

CHRISTIANITY



ISLAM



HINDUISM



CONFUCIANISM



BUDDHISM

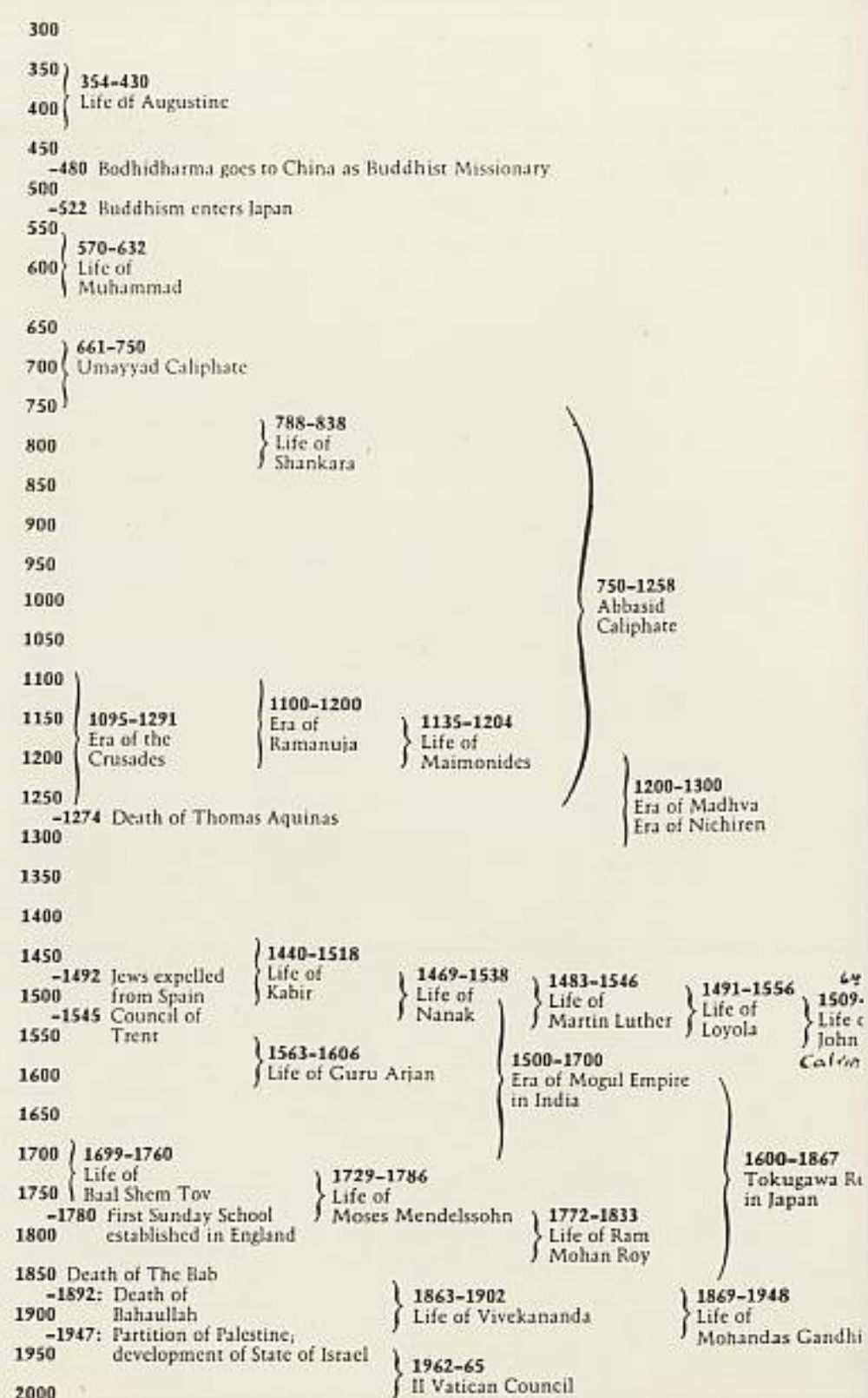
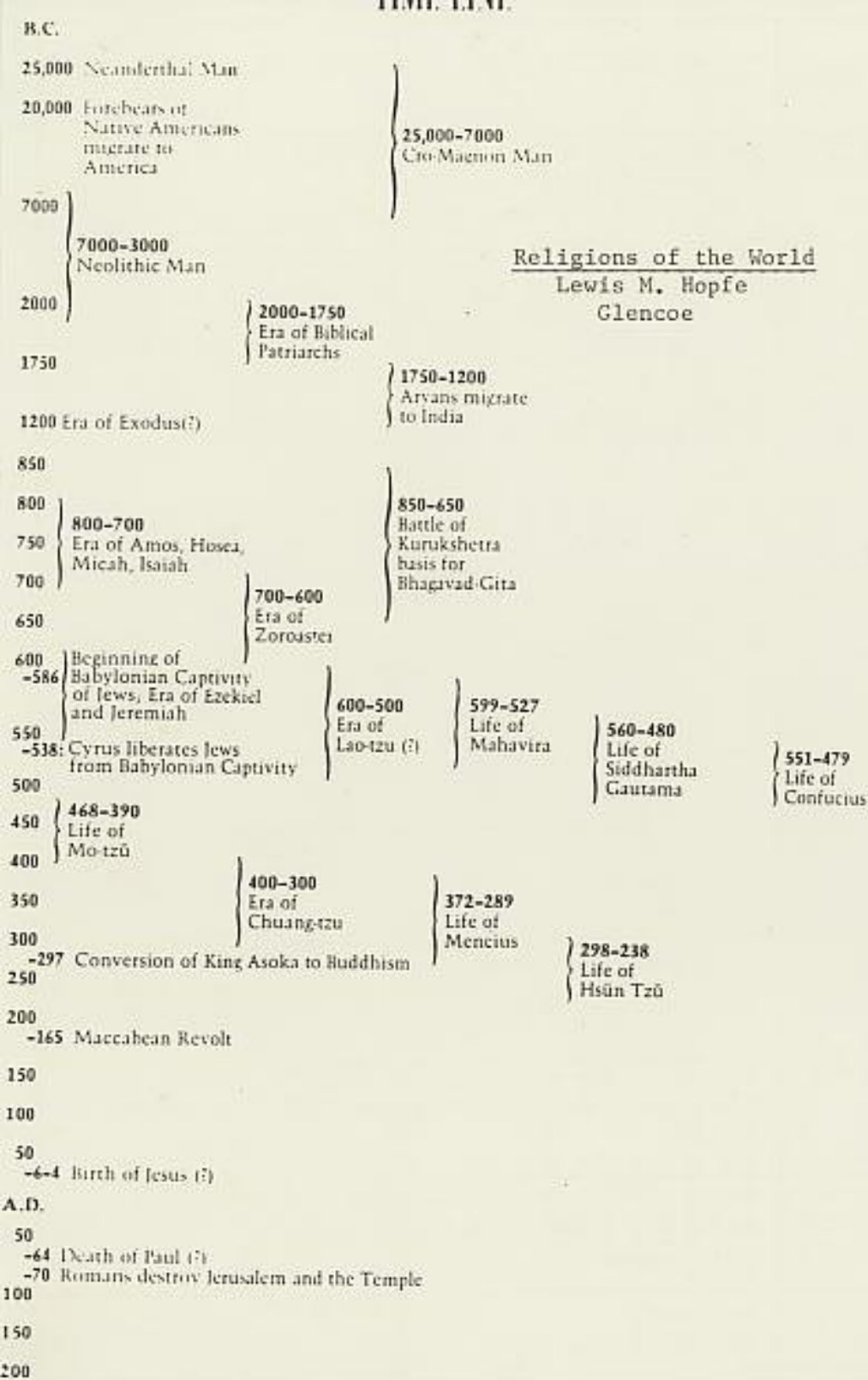


JUDAISM

A BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE RELIGIONS OF THE WORLD
Meredith J. Sprunger

RELIGION	VALUES - ETHICS - MORALITY	PROBLEM OF EVIL	SALVATION	AFTERLIFE
HINDUISM	Diverse and tolerant Hereditary caste system Truthful, mind control, honesty, nonirritability	The illusion of pleasure, wealth, & worldly success	Path of renunciation Commitment to Atman- Brahman - growth toward perfection by reincarnation	Nirvana - extinction of personality in Brahman or totally indescribable state
JAINISM	Nonresistance, nonattachment, truthful, honest, renounce sex pleasure, monastic ideal	Attachment to the evil material body	Liberating soul from matter through law of karma and reincarnation - only by individual effort	Nirvana - extinction of personality or totally indescribable state
BUDDHISM	Right knowledge, aspiration, speech, behavior, livelihood, effort, mindfulness, contem- plation, mind control, kindness	Life estranged from reality Insatiable desires are the cause of evil and suffering	Nonattachment to world Follow Eight-fold Path Self-effort, karma, reinca- Mahayana: Buddha a savior	Nirvana - highest destiny of human spirit - indescribable bliss Mahayana: heaven & hell
SIKHISM	Pure motive and action Loves wife & family Service, nonarrogant, learn- ing, forsakes evil company	The illusion of matter Man is helpless - dependent on divine action	Becoming one with God Worship of the True Name Faith, love & devotion	Nirvana - individuality extinguishing absorption in God - also speak of heaven and hell
TAOISM	Recompense injury with kind- ness, quiet humility, simplicity in living, attain fullness of life	Egocentricity source of evil and suffering Man's way vs God's way Worldly things worthless	Oneness with Tao Pomp and glory are to be despised	Early: all goes back to Tao Later: heavens & hells
CONFUCIANISM	Balance authority & obedience with goodness and love Respect, courtesy, peace	Man basically good Lack of filial piety root of evil in society	Following social propriety and offering sacrifices Later: sacrifices to Confucius	Not other-worldly Accept vague ideas of heaven and hell Humanistic
SHINTO	Personal cleanliness Sense of communal guilt Bushido: honor, loyalty, courage, truth, justice	Man and nature essentially good - suicide encouraged to avoid dishonor, defeat, or to protest	Being a part of the chosen Japanese people and living with honor and purity	Shinto largely adopted Mahayana Buddhist beliefs of heaven & hell
ZOROASTRIANISM	Good thought, word, & deed Truthful, compassionate, justice, learning, service	Angra Mainyu or Satan Man born sinless - chooses between good and evil	Choosing good over evil Living a righteous life	Judgment: heaven & hell Ultimate triumph of good and eradication of evil
JUDAISM	Ten commandments, justice, righteousness, truth, loving- kindness, humility, learning, kosher food	Satan, unfaithfulness to will of God, choosing egocentric self, false gods, or evil	Early: animal sacrifice Later: faith & righteous living Messianic deliverance	Not other-worldly Early: She'ol - land of dead - Later: Judgment - heaven and hell
CHRISTIANITY	Love of God and man, ten commandments, service, truth, beauty, goodness, justice, humility, learning	Satan, fall of man, imper- fection of creation, ego- centricity, alienation from God	Evangelicals: Faith in blood atonement of Jesus Mainline: Faith in Jesus as mediator-savior	Judgment: heaven & hell Modern: growth & service in heaven; some question about an eternal hell
ISLAM	Five Pillars: creed, prayer, almsgiving, fasting, pilgr- image - predestination, specific rules of conduct	Satan, not submitting to the will of Allah Allah beyond human quest- ing - accept life as is	Submission to will of Allah, living by the Five Pillars	Judgment: heaven & hell Sensual description of afterlife

RELIGION (1982 Statistics)	DOMINANT EMPHASIS	SCRIPTURE - REVELATION	FOUNDER - ORIGIN	ULTIMATE REALITY - GOD
HINDUISM (477,991,300)	Divine immanence and spiritual growth governed by karma and reincarnation	The Vedas Upanishads Code of Manu Bhagavad-Gita	Early Aryans from Persia (Second millennium B. C.)	Impersonal Brahman
JAINISM (2,000,000)	Asceticism Ahimsa (noninjury)	Aganas Siddhantas	Mahavira (Sixth century B. C.)	Various gods - unimportant Mahavira: no personal God Mahavira deified
BUDDHISM (254,866,450)	Ethical self-culture Four Noble Truths and Eight-fold Path	Tripitaka	Siddhartha Gautama (Sixth century B. C.)	Atheistic - no personal God and no soul Buddha deified
SIKHISM (6,000,000)	Syncretic unity between Hinduism and Islam	Granth	Nanak (1469-1538)	God - The True Name
TAOISM (31,286,000)	The divine way (Tao) Simplicity in living Following nature	Tao Te Ching	Lao-tzu (Sixth century B. C.)	The Tao - Supreme Being The Ultimate All-Father Absolutes are unknowable
CONFUCIANISM (156,070,100)	Social propriety The middle way (li)	The Five Classics and Four Books are used as touchstones of conduct and wisdom	Kung - Confucius (551-479 B. C.)	Early: Shang Ti Later: Confucius deified Today: Humanistic
SHINTO (57,154,200)	Nature worship Emperor worship Patriotism Purity	Kojiki Nihongi	Sun Goddess Amaterasu (Seventh century B. C.) Grandson, Ninigi, first emperor	kami: Izanagi & Izanami Sun Goddess Amaterasu
ZOROASTRIANISM (271,000)	The struggle between good and evil	Avesta	Zarathustra Spitama - Zoroaster (660-583 B. C.)	Ahura Mazda Seven sources of reality who are both masculine and feminine
JUDAISM (14,336,520)	Ethical monotheism God active in social-historical process	Torah - Old Testament Mishnah Gemara } Talmud	Semitic Patriarchs (Second millennium B. C.) Abraham Moses	El Elyon, Elohim Jehovah - Yahweh
CHRISTIANITY (997,503,640)	Jesus as Lord Fatherhood of God Brotherhood of man Kingdom of God, Church	Bible Roman Catholics also accept church tradition	Jesus of Nazareth Paul: expeditor of church development	God - Heavenly Father
ISLAM (589,143,400)	Submission to God Teachings of Muhammad	Quran - Koran Twenty-eight prophets of Allah (Abraham, Moses, Jesus)	Muhammad (570-632)	Allah



I. HINDUISM

The Religion of Divine Immanence and An Hereditary Graded Social Structure

Hinduism, dating from around 1500 B. C., is the oldest living religion having a membership (1982) of 477,991,300 confined largely to India. It is the most complex, diverse, and tolerant of the world's religions. One can find within Hinduism almost any form of religion--from simple animism to elaborate philosophical systems--which has ever been conceived or practiced by mankind. Hinduism has met the challenge of other religions, primarily, by absorbing them and their practices and beliefs into the mainstream of Hindu religious expression.

The Aryans (noble ones) invaded the Indus valley from Persia in the second millennium B. C. They were basically wandering nomads who spoke an Indo-European language which became the basis for Sanskrit. This early Aryan society developed into three basic socio-economic classes. The priests or Brahmins became the ruling class. The tribal chieftains and their warriors or Kshatriyas were next in line, with the commoners and merchants or Vaishyas rounding out the Aryan society. A fourth group, the conquered pre-Aryan people or Shudras, were at the bottom of society. Eventually these divisions developed into a religiously supported caste system.

The Vedas are the sacred scriptures of Hinduism. The four basic Vedic books are the Rig-Veda, the Yajur-Veda, the Sama-Veda, and the Atharva-Veda. Each of the Vedic books is divided into four parts. Each contains a section of hymns to the gods (Mantras), a section of ritual materials (Brahmanas), a section of guidance for hermits (Aranyakas), and a fourth section of philosophical treatises (Upanishads). The Mantra and Brahmana sections are the oldest materials with the Aranyakas and Upanishads added later. This Vedic literature evolved during the classical period of Hinduism.

The fourteen principal Upanishads form the basis of Hindu philosophy. They assume there is one reality, the impersonal god-being called Brahman. All things and beings are an expression of Brahman. Everything in the world and experience which is not Brahman is illusion (maya). All phenomenal existence (pleasure, worldly success, wealth) is illusion arising from ignorance of the true nature of reality. Those who continue in this ignorance are bound to life by the law of karma which keeps them endlessly in the cycle of birth, life, death, and rebirth. When man discovers the Path of Desire is not fulfilling he is ready to start on the Path of Renunciation. Here he recognizes his duty to others, family and community, and dedicates himself to a life of service. This is rewarding but he still yearns for infinite being, infinite awareness, and infinite joy.

To achieve these ultimates of experience we must realize the basic purpose of life is to pass beyond imperfection. That which is beyond the limitations and imperfections of life can be found within. Underlying our physical existence and personality is an infinite reservoir of reality. This infinite center of every life, this hidden authentic self or Atman is no less than Brahman, the Godhead. By detachment from the finite, illusory self and commitment to Atman-Brahman, we achieve infinite being, infinite awareness, and infinite joy.

This philosophy of the Upanishads is a reaction to the sacrificial, priestly form of worship in Hinduism. It emphasizes meditation as a means of worship and teaches that ignorance is man's basic plight. Historically, the priestly sections of the Vedas have directed the religion of the masses in India while the Upanishads have attracted a relatively small number of Indian intellectuals.

Contemporary Western people who are attracted to Eastern thought tend to identify Hinduism with the philosophy of the Upanishads.

Classical Hinduism also produced the ethical Code of Manu which teaches that the caste system is divinely ordained. The first three castes (Brahmins, Kshatriyas, and Vaishyas) are "twice born" people while the Shudras are "once born" manual laborers. The only upward mobility through this caste system is by means of repeated incarnations. Although the caste system is outlawed in contemporary India, its social influence is still strong.

The Code of Manu also teaches the various stages through which a man is expected to pass in a successful life: student, householder, hermit, and wandering beggar. These stages are only for twice born men. Women should stay in the home under the protection and control of the chief male in the household. The code requires the cultivation of pleasantness, patience, control of mind, nonstealing, purity, control of senses, intelligence, knowledge, truthfulness, and nonirritability. The killing of cows is listed among the greatest of sins.

The composition of the great epic poem, the Bhagavad-Gita, sometime between the second century B. C. and the third century A. D. marks the end of the period of classical Hinduism. The Bhagavad-Gita is found within the text of a much longer poem and is probably the most highly esteemed scripture of Hinduism. In the poem Arjuna, a Hindu knight, for the first time in the recorded history of Hinduism, raises the question of the propriety of killing people. He is answered by his charioteer, Krishna, who turns out to be an incarnation of the god Vishnu. Arjuna is told he must be loyal to his duty as a warrior and kill. The Gita also teaches a variety of means of personal salvation. One may achieve release from life (Nirvana) through asceticism, through meditation, through devotion to and worship of the gods, or through obedience to the rules of his caste.

After the close of the classical period subtle changes gradually appear in Hinduism. Out of the millions of major and minor gods, worship tended to center around the Trimurti: Brahma, the creator; Shiva, the destroyer; and Vishnu, the preserver. Among this trinity, Brahma receives the least attention. Shiva is the most popular probably because he is the god of sex and reproduction and appeals to the deprivation experienced by the masses. His various goddess consorts such as Kali are equally revered. According to mythology, Vishnu has appeared on earth in nine forms and will come a tenth time to bring the world to an end. Among his appearances are Krishna; Gautama, the Buddha; Matsya, the fish who saved Manu from the great flood; and Christ.

The majority of the people of India seek salvation through devotion to the gods while many of the wealthy and educated seek salvation through the way of knowledge. This intellectual Hinduism centers around six systems of philosophy: Samkhya, Yoga, Mimamsa, Vedanta, Vaisheshika, and Nyana. All claim to be based on the Vedas and revolve about common themes. The only basic difference among them is their view of ultimate reality. The Vedanta system is monistic and asserts that the only essence in the universe is Brahman; all else is illusion. The Samkhya, Yoga, Vaisheshika, and Nyana systems are dualistic and assert that the universe is composed of two forces, matter and spirit. The Mimamsa system is basically atheistic and teaches that salvation comes through the correct observance of Vedic rituals.

Jainism and Buddhism began as reform movements in Hinduism and it has absorbed much of their thinking. During the Middle Ages Hinduism and Islam

competed for followers in India. The two religions are in many ways opposites and there has been much bloodshed in their struggles. Sikhism arose in an attempt to bring reconciliation between the two. Tradition credits the disciple Thomas for bringing Christianity to India. During the three centuries of British rule Christianity had considerable influence on the growing edge of Hinduism.

The nineteenth and twentieth centuries brought three main reform movements in Hinduism. Ram Mohan Roy, called the Father of Modern India, was a monotheist who tended to agree with Christian missionaries in their attempt to suppress the suttee, child marriage, polytheism, and idolatry in Hinduism. The greatest reformer was Sri Ramakrishna, a follower of nondualistic Vedanta, who believed there was one single reality, God, behind all religions and that truth is essentially one. His disciple, Dutt, later known as Vivekananda, became the first Hindu missionary to the modern world. He described Vedanta Hinduism as the mother of all other religions. The best known Indian reformer is Mohandas K. Gandhi who was influenced by the teachings of Jesus and the Jain doctrine of noninjury (ahimsa) espoused civil disobedience and nonviolence which were largely responsible for bringing India freedom from British rule. Gandhi, in turn, became a major influence in the political thinking of Martin Luther King, Jr. and many of the leaders of the "peace movement" in Western Civilization.

II. JAINISM

The Religion of Asceticism

Jainism, founded by Mahavira in the sixth century, has around two million adherents in India most of whom are business people who have wealth and social importance far beyond their numerical significance. Mahavira was part of a great creative period of history which produced Gautama Buddha, Confucius, Lao-tzu, Zoroaster, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Isaiah, Thales, Anaximander, Xenophanes, Pythagoras, and Heraclitus.

Jainism (conqueror) began as a reformed movement in Hinduism. Both Jainism and Buddhism denied the validity of the Vedas as inspired scripture and rejected the religious implications of the Indian caste system.

Mahavira was the son of a minor ruler in northeast India. Before his birth his mother is said to have had fourteen marvelous dreams and their family suddenly prospered. Mahavira married and was the father of a daughter. Despite his position and wealth, he was not happy. At the age of thirty, after the death of his parents, Mahavira bade farewell to his family and his wife and child, turned his back on wealth and luxury and went off to join the ascetics in the pursuit of salvation.

Not finding salvation among ordinary ascetics, he went off on his own path of extreme asceticism. He believed one should not injure any form of life (ahimsa) and swept the path where he walked and strained all the water he drank. To torment his body Mahavira went naked and sought the coldest spots in winter and the hottest climates in summer. He begged for his food, preferring that which was left over from the meals of others. When beaten or attacked by dogs he did not resist. Legend tells of a time when he was meditating and some people built a fire under him to see if he would resist; he did not. So as not to become attached to people or things he never stayed more than one night at the same place. He became indifferent to all things. During the thirteenth year, squatting in the sun, he achieved release (moksha) and reached Nirvana.

After he felt he had gained complete control over his body, Mahavira changed from being a solitary ascetic to a leader and teacher of monks. He taught that the world is made up of two substances, soul and matter. The cause of all misery is the connection of the vile material body with the pure eternal spirit. Salvation is liberating the soul from matter. The law of karma and reincarnation are closely linked with this drama of the flesh and the spirit.

Salvation of the soul must be accomplished by the individual himself; therefore, there should be no worship or prayer. The gods are of little consequence; they are simply beings living on a different plane from mankind who are busy working out their own salvation. Although Mahavira taught that there is no personal God and forbid worship and prayer, his followers worship him and pray to him. They believe he was sinless, omniscient, pre-existent, and incarnate--the last of a series of twenty-four saviors of men.

The scriptures of Jainism are Aganas (precepts) or Siddhantas (treatises). The language of these scriptures is one of the Prakrit vernaculars. Early commentaries were written in Sanskrit. A few documents have been translated into contemporary languages but most Jains are largely ignorant of their own scriptures. The devout Jain is ascetic, humble, inoffensive, and unvindictive.

By 80 A. D. the Jains were divided into two sects. The Svetambara or "white clad" live mainly in northern India today. They are more liberal in their interpretation of Mahavira's teaching regarding nudity and allow their monks to wear a white garment. Women are also allowed in their religion and monasteries accepting the possibility that they may find salvation.

The Digambara or "sky clad" live mainly in southern India. They adhere to the old ideals that require their monks to go about naked; however, civil authorities sometimes have required them to wear loin-cloths. The Digambara sect believe women have no chance of achieving salvation until they are reborn as men. Consequently women are prohibited from entering monasteries and temples.

Jains practice their religion in two distinct groups: common citizens and monks. Monks lead the ideal life for a Jain and have the best chance for salvation. They take five vows: noninjury to life, to speak the truth, to not steal, to renounce sexual pleasure and women in general, and to renounce all attachments. Mahavira declared, "Women are the greatest temptation in the world." Generally all Jains seek to follow the first three vows as much as possible. The Jain doctrine of ahimsa was a potent influence in the lives of Mohandas Gandhi and Albert Schweitzer.

Today Jainism is sometimes regarded as a minority sect of Hinduism. Jains are forbidden from entering all occupations that take life or profit from taking life. This has forced them into the commercial field. Their reputation for honesty and high moral principles has made them excellent businessmen. It is a paradox that a sect which began with the ideal of asceticism and poverty has become one of the wealthiest classes in India!

III. BUDDHISM

The Religion of Peaceful, Ethical Self-culture

Buddhism began in India in the sixth century B. C. as a reform movement in Hinduism. It was the first religion of the world to become international and today (1982) has a membership of 254,867,450. The founder of Buddhism was Siddhartha Gautama, the son of a rich ruler of the Kshatriya caste. There are legends of his nonhuman conception, supernatural birth, and of his future greatness prophesied by a Hindu saint. Gautama married at the age of nineteen and later had a son. He lived a luxurious and sheltered life but while riding outside the royal compound he saw a decrepit old man, a diseased man, a corpse, and an ascetic monk. He became obsessed with the fact that all must face age, sickness, and death and he determined to find an answer to this anxiety and suffering.

Leaving his wife, son, family, and inheritance Gautama clipped his hair and beard, exchanged clothes with a beggar and began his quest. For years he tried to solve the problem of suffering first through philosophy and then by extreme asceticism but found no inner peace.

Finally, around the age of thirty-five he sat down under the shade of a fig or bo tree to meditate; he determined to meditate until he received enlightenment. After seven weeks he received the Great Enlightenment; The Four Noble Truths and the Eight-fold Path. Henceforth he became known as the Buddha (enlightened one). This Middle Way is a psychological-philosophical insight into the cause and cure of suffering and evil.

The First Noble Truth points out that the human condition is steeped in suffering, that in some way life has become estranged from reality. The Second Noble Truth tells us the cause of life's dislocation. Anxiety and suffering are caused by indulging in inherently insatiable desires. All forms of selfishness tend to separate us from others, life, and reality. The Third Noble Truth states a logical conclusion: suffering will cease when we suppress, overcome, and master these cravings and desires. We must develop nonattachment to the things of the world. The Fourth Noble Truth tells us how this cure is accomplished--by following the Noble Eight-fold Path.

Buddha's analysis of the problems of life in the Four Noble Truths is essentially that of a therapist; and the Eight-fold Path is the course of treatment through training. First one needs to have right knowledge in order to have the facts, principles, and values to establish a wise life plan. Second, right aspirations are required to give power to this plan. The heart as well as the head must be dedicated to our goals. Third, right speech is needed to take hold of what is in our consciousness which controls our thinking. We need to change our speech and thinking toward truth and charity. Fourth, right behavior should be initiated to further change and control our lives. We must follow the Five Precepts: do not kill, steal, lie, be unchaste, or drink intoxicants. Fifth, we should engage in a right livelihood. Spiritual progress is difficult if one's occupation pulls in the opposite direction. One should not take work which weakens or destroys life but serve in those occupations that promote life. Sixth, right effort is needed to keep us growing in spiritual attainment. Buddha laid great stress on the importance of the will in determining our destiny. He had more confidence in the long steady pull than in quick spurts of activity. Seventh, we need right mindfulness to sustain our growth. Few teachers have equaled Buddha's emphasis on the mind as the shaper and determiner of the course of human life. The Damma-pada opens with the words, "All we are is the result

of what we have thought." We should wisely control our state of consciousness. Eighth, right contemplation and absorption finally brings the aspirant into a transmutation of consciousness which transcends the worldly preoccupation with things, desires, and suffering. Those who have followed the eight-fold path and arrived at the point of achieving Nirvana are called arhat, or "saint."

Gautama Buddha taught a way of life devoid of authority, ritual, speculation, tradition, and the supernatural. He stressed intense self-effort. His last words before he died at the age of eighty were, "Work out your own salvation with diligence." Gautama accepted the law of karma and reincarnation. He saw Nirvana not as a state of extinction or annihilation but as "the highest destiny of the human spirit." It is so totally different that it is "incomprehensible, indescribably, inconceivable, unutterable...bliss."

Buddha did not believe in the existence of a personal God; nor did he believe that man had a soul. He tended to deny the existence of substance of every kind and saw the transitoriness of all finite things and beings; he stressed impermanence. Man's life after achieving Nirvana is unfathomable - "reborn does not belong to him nor not-born, or any combination of such terms." Some scholars have pointed out that Buddhism in its earliest form was not a religion but a system of psychological-ethical discipline based on a pessimistic philosophy of life. Although there is some truth in this evaluation, there is much that is positive in Buddha's teaching.

The scripture of Buddhism is the Tripitaka (Three Baskets of Wisdom), made up of the Vinaya Pitaka (Discipline Basket), the Sutta Pitaka (Teaching Basket), and the Abhidhamma Pitaka (Higher Doctrine Basket). Parts of the Tripitaka such as the Dhamma-pada and the Sutta-Nipata are among the most impressive religious books in the world. Some of Buddha's parables are very similar to those used by Jesus.

Buddhism has been divided into two major branches which have in turn been subdivided into numerous sects. Today one may find in this one family of religions nearly every form of religious belief and expression on the planet.

Hinayana (Lesser Vehicle) or Theravada Buddhism concentrated in Southeast Asia is conservative and more closely follows the original teachings of Buddha. It sees man as entirely dependent on self-effort, teaches wisdom as the key virtue and regards religion as a full-time job, primarily for monks. They regard Buddha as a saint, eschew metaphysics and ritual, and limit prayer to meditation. Their ideal is arhat (sainthood).

Mahayana (Greater Vehicle) Buddhism has spread throughout the world and rests on the principle that Buddha taught many things in secret to the elect who could properly interpret them. It sees man as involved with others and saved by grace. It teaches compassion as the key virtue and believes its religion is relevant to life in the world; therefore, it is a religion for laymen as well as monks. The Mahayana branch sees Buddha as a savior, welcomes metaphysics and ritual, and engages in petitionary prayer. Their ideal is the Bodhisattva--a mortal who has achieved enlightenment and after death postpones Nirvana attainment to serve in heaven answering prayers and helping mortals who are in need. Mahayana Buddhism regards Buddha as a divine savior--pre-existent, planfully incarnate, supernaturally conceived, miraculously born, sinless, with a redemptive purpose, all knowing, and everlasting. Buddha has been made a member of the Buddhist Trinity.

Buddhism received its greatest impetus from the Indian emperor, Asoka, who was converted in 297 B. C. and became convinced that Buddhism was a religion for all of the peoples of the world. Accordingly, he sent missionaries throughout the known world. Asoka also called the third council of Buddhism in 247 B. C. for the purpose of determining the true canon of Buddhist scriptures.

The main branches of Mahayana Buddhism are the Pure Land Sect, the Intuitive Sects, the Rationalist Sects, the Sociopolitical Sects, and the Tibetan Sect. The Pure Land Sect seeks to achieve salvation and life after death in the "pure land of Western Paradise." They believe in Dhyanis Buddhas who are lesser deities who help human beings. Their priests may marry and their worship practices parallel the church and Sunday school services of Christianity.

The Intuitive Sects such as Ch'an and Zen emphasize that the truths of religion do not come through rational thought processes but through a sudden flash of insight. They believe the externals of religion are unnecessary. Reason is to be distrusted more than anything else; therefore riddles and various techniques of irrationality are used to confuse reason and trigger an intuitive flash. Zen is so concerned with the limitations of language and reason that it makes their transcendence the central intent of its method. Experience, not words are important. So they sit hour after hour, day after day, year after year seeking to develop their intuitive powers.

The Rationalist Sects believe that in addition to meditation one should utilize reason and a study of the scriptures in order to find the truth. All approaches to enlightenment may be useful at times but in reality there is only one true Buddhist teaching and one must study the scriptures of Buddhism in order to know this truth. The Chih-i sect in China and the Tendai sect in Japan stress the importance of the rational approach.

The Sociopolitical Sects such as the Japanese Nichiren sect have had great effect on the social and political dynamics of various nations. The founder of Nichiren thought that all of the sects of Buddhism were a perversion of the true teachings of Buddha and were leading people to hell. He came to believe the only scripture one needed to study was the Lotus Sutra. Nichiren teaches a simplified form of Buddhism and uncompromising patriotism.

Tibetan Buddhism is representative of sects that emphasize the use of magic words or formulae to achieve various goals. Tibetan people traditionally have used incantations, spells, and magic to protect themselves from demons. Tibetan monks or lamas invented the prayer wheel to augment their defenses against evil. By the 14th century monastery leaders became more powerful than kings and for all practical purposes the country was ruled by Buddhist priests. The lamas of Tibetan Buddhism have been divided into two orders, the Red Hats and the Yellow Hats. The leader of the larger Yellow Hat group is known as the Dalai Lama who was virtually ruler of Tibet. China in 1950 set up a puppet government in Tibet and when the Dalai Lama attempted to overthrow Chinese rule in 1959 the rebellion was crushed. The Dalai Lama and a few of his followers escaped to India.

During the twentieth century Buddhism is experiencing a revival. This new awakening may have been augmented by Christian missionaries who translated the ancient Buddhist texts and made them available for all to study and by the rise of Asian nationalism. Buddhism today is once more a missionary religion.

IV. SIKHISM

The Religion of Syncretism

Sikhism is the youngest of the world religions. It was founded by Nanak in the sixteenth century and has approximately 6,000,000 adherents located chiefly in the Punjab region of India. In a sense Sikhism may be regarded as yet another reform movement in Hinduism. Nanak attempted to integrate the best in Hinduism and Islam into a new inclusive religion. Nanak stands in a tradition of reformers. An older contemporary, Kabir, is especially noted for his attempt to bring Hinduism and Islam together.

Nanak was born of common Hindu parents of the Khatri (Kshatriya) caste in 1469. He was a precocious youth who loved poetry and religion but was a failure at a variety of occupations. He married at nineteen and was the father of two sons. Later he left his wife and sons and went to the city of Sultanpur where he was a little more successful in business pursuits.

Around the age of thirty Nanak had a vision of God while meditating in the forest. He was told he had been singled out as a prophet of the true religion. His message was to be, "There is no Muslim and there is no Hindu." Following this visionary experience, he became an evangelist of the gospel of unity between these two religions.

Along with his constant companion, the minstrel Mardana, Nanak traveled widely throughout India preaching the essential unity of Islam and Hinduism. He wore a mixed costume made up of both Hindu and Muslim clothing. They even made a pilgrimage to Mecca. Wherever he went he tried to organize groups who accepted his teachings. Nanak is reported to have performed miracles. His followers were known as Sikhs (disciples). Toward the end of his life Nanak appointed his disciple, Angad, as his successor.

In October, 1538 Nanak was about to die. His Muslim converts wanted to bury him and his Hindu converts wished to cremate him after death. To settle the argument Nanak told each group to place flowers on either side of him and the group whose flowers were still fresh in the morning could have his body. He then drew the sheet over his head and became still. When the sheet was removed the next morning both bouquets of flowers were in bloom but the body of Nanak was gone. Thus, according to this legend, even in death the peaceful and loving Nanak sought to bring harmony between Muslims and Hindus.

Nanak, like Kabir and others, tried to synthesize the best elements of Islam and Hinduism. He taught a devotional monotheism, referring to God as "The True Name." Nanak rejected ahimsa thus allowing Sikhs to kill and eat animals. He accepted the principle of reincarnation and the law of karma but eliminated ceremonialism and ritual. Nanak also accepted the Hindu doctrine of Maya or illusion. God created matter by drawing a veil of illusion over himself producing all of the diverse forms of creation: the finite gods, Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva; the heavens, the hells, the earth, men, animals, and plants. Salvation consists in becoming one with God. But salvation is not going to Paradise after the last judgment but absorption in Nirvana--individuality extinguishing absorption in God, the True Name.

The scripture of Sikhism is the Granth (book) which is an anthology of many poems somewhat like the Hebrew Psalms and wisdom literature. The Granth has many authors and the Sikhs ascribe absolute authority to it. The first two

sentences of the Granth is prescribed as the first utterance for every Sikh each day, "There is but one God, whose name is True, Creator, devoid of fear and enmity, immortal, unborn, self-existent, great and bountiful. The True One is, was, and also shall be." The main method of worship is meditation on God. The need for a teacher and the Pure Congregation of disciples are important in Sikhism. The good Sikh is pure in motive and action, serves others, honors those who can teach him, and craves the Guru's word; loves his wife and renounces all other women; avoids quarrelsome topics, is not arrogant, does not trample on others, and forsakes evil company.

The first four of the ten gurus of Sikhism followed the teachings of Nanak. The fifth guru, Arjan Des, turned from the pacificism of Nanak to a militant stance. Under the persecution of Islam rulers Sikhism grew more defensive. Gobin Singh, the tenth guru, introduced a ritual, the baptism of the sword, and prepared the Sikhs for self-defense and war. He developed an elite class of Sikhs known as Singhs (lions) who were distinguished from their fellows by wearing long hair, beards, a comb, short trousers, a steel bracer, and a dagger. They were not allowed to use wine, tobacco, or any other stimulant. The Singhs were incredible warriors and later the British used them as soldiers and policemen throughout India and many other parts of the world.

Today there are three main branches of Sikhism and many minor groups. The first sect is called the Udasis which is basically an order of ascetics and holy men. They frequently shave their heads and beards and are often active as missionaries. The second sect is the Sahajdharis who reject militarism and prefer to be clean shaven. The third sect is the Singhs already described. In temples the central object of worship is a copy of the sacred Granth. Congregational worship involves prayer, hymns, a sermon, and a communal meal. Since there are no Sikh priests, group meetings may be led by any member of the community. All Sikhs give special attention to the Takht (throne) of Sikhism with its golden temple at Amritsar.

V. TAOISM

The Religion of the Divine Way

The religions of China are rooted in ancient religious concepts. The Chinese people recognized many gods and spirits. The good spirits were known as Shen; and the evil spirits were called Kwei. The common people performed sacrifices and rituals. They believed the universe was composed of the negative force of nature, Yin, and the positive force of nature, Yang. Filial piety and ancestor worship were practiced. They predicted the future by divination through the methodology of I Ching. Following the eleventh century the Chou rulers for political reasons promoted a belief in Shang Ti, the one supreme God who controlled the destiny of men and rulers.

The origins of Taoism are unclear. Traditionally, Lao-tzu who lived in the sixth century is regarded as its founder. Its early philosophic foundations and its later beliefs and rituals are two completely different ways of life. Today (1982) Taoism claims 31,286,000 followers.

Legend says that Lao-tzu was immaculately conceived by a shooting star; carried in his mother's womb for eighty-two years; and born a full grown wise old man. It is said that he was the keeper of the royal archives but tired of the artificial court life and retired. Lao-tzu traveled west into the mountains and sought to leave the country at the Hankao Pass. The guard at the gate recognized the wise old man and refused to allow him to leave until he had committed to writing the sum of his wisdom. He retired for three days and returned with a slim manuscript entitled Tao Te Ching (The Way and Its Power). After leaving he was never seen again.

Except for the Analects of Confucius, the Tao Te Ching is the most influential book in Chinese literature. It has been the object of at least a thousand commentaries and has been translated into English more than forty times. The book was probably developed over the centuries and evolved into its present form around the fourth century B. C.

The chief religious teaching of the Tao Te Ching is concerning one eternal Supreme Being: "Original, primeval, the Ultimate...sustaining source of all things... an All-Father...Makes its knower fearless, invulnerable, immortal." The ethical ideal of the Tao Te Ching is to recompense injury with kindness and achieve a quiet, restful, humble simplicity in living. The teachings of early Taoism center around the following themes:

1. The basic unity behind the universe is a mysterious and undefinable force called the Tao. Tao produces all things and all things go back to their common origin and blend into one. Absolute truth and absolute good are unknowable.
2. Life is the greatest of all possessions. The chief aim of human existence is to attain fullness of life by attunement with the Tao. When man seeks his own plan rather than the eternal plan of the great Tao, he precipitates ills, suffering, and evil.
3. Live in primitive simplicity. Leave all things take their natural course. Education, wealth, power, and family ties are worthless impediments to living. The sage can know the whole world without going out of his door. The further one travels, the less one knows. The Tao is characterized by its quietude of power, its production without possession, action without self-assertion, development without domination. "Aim at extreme disinterestedness and maintain the utmost

possible calm...There is no guilt greater than to sanction ambition...Only quiet non-striving is successful." Kindness, sincerity, and humility should be cultivated.

4. Pomp and glory are to be despised. The tree which stands higher than its neighbors is the first to be felled by the woodsman. The weak and humble overcome the strong and proud. The highest goodness is like water, it seeks the lower levels; therefore it is near to Tao. The least government is the best government. Weapons are instruments of ill omen; he who has Tao will have nothing to do with them.

This early Taoism was more a philosophy than a religion. It was concerned about the quality of life and had little interest in the heavens, gods, rituals, or life after death. During the fourth and third centuries B. C., in addition to Taoism, three major schools of thought struggled for dominance in China. The Confucians believed in an idealized feudal system characterized by social propriety. The Legalists were tough-minded realists who believed human nature is wicked and lazy and must be ruled with a strong hand. The Mohists taught the values of the traditional religions, especially that men should love one another. They were pacifists who recognized the necessity of self defense.

Later Taoism became a religion of the masses and deteriorated into polytheism, demonology, witchcraft, magic, and occultism. It borrowed from Mahayana Buddhism and its teaching of an afterlife with heavens, hells, and judgment and developed a monasticism after the Buddhist pattern. The upper classes and intellectuals of twentieth century China continued reading the classics of philosophical Taoism but regarded the religion as only fit for the ignorant masses. The current Chinese government look upon it, and all forms of religion, as superstition.

VI. CONFUCIANISM

The Religion of Social Propriety

Confucianism has been the chief cultural influence of China for centuries. The teachings of Confucius were never intended to be a religion. It has no revelatory sacred writings, no priesthood, no doctrine of an afterlife, and frowned on asceticism and monasticism. Later Confucius was deified and raised to the rank of Emperor and Co-assessor with the deities in Heaven and Earth. Official animal sacrifices were made at the tomb of Confucius for centuries. In 1982 Confucianism claims 156,070,100 adherents.

The Chinese name of Confucius was Kung. His disciples called him Kung, the master (Kung Fu-tse) which western missionaries Latinized to "Confucius." He was born in 551 B. C. of an aristocratic family who had lost their wealth and position. His father, who died before Confucius was three, is said to have been a famous warrior of gigantic size and strength who was seventy years old when Confucius was conceived. Confucius was the youngest of eleven children. He grew up in poverty but received a good education. In his teens he accepted a minor government position, married and fathered a son but the marriage ended in divorce.

In his twenties, following his mother's death, Confucius set himself up as a teacher. He taught the traditional Six Disciplines: history, poetry, government, propriety (ethics), music, and divination. Confucius became one of the great teachers of history but aspired to public office. He had supreme confidence in his ability to reorder society.

Legend has it that at the age of fifty Confucius ascended through the offices of Minister of Public Works and Minister of Justice to Prime Minister. His government was ideal. Enemies, however, conspired against him and he was forced to retire at the age of fifty-five. In reality, scholarly speculation has assumed that contemporary rulers were much too afraid of Confucius' candor and integrity to appoint him to any position involving power.

During the next twelve years Confucius wandered from place to place with a few of his disciples. He was jeered at and even placed in jail. At the age of sixty-seven a position was found for him as an advisor to the Duke of Ai. During the next years he spent his time teaching and compiling some of the classic Chinese texts. He died in 479 B. C. Confucius was not only a wise man, he was an incorruptible, human-hearted man. Although largely defeated in his purpose of reforming society, he died with courage, saying, "There is not one in the empire that will make me his master!"

Li (social propriety) is the greatest principle of living. When society lives by li it moves smoothly. Confucius saw the embodiment of this society in the idealized form of feudalistic government, illustrated by the Five Relationships: kindness in the father, filial piety in the son; gentility in the eldest brother, humility and respect in the younger; righteousness behavior in the husband, obedience in the wife; humane consideration in elders, deference in juniors; benevolence in rulers, loyalty in ministers and subjects. Li may also refer to the "middle way" in all things.

Just as li is the outward expression of the superior man, jen (goodness, humaneness, love) is the inner ideal. Confucius taught that men should love one another and practice respect and courtesy. If li and jen were operative in a person, the end product would be the Confucian goal: the superior man. Confucius

believed in the natural goodness or at least the natural perfectibility of man. He stressed government by virtue (Te) and the arts of peace (Wen). Since filial piety is the root of all virtue this concern for parental respect is seen in the veneration of age and ancestor worship. Confucius was a pragmatic man who thought one should respect the spirits but keep them at a distance.

Confucius regarded himself as a transmitter, not the originator, of social values and wisdom. Although Confucianism does not claim revelatory scriptures, the Five Classics and the Four Books are regarded as the touch-stone of Confucian conduct and wisdom. Mencius and Hsun Tzu were the great expositors of Confucius in the fourth and third centuries B. C. and did much to popularize and spread his teachings. During the Han Dynasty there developed a cult of Confucius himself. By the sixth century A. D. every prefecture in China had a temple to honor Confucius.

The Confucian cult was checked in 1503 when the images of Confucius were ordered removed from the temples and replaced with wooden tablets inscribed with his teachings. All titles were removed and he was spoken of simply as "Master Kung, the perfect teacher of antiquity." In 1906 there was an attempt to revive the Confucian cult but with the birth of the People's Republic of China all sacrifices to Confucius and other religious observances were officially abandoned.

VII. SHINTO

The Religion of Nature Worship, Emperor Worship, and Purity

Shinto (the way of the gods), traditionally dating back to 660 B. C., is a loosely organized religion of the Japanese people embracing a wide variety of beliefs and practices. In its most basic sense Shinto is a religious form of Japanese patriotism. The mythology of Shintoism teaches that Japan and the Japanese people were brought into being by special divine creation and that their emperors were literally descendants of the Sun Goddess. In Japan a person may in good conscience be a Buddhist, a Confucian, and a member of a Shinto sect at the same time. Today (1982) Shintoism reports 57,154,200 members.

The two most important sacred books of Shintoism are the Kojiki (Chronicles of Ancient Events) and the Nihongi (Chronicles of Japan). The Kojiki mythology reports that in the beginning were the kami (gods, mana, occult force). Two of these primeval kami or deities were Izanagi (male-who-invites) and Izanami (female-who-invites). After giving birth to the land of Japan they produced many other kami.

Izanami died after giving birth to the kami of fire. Izanagi journeyed to Hades to find her. Finding her decayed body crawling with maggots he fled in horror back to the land of the living. To purify himself he entered a body of water and when he washed his left eye there came into existence the Sun Goddess, the Great Kami Amaterasu; and when he washed his right eye Tsukiyomi, the Moon Kami, emerged. After years of struggle the Japanese people were warring against each other and the Sun Goddess sent her grandson, Ninigi, to become the first emperor of Japan. Shinto is unique among the religions of the world in representing the Supreme Being as feminine in gender.

Although mythological tradition has the first Japanese emperor enthroned in the seventh century B. C., modern scholars think the actual history of Japan did not begin until the third century A. D. After the fourth century A. D. the Japanese came under the influence of Buddhism, Taoism, and Confucianism. By the end of the sixth century Mahayana Buddhism had taken a firm foothold on Japan. It was at this time that the term "Shinto" was introduced to distinguish the native Japanese religion from the new foreign religion.

Little by little the boundaries between Buddhism and Shintoism were obliterated. The concerns of day-to-day life became the domain of the Shinto side of religion while the concerns of the afterlife were served by the Buddhists. The Japanese developed distinctive forms of Buddhism such as Zen, Pure Land, and Nichiren.

Shinto almost died out as a viable religion but in the seventeenth century it was revitalized by tough-minded military leaders. A combination of Shinto and Confucianism was used to develop the warrior code of Bushido. The samuri (knights) who followed this code emphasized loyalty, gratitude, courage, justice, truthfulness, politeness, reserve, and honor. In Japan suicide has often been encouraged to avoid dishonor, escape from a bad life situation, or as a means of protest. When dishonored the Bushido warrior was expected to kill himself by hara-kiri (disembowelment).

Shinto teaches the importance of personal cleanliness and the sense of communal guilt. Apart from subservience to the Emperor, Shintoism has no definite set of theological beliefs or code of morality. Morality and theology are

naturalistic. Motoori (1730-1801), one of the most important scholars in the history of Shintoism, explains the lack of ethics in Shintoism: "It is because the Japanese were truly moral in their practice that they require no theory of morals."

After Commodore Perry in the mid nineteenth century opened Japan to outside influence sweeping changes have occurred in the country. The Constitution of 1889 established a state supported Shinto but other religions were allowed to exist and propagate. State Shinto supported thousands of shrines and priests. The grand imperial shrine at Ise was dedicated to the mother goddess of Japan, Amaterasu. Every loyal Japanese citizen wishes to visit the Ise Shrine at least once in their life time.

There are many Shinto sects which tend to be oriented in three major categories. First, those whose emphasis is on mountain or nature worship. Second, those who stress shamanism, divination, and faith healing such as the Tenri-kyo (Teachings of Divine Reason) sect. The third type of sectarian Shinto is more in tune with historic Shinto, reviving the myths of the origin of Japan, stressing purification rites, fasting, breath control, and other techniques similar to the Yoga cults of Hinduism. Domestic Shinto is practiced in many homes. The kami-dana (god shelf) is found in residences. Flowers or food may be placed before this altar daily or brief prayers and devotions may take place.

Shinto had become such an inseparable part of Japanese militarism the American occupation forces felt it necessary to direct the abolition of state support of Shinto in December of 1945. New Year's Day 1946 Emperor Hirohito disavowed the belief in his divine nature and complete religious freedom was guaranteed to every citizen.

VIII. ZOROASTRIANISM

The Religion of the Free Will Choice Between Good and Evil

Zoroastrianism is closely related to Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Concepts of Satan, angelology, demonology, a deliverer, future life, Paradise, and judgment in these religions may have been directly or indirectly derived from Zoroastrianism. Although it started with the intent of being a voluntarily accepted and universally adopted religion, today it is largely a hereditary faith reporting (1982) 271,000 followers living mostly in India and Iran.

The origins of Zoroastrian religion are shrouded in mystery. The ancient inhabitants of the Persian region were Aryan nature worshipers who venerated a series of deities known as daevas. Above these minor deities were higher gods among which the most important and popular was Mitra, the god of light, benefactor of cattle and upholder of loyalty and obedience. Part of these Aryans migrated into India which explains why many of the gods and practices of Vedic Hinduism and the ancient Persians are the same.

Zoroaster's birth date is uncertain. Tradition says he was pre-existent and born of a fifteen year old virgin in 660 B. C. Many marvels accompanied his birth. His name, Zarathustra Spitama, indicates he was born into a warrior clan that was connected with the royal family of ancient Persia. At fifteen he put on the kusti, a sacred string belt symbolic of his passage into manhood as a member of his religion. He spent years, partially in solitude, searching for answers to religious questions. At the age of thirty Zoroaster had a vision of the angel Vohu Mana, who appeared nine times the size of a man. The angel told him there was only one true God, Ahura Mazda, and that he was to become the prophet of Ahura Mazda. During the next ten years Zoroaster had other visions in which each of the archangels of Ahura Mazda appeared and revealed further truth to him.

He began preaching this new revelation but with no success. In ten years the only convert he won was a cousin. The turning point came when he met the Aryan King Vishtaspa. In a struggle with local priests he was thrown in jail but after two years won Vishtaspa to his faith, tradition says, by his wondrous cure of Vishtaspa's favorite black horse. The king put all of his power behind the propagation of the faith. Zoroaster became a leader in the nation and married three wives and was the father of six children.

The next twenty years was spent vigorously promulgating the faith among Persians and fighting two holy wars in its defense. During a war with the Turanians an enemy soldier found the seventy-seven year old prophet tending the sacred flame in a fire temple and killed him.

Zoroaster taught that Ahura Mazda (who is also given many other names) was the one true God and the nature gods or daevas (devils) his people worshiped were false gods. Ahura Mazda reveals himself to man through six modes (called archangels by Western scholars). Three were masculine and three were feminine in nature. Together with Ahura Mazda they compose seven sources of reality. The masculine immortals are Asha (knowledge of the law of God), Vohu-Mana (love), and Kshathra (loving service). The three feminine immortals are Armaiti (piety), Haurvatat (wholeness or perfection) and Ameretat (immortality).

The inclusive name of Zoroastrian scriptures is Avesta (knowledge) and it is divided into five main parts: Yasna (worship), Gathas (Psalms), Vendidad (law against demons), Yashts (worship hymns), and the Khorda-Avesta (litanies and prayers). In Zoroastrianism there are a limitless number of angels. Two angels are said to

record each person's good and evil deeds. Mithra is the strongest of these heavenly beings and the ideal of soldiers. Zoroaster approached the problem of evil more systematically than do other world religions. His position is often referred to as a dualism but this is incorrect. He taught there were two spirits emanating from Ahura Mazda. One is Spenta Mainyu, the Beneficent Spirit; the other is Angra Mainyu, the Evil Spirit (sometimes known as Ahriman or Satan). These spirits or forces exist and operate much like the yin and yang of Taoism.

Zoroaster saw the forces of good struggling with the forces of evil in the world. Man is born in a pure and sinless state and has complete freedom of will to co-operate with good or evil and shape his destiny. It is possible for man to choose the path of righteousness and achieve perfection in this life. He believed in a law of retribution which is called karma in Hinduism and is stated by St. Paul as, "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he reap." Man is entirely responsible for his destiny.

In Zoroaster's eschatology the soul stays with the body for three days. On the fourth day the soul journeys to the place of judgment. If the preponderance of his life has been good the soul goes to Paradise; if evil it is sentenced to hell. The descriptions of hell by Zoroastrianism is suited to the sins of the person and filled with revolting horrors. These souls will abide in heaven or in hell until the final consummation of the world established by Ahura Mazda. Before the end of the world there will be three saviors who will come at intervals of one thousand years. At the end of the age Ahura Mazda will wipe out every trace of the evil work of Angra Mainyu. The souls from hell will be brought up and purified and will join the resurrected souls of the righteous and the world will enter a new cycle of perfection where no one will grow old or decay and Ahura Mazda will reign supreme.

Zoroastrianism teaches concern for good thought, good word, and good deed as expressed in truthfulness, chastity, justice, compassion, care of the soil and natural elements, charity, education, and service. Their worship consists mainly in prayers requesting assistance in living righteous lives. They may offer sandalwood to be burned in the sacred fire which burns eternally in their temples. At the age of seven in India and ten in Iran the young Zoroastrian is received into his faith with the investiture of a sacred shirt (sade) and the sacred thread (kusti) and he must wear them the rest of his life except when bathing. There are ceremonies for all of the important points of life. At death the body dare not contaminate ground, fire, or water so it is placed in a Dakhma (tower of silence) where it is eaten by vultures or beasts of prey--or may be buried in a stone casket lined with lead.

The Persian empire was conquered by Alexander the Great in the fourth century B. C. Mithraic cults were established throughout the entire Mediterranean world and were a major rival of early Christianity. There was a revival of Zoroastrianism in the third century A. D. under the Sassanid rulers of Persia. When they were conquered by Muslim warriors in the seventh century followers of Zoroastrianism were eventually forced to convert to Islam or flee the country. Many followed their ancient kinsmen to India where they were known as Parsees. When the British arrived they favored the Parsee because they were not encumbered with the caste system or food taboos and because they valued education. The Parsee became leaders in education, business, and finance. Today they make up a small minority in India and an even smaller minority in Iran known as Gabars (infidels).

IX. JUDAISM

The Religion of Ethical Monotheism

Judaism is among the oldest of the world's major living religions. Its members have been frequently persecuted and scattered throughout the world yet have kept their identity. In 1982 Judaism reports 14,336,520 followers. Judaism believes that God is active in the social and historical process. The amazing achievement of Judaism is that it has developed the concept of God from that of a primitive tribal deity to the God of all nations.

The patriarchs of Judaism lived in the Fertile Crescent at the beginning of the second millennium B. C. The Biblical report speaks of the calling of Abraham in which he is promised that he will become the father of a great nation through which all the world will be blessed. The early Hebrews practiced animal sacrifice and circumcision. The generic name for God among the Semites was El. He is referred to variously as El Shaddai (God of the mountains or God Almighty), El Elyon (God Most High), El Olam (God everlasting), and Elohim (Gods). The Hebrews regarded themselves as God's chosen people.

The exodus of the Hebrews from Egypt where they served as slaves is the most important event in Judaism. Their miraculous delivery from the Egyptians under the leadership of Moses, the reception of the Ten Commandments, their forty years in the wilderness, and their conquest of the promised land are central factors in their religious consciousness, holidays and observances. The Ark of the Covenant and the Tent of Meeting were also important in the early days of Judaism.

With the establishment of the Hebrew monarchy under David and Solomon the religion of Israel took on a more formal character. David captured Jerusalem and Solomon built the first temple. Although animal sacrifice remained the main form of worship, prophets added a new dimension to Judaism. Amos proclaimed the need for personal and national obedience to a righteous God. Hosea declared that Yahweh was a God of mercy and love. Isaiah caught a vision of God's holy majesty and righteousness. Micah's summary of religious duty was "to do justly, and to love kindness and to walk humbly with thy God."

In 922 B. C. the Hebrews were split into two nations. The northern kingdom, Israel, was destroyed by the Assyrians in 721 B. C. and the ten tribes which made up this nation disappear from history. The southern kingdom, Judah, survived the Assyrian years but were conquered by the Babylonians in 586 B. C. Solomon's temple was torn down and the people were carried into captivity.

During the period of captivity Ezekiel gave the Hebrews hope by pointing out that they could worship Yahweh in Babylon as well as Jerusalem and pictured the rise of a new nation in the future. Second Isaiah described Yahweh as the God of the universe and promised a messiah to redeem the entire world.

When the Persians captured Babylon in 538 B. C. many Jews under the leadership of Ezra were allowed to return and rebuild Jerusalem. The reading of the law in book form took on new significance. The second temple was built (520 B. C.) and greatly enhanced much later (37-4 B. C.). The Romans destroyed it in 70 A. D. Following the Babylon captivity the Priestly Code was developed and legalistic Judaism was established. Later apocalyptic writers like Daniel and Enoch spoke of the coming of divine deliverance and an idealized future.

The Babylonian captivity was also the beginning of the long history of the

Diaspora. All of the cities in the Roman empire had a Jewish population. The Jews of the Diaspora developed the institutional synagogue and the office of rabbi. Following the fall of Jerusalem in 70 A. D. Hebrew scholars gathered and after much debate established the canon of the Torah--The Law, The Prophets, and the Writings (Old Testament) as we have it today. Later the Mishnah (commentaries on the law) was compiled.

The center of Jewish learning then shifted to Babylon where the Gemara (sermonic material on all areas of Jewish life) was brought together. When the Gemara was added to the Mishnah the resultant product was called the Talmud. There was a Palestinian Talmud and a Babylonian Talmud; both are written in Aramaic, while the Mishnah texts are entirely in Hebrew. During the medieval period Jewish and Muslim scholars worked together translating Greek and Latin philosophers into Arabic. Baghdad became the center of Jewish religious authority during this period.

Renewed persecution of the Jews by Muslim rulers began in 847 and with the decline of the Babylonian community Spanish Jews became the leaders of worldwide Judaism. The greatest figure in Spanish Judaism was the philosopher, talmudist, and physician, Maimonides (1135-1204). He attempted to harmonize Judaism with the philosophy of Aristotle. In 1391 there was a massacre of thousands of Jews and in 1492 the Jews and the Moors were expelled from Spain.

Mysticism--the concern for angels, demons, charms, dream interpretation, messiah predictions, and numerology--in Judaism is lumped under the heading of Cabala (tradition). The most outstanding compilation of cabalistic material was the Sefer Hazohar or Zohar attributed to a second century A. D. leader, Yohai; however, scholars believe Moses de Leon, a thirteenth century Spanish mystic, is the author. Cabalistic literature appeals to those who are oppressed and discouraged. These writings have been popular. This aspiration for deliverance is also reflected in that many in Jewish history have claimed to be the expected Messiah.

By the tenth century Europe had become the major location for Jewish life. The Jews frequently became money lenders to the Christian nobility. The Christian Crusades set off widespread attacks on Jews in Europe. Many fled to Poland or Islamic countries where rulers were more tolerant. By the end of the sixteenth century Poland had the largest concentration of Jews in the world. Their language was Yiddish, a combination of German and Hebrew. Jews in European cities were forced into restricted sections known as Ghettos, which were the worst parts of the city. The Lateran Council in 1215 decreed that Jews must wear a yellow badge and in some communities distinctive hats were required. A revolt in Poland resulted in the slaughter of from 300,000 to 500,000 Jews.

In the mid 1700's Moses Mendelssohn, a learned Jew, began writing essays in German and was accepted by the literary people and leaders of his day. He encouraged the Jews to come out of the ghettos and enter the modern world. About the same time Baal Shem Tov began preaching that God was not found in scholarly research in the Bible or the Talmud but in simple heartfelt faith. His followers became known as the Hasidim (pious ones).

By the nineteenth century Christian nations began making declarations that people of all faiths had equal rights. In 1848 Jews were first admitted to European universities. The Alfred Dreyfus trial in France, however, caused Theodore Herzl and others to realize that Jewish people would never be treated fairly until they had a land of their own. This resulted in the birth of the Zionist movement. The Nazi holocaust in which an estimated six million Jews were killed intensified this aspiration. Jews in increasing numbers migrated to Palestine.

They were encouraged by the British and when the British left Palestine in May of 1948, Israel immediately proclaimed statehood.

The following beliefs are central to Judaism: (1) Ethical monotheism, this doctrine of the one universal God is the central teaching of Judaism and its gift to the world. (2) The one true God has revealed his sovereign will through the Prophets. Here Abraham and Moses are especially important but revelation is progressive and is continued through the scholars and rabbis. (3) God has chosen Israel to be his servant to bring men to a true knowledge of God. Israel has a mission to all mankind. This does not endow the Jews with special privileges but it does give them special responsibilities. (4) God's will for man effects all of life. It applies to all people and to all times and places. Religious duties are especially emphasized in connection with the family and the welfare of society. The ideals of truth, justice, humility, faithfulness, and loving-kindness are held in high regard. Jews are noted for their love of learning.

There are three divisions within modern Judaism. Orthodox Judaism is rigorous about ritual observances, the dietary laws, and keeping the Sabbath. It stresses the absolute authority of revealed Law and looks for the coming of the Messiah. Conservative Judaism, while continuing rabbinical Judaism, claims the right to adopt the traditions to the conditions of the modern world. It is less rigid in the formulation of requirements than Orthodox Judaism. Reformed Judaism stresses the ethical teachings of the prophets and the growth of an age of justice, truth, and peace. Judaism is regarded as an evolving religious experience that is subject to change. (H. H. Titus - Living Issues of Philosophy)

X. CHRISTIANITY

The Religion of the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man Mediated by Jesus Christ

Christianity, stemming out of Judaism and developing primarily in the West, has become the largest religion of the world even though, except for Islam, it is the youngest major world religion. Its reported membership (1982) is 997,503,640 divided among 579,562,300 Roman Catholic, 76,444,600 Eastern Orthodox, and 341,496,740 Protestant members. Approximately one in every three persons on earth is identified with Christianity.

A religion practiced by so many people naturally encompasses a wide variety of beliefs and practices. In general Christians share a common belief in the uniqueness of Jesus of Nazareth as a truly divine and truly human incarnate Son of God who is the savior of mankind. They believe each individual by their faith and life determine their eternal destiny--either in heaven or in hell.

Scholars believe that Jesus, the founder of Christianity, was born between 4 and 7 B. C. at Bethlehem and grew up in Nazareth of Galilee. His contemporaries regarded him as the eldest son of Joseph, a carpenter, and his wife, Mary; but Matthew and Luke report that Jesus was born of a virgin. He grew up in a family of at least six other children. Roman Catholics maintain these were children of Joseph by an earlier marriage.

Since Jesus' parents were common people, it is assumed he attended the local synagogue school and was trained as a carpenter. The story of his discussion with the teachers of the law in Jerusalem when he was twelve suggests that he had an unusual interest and knowledge in religious matters. The next eighteen years are often called the silent years. Since Joseph drops out of the records at this point, it is assumed that he died during this period and that Jesus took over the management of the carpenter business along with the help of his brothers.

When Jesus was about thirty he began his ministry. The first public act was his baptism by his cousin, John the Baptist, in the Jordan river. Following his baptism, Jesus spent forty days in the Judean wilderness pondering the nature of his ministry. When he returned Jesus selected twelve apostles and spent three years preaching and teaching in Galilee, Judea, and Perea. His ministry was a balanced portrayal of the nature of God and service to man. Many were benefited by his miracles of healing. Peter described his life succinctly: "He went about doing good."

Both the form and content of Jesus' teachings are recognized and respected as outstanding among the great religious pioneers and innovators of the world. Jesus believed he was sent by God and accepted Peter's description of him as "the Christ" (Messiah). The basic teaching of Jesus was the love of God and the love of man. The fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man is the essence of his gospel. This fellowship of the sons and daughters of God with each other and with their Heavenly Father Jesus referred to as the Kingdom of God or the Kingdom of Heaven. We see in his life and teachings the centrality of the religious point of view. His primary concern was that he and all mankind should be completely dedicated to doing the will of God. Jesus saw the Kingdom of God as a progressive growth of the individual and society--a mustard seed phenomenon. Jesus emphasized the worth of human personality. Evil was to be opposed with vigor but persons must be loved unendingly. Ethically Jesus taught principles rather than rules. The spirit, the motivation, is the heart of behavior; external action or

appearances are secondary. He saw body, mind, and spirit as a functional whole which is essentially good and capable of growth and improvement, striving toward the perfection of the Heavenly Father. Much of Jesus' most profound teaching is given in parables. Through his life and teachings he achieved a new synthesis of religious insights which has attracted people of all religions and has resulted in more books being written about him than about any person who has ever lived on our planet.

The leaders of Judaism increasingly threatened by his appeal to the common people and by his unorthodox teaching and behavior contrived to have him condemned by the Jewish high court and with the co-operation of the Roman Procurator of Judea, Pontius Pilate, had him crucified. The third day following his death the Gospels report his resurrection and after forty days, in which Jesus appeared to various groups of disciples, he ascended into heaven.

At Pentecost (Shavout, fifty days after Passover) his followers in Jerusalem experienced being filled with the Holy Spirit and they began preaching the gospel of their risen Lord with great enthusiasm and dedication. Peter and James assumed leadership of the Jerusalem Church until its destruction along with the city in 70 A. D.

Paul of Tarsus is often called "the second founder of Christianity." He was a Jewish scholar convert who is traditionally considered to be the author of fourteen books of the New Testament. Paul was the first to state systematically the beliefs of Christianity and is largely responsible for transforming a sect of Judaism into the early Christian Church where gentiles were welcome. John B. Noss says, "He brought intact the religion of Jesus in the vehicle of a religion about Jesus."

The Bible, made up of the Old Testament and the New Testament, is the scripture of Christianity. The New Testament began in the early Christian Church as a series of papers and letters written by numerous people. Over the years there was much discussion about which books should be officially recognized. In 367 Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria, in an Easter letter discusses the books he considered canonical. This is the first list which includes all of the twenty-seven books in the New Testament as we now have it. Various church councils in the years that followed adopted this list.

The early Christian Church was not a highly organized body with an established creed; therefore, it encompassed a wide variety of beliefs. The most famous heresy of the early church centered around a widespread and diverse group known as Gnostics. They believed the spirit was good and that flesh was evil. Consequently, they denied that Christ could have been truly human. Jesus was not really born of the flesh and there was no resurrection of the flesh. The Gnostics also regarded Jehovah as an inferior being and rejected the Old Testament. Gnosticism was a syncretistic movement which incorporated beliefs of many Middle East religions and philosophies.

Marcionism was a closely related heresy. Marcion, the son of the Bishop of Pontus, declared that the God of the Old Testament was a cruelly legalistic and merciless deity and that Christians should discard the Old Testament and follow Paul in asceticism, celibacy, and scorn the physical world.

A third heresy, Montanism, was a theology preached by Montanus in the middle of the second century. Montanus taught that the Holy Spirit was not to be stifled by dogma but should be free to move in the hearts of Christians, causing them to speak in tongues and engage in other charismatic activities. He taught

that the end of the world was coming soon.

To counter these and other heretical groups Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons, wrote Against the Heresies around 185 A. D. Later the Apostles Creed was adopted and the New Testament was canonized in an attempt to control religious beliefs. Modern scholars are finding the struggle with these deviant groups was much more complex than official records show. At times political and economic factors may have been more important in determining actions than the theological issues.

Early Christians, in addition to being torn by internal problems, were persecuted in the Roman empire. They were accused of being atheists who committed sexual atrocities and engaged in cannibalism. In such an environment gradually the Bishop of Rome for a variety of social, political, and ecclesiastical reasons came to be recognized as the most important bishop of Christianity and was finally designated Pope. The Emperor Constantine whose wife and mother were Christians brought persecution to a close. In 325 he called the Church Council of Nicea to stop the warring within Christianity over the nature of Christ. Just before dying Constantine accepted baptism and officially became a Christian.

The writings of St. Augustine (354-430) formulating the doctrines of original sin, the fall of man, and predestination along with the rise of the monastic movement had a great influence on Christianity. Theological differences and deteriorating relationships between East and West finally resulted in a complete break in 1054 when the pope excommunicated the patriarch of Constantinople and precipitated the formation of the Eastern Orthodox Church.

The medieval papacy developed power, gathered lands, wealth, and went to war like any other feudal fiefdom. The moral leadership of the papacy was at its lowest ebb between 1309 and 1377. It was a time of luxury, moral laxity, and abuse. The papacy was moved from Rome to Avignon. In 1378 the Avignon cardinals elected a new pope, Urban VI, who refused to return to Avignon. The cardinals declared Urban's election void and elected another pope to rule from Avignon. Urban retaliated by selecting another college of cardinals who were stationed at Rome. The Council of Pisa called in 1409 to settle the issue resulted instead in electing a third pope who also claimed to be Christ's vicar on earth. The Great Schism was finally resolved at the Council of Constance which met from 1414 to 1418. Thomas Aquinas (1227-1274), a Dominican monk, who lived in this medieval historical period was one of the greatest thinkers the church ever produced. In his Summa Theologiae he applied Aristotelian philosophy to the formation of Christian theology in an attempt to bring faith and reason together.

The Renaissance, the rise of European nationalism, and the decline of the papacy set the stage for the Protestant Reformation. Forerunners like John Wyclif in England, John Huss in Bohemia, and Girolamo Savonarola in Italy helped prepare Europe for the Reformation initiated by Martin Luther when he nailed ninety-five theses on the door of the Wittenberg Church as grounds for debate. Ulrich Zwingli and John Calvin in Switzerland and John Knox in Scotland were the originators of the Reformed-Presbyterian churches. The marital problems of Henry VIII were instrumental in founding the Church of England, establishing the heritage of the Episcopal Church, and later the Methodist Church under the leadership of John and Charles Wesley.

The most radical of the Protestant groups were the Anabaptists in Switzerland and the Netherlands. They attempted to discard everything that was not expressly found in the New Testament. These nonconformists laid the foundation for the emergence of the Mennonites, Amish, Quakers, Congregationalists, Baptists, and

Unitarians. Later social concerns resulted in the advent of the Salvation Army, the Young Men's Christian Association, and the Sunday School movement.

The Roman Catholic Counter-Reformation at the Council of Trent in 1545 declared that Catholic tradition was co-equal with scripture as a source of truth; and that the Roman Catholic Church had the sole right to interpret scripture. They reaffirmed the seven sacraments: Baptism, Confirmation, Penance, Eucharist, Extreme Unction, Marriage, and Ordination. (The Protestant churches recognize only Baptism and the Lord's Supper as sacraments.) Later the Catholic Church established the doctrines of the Immaculate Conception of Mary (1854) and the bodily assumption of Mary (1950). The Vatican Council of 1869 declared the dogma of papal infallibility when the pope speaks *ex cathedra*. The Second Vatican Council called by John XXIII in 1958 and at meetings between 1962 and 1965 effected the most sweeping changes ever made in the Roman Catholic Church. It recognized Non-Catholics as true Christians; allowed the vernacular in the mass and more congregational participation in worship; declared Jews were not responsible for the death of Jesus; and took steps toward reconciliation with Orthodox and Protestant groups.

The nineteenth century was characterized by a strong missionary movement; and the twentieth century has given birth to the ecumenical movement. Churches all over the world are beginning to initiate fellowship and unite. The World Council of Churches was organized in Amsterdam in 1948. Denominations like the United Church of Christ, the United Methodist Church, and the United Presbyterian Church illustrate this trend.

With the rise of modern science and the ecumenical movement the mainline churches of Christianity became less doctrinaire and began utilizing scientific knowledge in their religious views. Many accepted evolution as the methodology which God used in creation and had no trouble with the possibility that there may be millions of inhabited planets in the universe.

There was a sharp reaction to this "modernism" by conservative churchmen who became known as fundamentalists. They denounced the National Council of Churches, evolution, and "worldliness." Fundamentalism stressed the infallibility and inerrancy of the Bible; the deity and virgin birth of Christ; the necessity of the substitutionary blood atonement doctrine; the physical or bodily resurrection of Christ; and the bodily second coming of Christ. These churches now prefer to be called "evangelicals." They have become quite militant in their evangelism and have a much larger missionary program than the mainline churches.

On the other extreme, liberal Christianity believes that Christianity is a dynamic and growing religion; that revelation is progressive and continuous; that God is personal and each person's religious experience is unique; that emphasis should be placed on man's inherent worth, dignity, and potentials as a child of God; and that the struggle against evil is both personal and social. Christianity must be thought out, deeply experienced, and lived in all of life.

John Noss sums up Christianity by saying, "Christianity is not a way of looking into the past, but a way of going forward into the future; not an escape from the world into solitariness, but a way of spending one's life in order to find it; not a retreat into ultimate truth, but a redemptive mission, a way of salvation leading into the world and through the world, in the love of God and man."

XI. ISLAM

The Religion of Submission to God

Islam is the youngest of the major religions of the world. It is the dominant religion of the third-world nations of the Middle East and Africa and the second largest of the world's religions with 589,143,400 followers. Muslim philosophy is a blend of Arabic, Jewish, and Christian elements and is one of the simplest and least complicated of the world's religions.

The basic belief of Islam is that there is only one God, Allah, who is the sole and sovereign ruler of the universe. Allah has made himself known through other prophets at other times; but his best and final revelation was to the prophet Muhammad in the seventh century. The central demand of Muslims (submitters) is submission to the will of Allah.

Pre-Islamic Arab religion was an animistic polytheism. Images to these gods were carved and cherished and blood sacrifices were made to them. They recognized one supreme high god whom they called Allah (the God). They venerated a black meteoric stone at Mecca. Legend says the stone fell from heaven during the time of Adam and Eve and that Abraham and Ishmael built the Kaaba around it.

Muhammad was born around 570 A. D. at Mecca. His father died before he was born and his mother died before he was six years old. He was reared by an uncle and had no opportunity for any kind of formal education. He was an illiterate caravan worker and camel driver. In his travels he met Christians, Jews, and perhaps Zoroastrians. Around the age of twenty-five he married a wealthy widow caravan owner, Khadija. During their twenty-five years of marriage she bore him two sons and four daughters; but only one daughter, Fatima, survived him.

In the years following his marriage he began to go into the hills surrounding Mecca to contemplate the fate of his people. Muhammad entered a period of spiritual stress. He was concerned about the idolatry of his people and their fate on the judgment day at the end of the world. As time passed he became agitated with the thought that the Last Day and Last Judgment might be near at hand. According to Muslim tradition he visited a cave near the base of Mt. Hira north of Mecca for days at a time. Here one night when he was around the age of forty the archangel Gabriel appeared to him. After a series of revelations extending over many years Muhammad became convinced that there was only one God, Allah; and that he was the last and the greatest in a series of prophets (28) of this God--which included Abraham, Moses, and Jesus.

Muhammad began to preach but was met with rejection and hostility. His first converts were from the younger and poorer classes in Mecca. As opposition mounted Muhammad received protection from his uncle; however, some of his followers took refuge in Abyssinia. In 619 both his wife and his uncle died. Muhammad tried to move out of Mecca to a nearby town but was rejected.

A fortuitous event took place in 620. Men from Yathrib (Medina) came to seek Muhammad as an impartial judge to settle disputes within the city. It was 622 before Muhammad could leave Mecca. A group of assassins had pledged to kill him but finally Muhammad and his friend and successor, Abu Bakr, escaped to a cave on Mt. Thaur and thence to Medina. The Hijrah (migration) normally took eleven days but they made it in eight. Muslims date their calendars from the Hijrah (A. H.).

At Medina Muhammad set up a theocracy and directed Muslims to pray toward Jerusalem but when he was opposed by the Jews he commanded his followers to pray toward Mecca. The final break with the Jews came when a Jewess, Zainab, invited the Prophet and his friends to dinner and fed them poisoned lamb. The Jewish tribes were either expelled from Muslim territory or offered the choice of conversion or death.

Although Muhammad greatly improved the treatment of women, they were still under the rulership of men. Muslim^s were allowed four wives if all of them were treated the same. A man could divorce his wife by repeating three times, "I divorce you." Muhammad through special dispensation married eleven wives. When he married his cousin, Zaynab, who had been the wife of his adopted son, Zayd, he was not criticized so much for taking another man's wife as for marrying a cousin which was considered incestuous in the Arab culture.

Muhammad launched military campaigns to consolidate their position. At the battle of Badr in 624 the Muslims defeated the Meccans. In another battle the following year the Muslims lost more men than the Meccans. A force of 10,000 Meccans attacked Medina in 627 but no decisive battles were fought and the Meccans withdrew. A peace treaty was worked out which allowed Muslims to make the pilgrimage to Mecca. In 630 Muhammad entered Mecca with an army of 10,000 men as its complete conqueror. He went to the Kaaba and destroyed all of the idols and images. With this symbolic act the Prophet became the sole leader of the Arabian people. At the age of sixty-two in 632 Muhammad led another pilgrimage to Mecca. When he returned he gave a farewell message to Muslims and died in the arms of his wife Aishah. His last words were, "Lord grant me pardon! Join me to the companionship on high! Eternity in Paradise! Pardon! The blessed companionship on high!" Muhammad was a man of unquestioned religious experience, a man of prayer, one utterly devoted to the religious ideal as he saw it. He was an attractive leader and an efficient organizer. At times he was vindictive and autocratic; yet he could say, "There is no compulsion in religion."

Muhammad made no provision for succession. The first four caliphs (deputy) were chosen by election and are often referred to as the "orthodox caliphs" because they were selected from the circle of the friends of the Prophet. Ali, the last of the orthodox caliphs, had the caliphate usurped by those who formed the Umayyad dynasty in 661. The Umayyad caliphs ruled from Damascus, Syria from 661 to 750. They were succeeded by the Abbasid dynasty which ruled from Baghdad, Persia between 750 and 1258. This was the golden age of Islam. The Abbasids were replaced by the Mamelukan Turks who ruled from Egypt. They were succeeded in the sixteenth century by the Ottoman Turks who made the caliph title synonymous with that of the sultan of Turkey. When the Ottoman Empire was broken up after World War I the caliphate ceased to be.

Islam is not a temple-oriented religion; however, Muhammad decreed that Muslims were required to pray together at a mosque on Friday. There an imam leads in prayer; the imam is not a priest but a pious man. The scripture of Islam is the Quran (reading) which is made up of 114 surahs (chapters) arranged according to the length of the surah. The Quran is the Word of God; it is eternal, absolute, and irrevocable. Muhammad acted only as a stenographer for Allah. Probably no scripture has influenced its people more than the Quran. It is dutifully read by Muslims and memorized in its entirety by many. The Quran has twenty-five references to Jesus Christ and represents Jesus as predicting the coming of the founder of Islam.

Essential beliefs of Islam include: (1) The one God, Allah, who is the

omnipotent, omnipresent, and omniscient creator and ruler of the universe. He has ninety-nine names which are suggestive of his infinite nature. Allah in referring to himself uses a plural pronoun, "we," like the Hebrew plural "Elohim." (2) Angels of various kinds which are both good and evil. The leader of the demons is Iblis (devil) who was responsible for the fall of Adam and Eve. (3) The Quran and other books such as the Hebrew Law and Psalms and the Evangel to Jesus. (4) Prophets of Allah-- twenty-eight are mentioned in the Quran and Muhammad is the last and the greatest of the prophets. (5) Judgment, Paradise, and Hell--the Islamic Paradise has abundant pleasures such as beautiful gardens with flowing water, large-eyed maidens, and wine with no headaches. Hell is a horrid place filled with scalding winds, black smoke, and brackish water. (6) Divine decrees-- things are predestined by the will of Allah. This emphasis gives Islam an atmosphere of fatalism. The most frequent statement among devout Muslims is "if God wills it."

Every Muslim must perform "the five pillars of Islam:" (1) Repeat the creed, "There is no God but Allah; and Muhammad is the Prophet of Allah." (2) Prayer--the Quran says three times a day but in later years it was raised to five times each day. The muezzins climb the minarets of mosques five times a day to cry out that it is time for prayer. The Muslim must cleanse himself and face Mecca in a prostrate position for prayer. (3) Almsgiving--a Muslim is expected to share his possessions with the poor of his community. Later almsgiving became obligatory and was assessed as a tax amounting to two or three percent of one's wealth. (4) Fasting is required during the month of Ramadan. Between daylight and dark Muslims are expected to abstain from all food, drink, smoking, and sexual relations. Exceptions are made for those who are sick, nursing mothers, small children, and those who are traveling. Pork, wine, and gambling are also forbidden to Muslims. (5) Pilgrimage (hajj)--once in a lifetime every Muslim is expected to make a pilgrimage to Mecca. Wearing seamless white garments, they will make seven trips around the Kaaba and kiss the sacred black stone. On the tenth day of the hajj they will sacrifice a sheep or goat. They may also visit Medina and perhaps Jerusalem. When the pilgrim returns home he may have the title "hajj" attached to his name.

Islam became the unifying force for Arab people. It conquered all of the Middle East and moved into India, China, Indonesia, and some of the Pacific Islands. In 711 the Muslims entered Spain where they were dominant for the next seven centuries. Europe was saved from further conquest by Charles Martel in 732 at the Battle of Tours. Muslims made real contributions to philosophic thinking during the early Middle Ages. They translated and discussed Plato, Aristotle, and other Greek thinkers and helped preserve this literature during the Dark Ages. Toward the end of the nineteenth century missionary activity began to spread into Africa.

Islam in the modern era has been characterized by extreme conservatism. The Wahhabi movement founded in 1744 opposed all forms of change. They suppressed the Sufis and others who were seeking to grow in the modern world. The isolation of the Muslim world came to an end in the early part of the twentieth century due to involvement in World War I and the need for Arab oil. They achieved wealth and political power almost overnight. This revolutionary upheaval preempting evolutionary development is causing many problems in the Middle East.

Like all religious movements Islam is divided into various sects. Around eighty-five percent of all Muslims are classified as Sunnis (traditionalists). They practice their religion exactly as it was established by the Prophet. Certain Quran instructions have presented problems--all thieves, for instance,

are to have their hands cut off. To wrestle with these difficulties four schools of thought have developed within the Sunnis group which differ in the interpretations of the life of Islam.

The Shi'ite sect constitutes the second largest group in Islam, making up around fourteen percent of the Muslim world. The Shi'ites live mostly in Iran and Iraq. They believe the descendants of Ali, who was murdered by those establishing the Umayyad dynasty, are the only true claimants to the caliphate. The twelve descendants of Ali are called Imans. The twelfth Iman disappeared in 878 and Shi'ites believe he will return again to lead Islam into a golden age. This messianic figure is called Mahdi. There are many minor sects among the Shi'ites. One group of interest founded by Hasan ibn-al-Sabbah used hashish to psych up followers and while thus intoxicated they were sent out to murder selected victims. They became known as Assassins, and this word was eventually added to the European languages.

Islam, like Judaism, has always been a "this worldly" religion; nevertheless, there have always been some Muslim mystics. They are known as Sufis (wool-wearers). They became an organized movement around the ninth century and have produced some of the finest mystic literature of the world. At times the Sufi movement has gone underground and taught its more unorthodox beliefs in secret. During the twelfth century the Sufis began to organize themselves into monastic orders. When a convert came to join the order he was known as a fakir or a dervish (poor man). Sufi monastic practices emphasize discipline, poverty, abstinence, and sometimes celibacy. Some dervishes gained notoriety for their whirling about in ecstasy. Other Sufis became known for their practice of walking on live coals and similar feats. The important contribution of the Sufi movement to religious thought is that union with God may be an authentic inner experience.

Some of the reform efforts in Islam have been syncretistic such as the Baha'i movement. Baha'i began as a sect of Islam but is now a separate religion. The central themes of Baha'i are that all religions of the world spring from the same source, that there is a basic unity in all religious truth, and that all the prophets have had a partial message of this one God. They believe religion must work in harmony with science and education to build a peaceful world order.

GENERAL READING

- Atkins, G. G. & Braden, C. S. Procession of the Gods. Harper, 1948.
- Bach, Marcus. Major Religions of Mankind. Abingdon, 1959
- Braden, C. S. The Scriptures of Mankind. Macmillan, 1952
- Braden, C. S. These Also Believe. Macmillan, 1957
- Browne, Lewis. The World's Great Scriptures. Macmillan, 1946
- Burt, E. A. Man Seeks the Divine. Harper, 1956
- Ellwood, R. S. Religious and Spiritual Groups in Modern America. Prentice-Hall, 1973
- Fern, Vergilius. Religion in the Twentieth Century. Philosophical Library, 1948
- Frazer, Sir J. G. The Golden Bough. Macmillan, 1958
- Frost, S. E. The Sacred Writings of the World's Great Religions. McGraw-Hill, 1972
- Hopfe, Lewis M. Religions of the World. Glencoe, 1983
- Hume, R. E. The World's Living Religions. Scribners, 1959
- Jurji, Edward, editor. The Great Religions of the Modern World. Princeton, 1946
- Moore, George F. History of Religions. Scribners, 1920
- Nielson, N. C. et al. Religions of the World. St. Martins, 1983
- Noss, John B. Man's Religions. Macmillan, 1980
- Smith, Huston. The Religions of Man. Harper, 1958