origin*.

The name *Shinto* comes from the Chinese word *Shen-tao*, meaning “the way of the gods”, and was not applied until the sixth century AD when other eastern religions were entering Japan and distinguishing titles became necessary.

Ancient traditions centered on clan loyalty, agricultural festivals, and reverence for life. Young maidens would perform ritualistic dances in order to call forth the *kami* spirits and local shamans would act like channeling oracles for the gods. Since the sixth century, Buddhism, Confucianism, and Taoism have influenced Shinto belief. However, Shinto does not have carefully crafted doctrine or ethics. It is more of a religion of participation in traditional rites, festivals, and worship at shrines. Today, three principal forms of Shintoism exist as: folk (animistic), shrine, and various sects of Shinto. However, there has also been state and Imperial Household Shinto as well. State Shinto was abolished after the defeat of Japan in WWII, and Imperial Household Shinto (rites for the spirits of imperial ancestors performed by the emperor) was severely challenged.

Two books composed around 720 AD are considered sacred. *Kojiki*, mentioned earlier, is a record of ancient matters, and *Nihongi* is a chronicle of ancient Japan. The concept of *kami* is, of course, very polytheistic and immersed in superstitions of sacred power found in both animate and inanimate objects. Most private homes have *kami dama* (the god shelf), and there is a system of shrines (places of Shinto worship) throughout Japan. A grand imperial shrine dedicated to the worship of Amaterasu is located at Ise, about 200 miles southwest of Tokyo, and is a most sacred spot in Japan. Shintoism stresses the values of loyalty and duty to family and clan, and it emphasizes the importance of community over individuality. Also, it emphasizes the need of gratitude towards the *kami* for blessings and life.

APPENDIX 2

Genesis Chronology

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth” Genesis 1:1

“And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living being.” Genesis 2:7

The Influence of Ussher: Irish Anglican Bishop James Ussher (1581-1656) attempted to date the time of Creation by starting at the year 1 AD, as the beginning of the Christian era, and then calculating backwards, using the Old Testament dates as a guideline. By adding the years of the patriarchs and generations prior to Abraham, he derived the year 4,004 BC as the date of Creation. However, some think that he was not saying that this was the time of Creation, but that it is the furthest that we can calculate backwards, according to the Bible. Ussher’s view became the leading idea in Christianity about dating the Creation. This view also worked well with the biblical tradition that the six days of Creation (Genesis 1) are the first six thousand years (2nd Peter 3:8; Psalm 90:4) and then comes the seventh in which we rest.

Other Ideas: Many of the Early Church fathers believed in the idea of six days and six thousand years. For example, Augustine thought that the Creation of man was less than six thousand years prior to his time (*City of God*, 12.12). Clement of Alexandria, Eusebius, and others had similar notions. Origin, however, thought that the world was at least ten thousand years old (*Against Celsus*, 1.20). Some believe that the apocryphal Second Book of Esdras (third century A.D.) indicates that the Creation was about ten thousand years prior, with about two thousand years still ahead.

The Gap Theory: One theory that has emerged in the last century is the gap or telescoping theory. This theory is based on the concept that names have been left out of the chronologies in chapters 5 and 11 of Genesis (as well as other places). The Hebrew authors were concerned with preserving a record of lineage rather than an exact chronology that listed all of the fathers and sons from the time of Adam to Abraham. This theory promotes the accuracy of Genesis but extends the time line of Creation further back to an unspecified date.

Some of the eminent biblical scholars who support the idea of the gap theory are below:

- William Henry Green, "Primeval Creation," *Bibliotheca Sacra*, April 1890, pp. 285-303.
- B. B. Warfield, "On the Antiquity and Unity of the Human Race," reprinted in *Biblical and Theological Studies* (P & R, 1968), pp. 238-261.
- Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. II, pp. 40-41.
- James Oliver Buswell, *A Systematic Theology of the Christian Religion*, Part II, Chapter IV.

- R. K. Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, pp. 147-52.
- Francis Schaeffer, *Genesis in Space and Time*.

Excerpt from *Genesis in Space and Time*, Francis Schaeffer (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1972), 122-124.

“Genesis 5 raises a very interesting question: What is the connection between this Old Testament genealogy and chronology? . . . I think the understanding that these genealogies are not a chronology is obvious from Scripture itself.

First, the relationship between the sequence of names and chronology is not always a straight line. In Genesis 5:32 we read, ‘And Noah was five hundred years old: and Noah begat Shem, Ham, and Japheth.’ It would appear from this passage that Shem is older than Ham who is older than Japheth. But in Genesis 9:24 we are told that ‘Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger son had done unto him’ (ASV). The reference is to Ham. Likewise, anyone reading Exodus 2 would certainly feel that Moses was the oldest son. Nevertheless, we learn in Exodus 7:7 that his brother Aaron was actually three years older. Consequently, the content of these various passages are accurate, but chronology was not what the authors had in mind. Undoubtedly Shem was named first because he was the most important one in the flow of biblical history. What they were recording was the flow of history – the things we are talking of in this book – the flow of origins, especially the Jews, for whom such things were of great importance, as we shall see in a moment. The Bible does not mislead us. It indicates that the genealogies are not chronological.

A second reason why we must not take genealogy for chronology is that several passages make it obvious that the writers knew the chronology but that they still deliberately omitted several steps in the genealogy. For example, if we compare 1 Chronicles 6:3-14 with Ezra 7:2, we find Ezra, despite the fact that he was a scribe and surely would have known all of the steps, omitted names in the genealogical tree. Not only this, but he seems to have added two names omitted in the 1 Chronicles genealogy. Of course, some of these men many have been known by more than one name as was common in Old Testament history, and there is a possibility of a later scribe’s error. Nonetheless, it does seem that some names were consciously omitted by Ezra.

An even more startling case which shows what the Jewish people were doing with their genealogies occurs in 1 Chronicles 26:24. Here we read: ‘And Shebuel the son of Gershom, the son of Moses, was ruler of the treasures.’ The time is that of David, roughly 1000 B.C., and the issue is that Shebuel had an official position on the basis of his genealogical line. The intriguing thing is that Gershom is the first-generation son of Moses, and yet between him and the next man, Shebuel, stand at least 400 years. There is no doubt that we have a tremendous gap in years and in intervening generations. Thus we are reminded that the purpose of all this is to indicate the flow of official, historical lines. It is important to say, ‘This man comes from such and such an origin.’

Another clear case is found in Matthew’s genealogy of Christ. In Matthew 1:8 we read, ‘And Asa begat Jehoshaphat; and Jehoshaphat begat Joram, and Joram begat Uzziah’ (ASV) Yet if we go back into the Old Testament we will find that Uzziah’s father, grandfather and great-grandfather are omitted in Matthew’s genealogy. (See 1 Chron. 3:11-12; in this list Uzziah is called Azariah.) The important point is that Jesus is

to be seen in the right genealogical line, and after that has been accomplished; chronology is of little or no interest.

Prior to the time of Abraham, there is no possible way to date the history of what we find in Scripture. After Abraham, we can date the biblical history and correlate it with secular history. When the Bible itself reaches back and picks up events and genealogies in the time before Abraham, it never uses these early genealogies as a chronology. It never adds us these numbers for dating.

There is a third reason why it should be quite obvious that these genealogies are not meant to be a chronology. If they were, it would mean that Adam, Enoch and Methuselah were contemporaries, and that just doesn't seem to fit at all. If this were the case the silence of the Bible in regard to these relationships would seem curious. But the situation is even more striking after the flood, because in this postdiluvian era if genealogy were chronology, all of the postdiluvians, including Noah, would have still been living when Abraham was 50 years of age. That would seem impossible. Furthermore, Shem, Salah, and Eber would all have outlived Abraham, and Eber would still have been living when Jacob was with Laban. The simple fact is that this does not fit into the rest of biblical history."

For further research on this subject, here are some websites to visit:

- Accuracy in Genesis: <http://www.accuracyingenesis.com/chrono.html>
- Answers in Genesis: <http://www.answersingenesis.org/articles/aid/v2/n1/do-the-genesis-genealogies-contain-gaps>
- Curt Sewell's site: <http://ldolphin.org/sewell/sewellchron.html>
- Reasons to Believe: <http://www.reasons.org/resources/non-staff-papers/the-genesis-genealogies>

The ancient site of Gobekli Tepe located in modern-day southeastern Turkey

- What one archaeologist believes: Archaeologist Klaus Schmidt of the German Archaeological Institute believes the site to be about 12,000 years old and likely associated with the location of the Garden of Eden. (See "Do these stones mark the mysterious site of the Garden of Eden?" Tom Knox, (March 5, 2009) <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-1157784>)
- Controversy in dating: There are those who challenge the ancient date assigned to Gobekli Tepe. Here are some reasons: (1) The Carbon 14 method of dating has always produced controversy as to its accuracy. (2) Comparing one archaeological site to another to determine the date. (3) If it is so old, where are the other archaeological sites that show a chronology of development and change between 10,000 B.C. and 4,000 B.C.? (See Lexiline Journal, (August 11, 2009) <http://lexiline.blogspot.com/2009/08/gobekli-tepe-decipherment-dating.html>; and "The Problem with Carbon 14 Dating", <http://contenderministries.org/evolution/carbon14.php>).