

Thirteenth Edition

Religions of the World

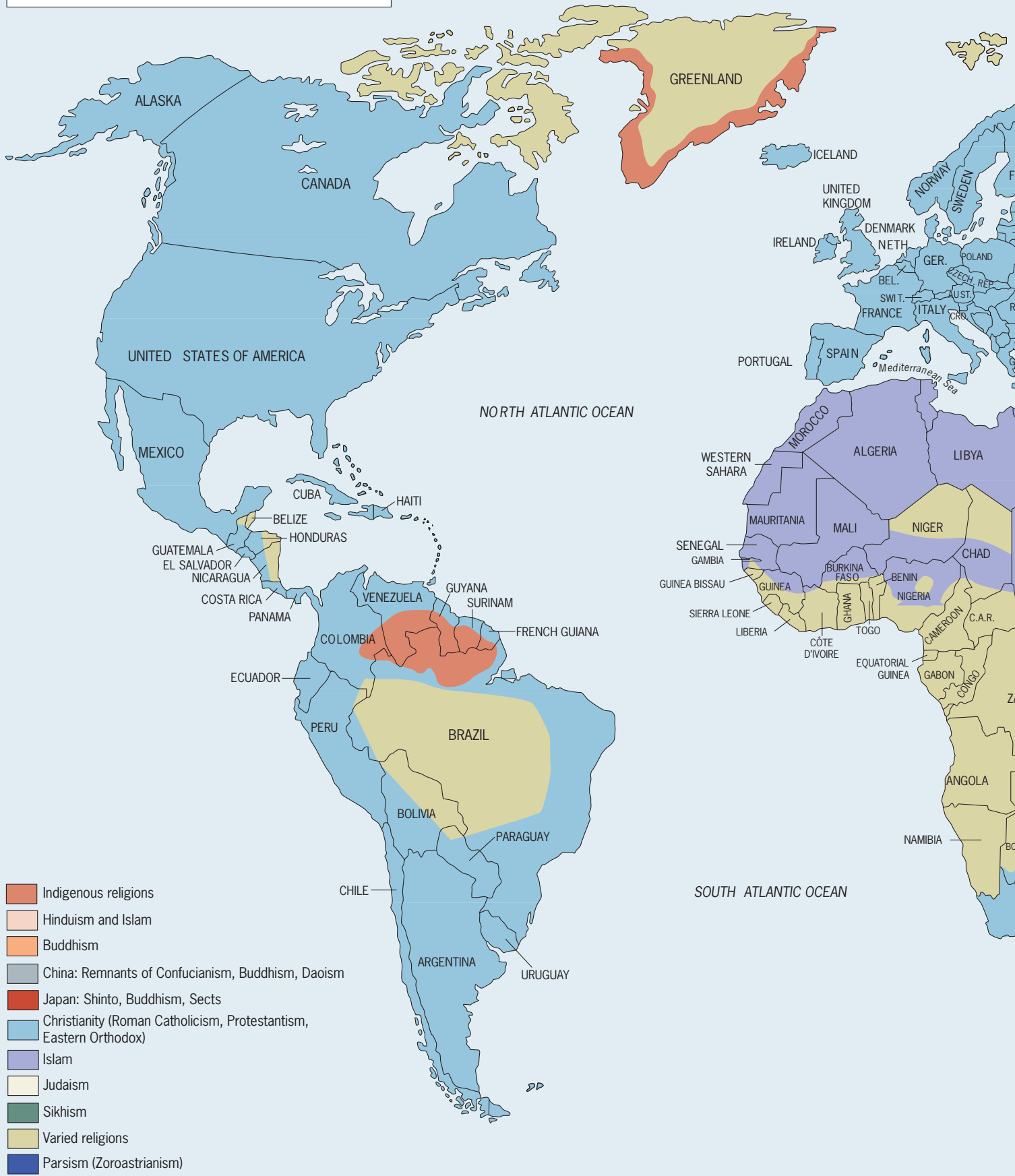


Lewis M. Hopfe
Mark R. Woodward
Brett Hendrickson

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Religions of the World

Predominant forms of religions in the world today



- Indigenous religions
- Hinduism and Islam
- Buddhism
- China: Remnants of Confucianism, Buddhism, Daoism
- Japan: Shinto, Buddhism, Sects
- Christianity (Roman Catholicism, Protestantism, Eastern Orthodox)
- Islam
- Judaism
- Sikhism
- Varied religions
- Parsism (Zoroastrianism)



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Religions of the World

Thirteenth Edition

Lewis M. Hopfe

Revised by

Mark R. Woodward

*Department of Religious Studies
Arizona State University*

and

Brett Hendrickson

*Department of Religious Studies
Lafayette College*

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Preface

A few years ago, I was teaching an introductory class on world religions to a group of students that included several young veterans from war zones in Iraq and Afghanistan. On one occasion, one of these students stayed to talk to me after a class session on Islam. He explained that he had recently completed a long tour in Afghanistan, and he lamented that he had not had the opportunity to take the class before his time abroad. “We would have understood the people there so much better if we had known this stuff,” he said.

Thankfully, not all education about the religions of the world is a matter of war and peace. However, this brief example helps illuminate why it is essential that we learn about other people in our world. The histories, deep-seated beliefs, ritual practices, and ethical systems that make up the world’s religions are some of the most important forces at play today on our incredibly diverse planet. A careful study of world religions, therefore, is both a key to responsible global citizenship and an excellent exercise in helping one understand one’s own assumptions, beliefs, and moral codes.

In addition to these weighty concerns, learning about people and their religions is fascinating and enjoyable. Many students come to an introductory course on world religions with little or no exposure to most of the religions covered in this textbook. When they learn how exciting, complex, and even beautiful the world’s religions can be, they return over and over to the study of religions, in their college careers and throughout their lives. This book invites you to what I hope will be a lifelong engagement with the religions of the world.

New to This Edition:

- The revised first section of the book has been refocused on living religions in the Americas and Africa.
- “Religion and Public Life” boxes throughout the text invite reflection on religion’s role in contemporary political and social issues.
- The revised account of the origins of Hinduism in Chapter 4 reflects more recent scholarship.
- Expanded “key terms” lists are included at the beginning of all chapters.
- Chapter 13 on Baha’i, previously available online only, is now included in the main text.

- The reconceived and expanded learning architecture throughout the text coordinates the main headings in the running text with both the Learning Objectives listed at the beginning of each chapter and the Think About It questions listed at the end of each chapter.
- One of the most exciting developments that took place during this revision was the development and design of REVEL, a new digital format that makes *Religions of the World* excitingly interactive. We believe that REVEL presents the same material found in the printed version in a dynamic design that actually functions more like a classroom than a textbook. We are sure that this will make the study of religion more engaging to the current generation of college students.

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PowerPoint Presentation Slides (0134027477): These PowerPoint slides summarize the content for each chapter to help instructors convey religious concepts and principles in a clear and engaging way. The slides are available at www.pearsonhighered.com.

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Tony Roberts, *Tarrant County College–Northwest*

Jerome Soneson, *University of Northern Iowa*

Brett Hendrickson

Lafayette College

Easton, Pennsylvania

About the Authors

Lewis Moore Hopfe

Lewis Moore Hopfe (1935–1992) graduated from Baylor University in 1956 with a B.A. in history and religious studies, an M. Div. degree from Southwestern Baptist Theological

Seminary in 1960, and his Ph.D. in Old Testament studies from Boston University in 1965.

Dr. Hopfe began his teaching career in 1965 as an instructor in religious studies at Kendall College, Evanston, Illinois. During his early years of teaching it became apparent that there was a need for an introductory textbook for the study of world religions. He said, "Religion is never a simple subject, and can become complex and intricate to the complete dismay of the beginning student." His goal was to provide the student with a reasonably brief and readable text that did not short-cut or simplify religions, but did not delve too deeply into the technicalities. Responding to this need the first edition of *Religions of the World* became a reality and was published in 1979.

Dr. Hopfe was "an author, teacher, pastor, archaeologist, college dean, weight lifter, and spiritual guide to students, colleagues, and parishioners" whose lives he touched via the written and spoken word. *Religions of the World* is his legacy to academia.

Mark R. Woodward

Mark R. Woodward is Associate Professor of Religious Studies at Arizona State University and Visiting Professor of Comparative Religions at the Center for Religious and Cross-cultural Studies at Gadjah Mada University in Indonesia. He received his Ph.D. in Cultural Anthropology from the University of Illinois and also studied at the Divinity School at the University of Chicago.

His research has focused on Islam, Buddhism, Christianity, and indigenous religions in Southeast Asia, especially Indonesia, Burma, and Singapore. For most of the past decade his research has centered on issues of religion, conflict, and violence in Southeast Asia and globally. He is the author, co-author, or editor of five books and many scholarly articles. He has taught the introductory level university course World Religions more than fifty times in the last twenty-five years.

Brett Hendrickson

Brett Hendrickson is an Assistant Professor of Religious Studies at Lafayette College in Easton, Pennsylvania, where he teaches courses on the religious history of the Americas, religion and healing, religion and public life, and the introductory course on world religions. He received his Ph.D. in Religious Studies from Arizona State University, a Master of Divinity (M.Div.) from Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary, and an A.B. in Latin American Studies from Columbia University.

Hendrickson's research examines lived religious practices in Latin America and among Latinos and Latinas in the United States, with a special interest in religious and folk healing. His work attempts to explain religious interactions and exchanges among various ethnic and cultural groups in complex political and social contexts. He is the author of *Border Medicine: A Transcultural History of Mexican American Curanderismo* and several scholarly articles.

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Introduction and Overview

Studying religion is deeply rewarding. Religions have been and continue to be some of the most important aspects of people's lives all over the planet. As we will see over the course of this book, world history has been profoundly influenced by religious leaders, religious ideas about society, and religious ethical codes. The way people have thought about nature, the human person, the cosmos, and questions of ultimate meaning and concern are intrinsic parts of religion. In modern times, religion continues to affect individuals, families, and whole societies, and it has entered into new and exciting conversations with science. The academic study of religion has many tools at its disposal and draws on insights from philosophy, psychology, history, comparative literature, anthropology, sociology, and other disciplines. Students of religion can expect to hone their critical thinking skills as well as their cross-cultural understanding.¹

Perhaps the greatest contribution that knowledge of world religions can make to a citizen of the twenty-first century is in the area of world politics. Religion has always played an important role in political conflict at home and abroad. Religious differences are fundamental to debates concerning civil rights, abortion, and gender relations in the contemporary United States. Catholic Christians fight with Protestant Christians, Hindus conflict with Muslims, Buddhists battle Hindus, Muslims debate with Christians, Jews struggle with Muslims, and secularists do not always see eye to eye with religious people on issues of public policy. Certainly, these conflicts have other dimensions, but the religious differences are imposing. If we are to fully understand these conflicts, we must know that Muslims, Christians, Jews, Hindus, and Buddhists have basic philosophical differences and that religion can be a source of conflict as well as of understanding. Given the severity of these conflicts, it is essential that government and private-sector leaders and the general public be aware of the ways in which religion can exacerbate and ameliorate regional and global conflict.

The twenty-first century pushes us out of our insulated worlds into closer and closer contact with what were formerly considered exotic and distant religions. Television brings instant coverage of events in formerly remote parts of the Earth. Industrialization brings us together in urban centers. The most rapidly growing religion in Europe and North America is Islam, due to the influx of Turks, Arabs, Iranians, and Pakistanis, as well as internal conversion. The largest concentration of Hindus outside of India is found in Leicester, England. Hollywood figures proclaim their conversion to Buddhism and pop stars to Islam. Dance clubs play music recorded by Sufi devotional singers. One simply cannot be a well-informed citizen of this era without knowledge of the religions of the world.

If there is to be peace among the nations, cultures, and religions of the world, religious differences must be known and respected. In the early 1960s, a young professor (Lewis Hopfe) and his wife gave a dinner party on a Friday evening. The guest list included Jews, Catholics, and Muslims. The entrée was ham! Jews and Muslims are forbidden by their religion to eat pork, and Roman Catholics of that period abstained from all meat on Fridays. Needless to say, it was not a happy party. Whether the choice of food was made due to ignorance or arrogance does not matter. The guests, because of their religions, were offended. That dinner party was a microcosm of what happens all too frequently because of ignorance of the religions of the world. More sensitive

and better-informed hosts would have asked if their guests had any “dietary restrictions,” or they would have served a religiously “safe” entrée such as trout. Many of us are familiar with the concept of “kosher” foods that can be eaten by conservative religious Jews. Increasingly one encounters “halal,” the Muslim equivalent, in the supermarkets and restaurants of American cities. In August 2002, a street food vendor near the American Museum of Natural History in New York posted a sign stating that his food was kosher and halal—one small indication of the growing religious diversity in our world.

Although in North America and Western Europe religion is sometimes imagined to be a private, personal matter, religion almost always has an important influence on public life. Throughout the world, collective social and political identities are defined on the basis of religious criteria. The end of the Cold War and the collapse of Communist states have vastly increased the importance of religion in world affairs. It is now essential for those who seek to understand regional and global politics, economics, and conflict to be thoroughly grounded in the study of religion.

A Definition of Religion

If we assume an interest in religions and a willingness to study them, what constitutes the subject matter of a course in world religions? Humankind has been on Earth for a long time. Our cultures, historic and prehistoric, are too numerous to even begin to detail. Which cultures and religions shall we study? Whole texts have been written solely on prehistoric religions, not to mention the great families of religion, such as those found within Hinduism. Therefore, any text or course on religions must be selective about its subject, and a definition of the subject is necessary.

In Western cultures, we tend to define religion in terms of a set of beliefs having to do with the gods, through which one is taught a moral system. Although this definition contains elements that are found within many of the religions of the world, it cannot do justice to them all. For example, some religions recognize the existence of gods but actually have very little to do with them. Jainism and, to some extent, some forms of Buddhism may be called nontheistic religions because their emphasis is on people’s delivering themselves from their plight without the help of gods. Some religions do not emphasize moral systems. Some religions that have existed on Earth have been more concerned with humanity’s proper relationship to gods, demons, and spirits, worldly prosperity, and well-being than with ethical relationships among people. One distinctive characteristic of the religion of the early Hebrews was the ethical dimension their God required of them. This emphasis was in turn passed on to Christianity and Islam. Similar concerns can be found in Buddhism, Hinduism, and other religions that have a broad, universal appeal. Modern adherents to these religions associate the word *religion* with the word *moral*, but among many religions, these terms are not synonymous.

The contents of this text have been chosen from the hundreds of world religions because they share many overlapping characteristics: (1) They usually, but not always, deal in some way with people’s relationship with spirits, ancestors, gods, and demons; (2) they usually have developed a system of myths about these beings and rituals designed for communing with or propitiating them; (3) they usually have developed a system of organized rituals, temples, priests, and narrative or scriptural traditions at some point in their history; (4) they usually have some understanding of life beyond death, either as survival in some shadowy existence, in some version of heaven and hell, or through rebirth; (5) they usually have developed a code of conduct or moral order; and (6) they generally have attracted large followings, either currently or at some time in the past. The religions included here have also been traditionally important to the discipline of religious studies.²

As there are many religions from which we must choose, so there are many methods by which we might organize them. We might present the religions of the world in terms of their effects on the societies that support them; in terms of their forms or styles of worship; in a comparative manner (in which each religion is compared with the others in terms of its outlook toward its God or gods, the nature of humankind, sin, and so on); or in terms of their histories and impact on the histories of the nations in which they were found. This text combines some of these methods and presents the major religions of the world as simply yet as thoroughly as possible. For each religion, five major points are considered: (1) What culture produced this religion? (2) If there was a founder, and if anything can be known of the founder's life, what factors caused this person to found this religion? (3) If there are scriptures or sacred texts, what do they tell us about this religion? (4) What have been the major historical developments of this religion? (5) How do participants practice their religion? What are the religious rituals, behaviors, and events that shape how they live their lives?

Theories of Religions

What is the nature of religion itself? Why are people religious? Scholars have conceptualized these questions in a variety of ways. Some of theories of religion focus on religion's origins. In the nineteenth century, when the social sciences were being developed and anthropologists were first beginning to investigate so-called "primitive" cultures, early anthropologists based their theories on observations. These nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century scholars, enamored of the belief that the biological theories of evolution taught by Charles Darwin could be applied to the social sciences, investigated contemporary "primitive" religions, reread ancient reporters (such as Herodotus), and hypothesized *ad infinitum* about the origin and development of the phenomenon of religion. Over time, these theories divided into two basic and overlapping groups: those that focused on the seemingly unique aspect of human cultures to relate to supernatural beings, deities, or forces and those that focused on how religion functioned in its surrounding society.

Relating to Gods, Deities, and Spirits

One of the first exponents of this type of theory of religion was the English ethnologist Edward Burnett Tylor (1832–1917). Although Tylor held no formal degree, he was a leading figure in anthropology for many years. Near the end of his career, he was named Britain's first professor of anthropology (1896–1909). Tylor's greatest contribution to the study of the origin of religions was his book *Primitive Culture* (2 vols., 1871). In the 1850s, Herbert Spencer had theorized that the gods of "primitive" people were based on dreams about the recent dead. According to Spencer, when "primitive" people dreamed of the dead, they came to believe that the former chiefs and heroes were actually alive in another world or another form. Tylor was aware of Spencer's theory, which was called "Manism," but he did not totally accept it.³ Tylor maintained that "primitive" people developed a sense of other or soul from experiences with death and dreams. According to Tylor, "primitive" people also believed that these souls were to be found not only in people but in all of nature. There were souls in stones, trees, animals, rivers, springs, volcanoes, and mountains. The entire world, the very air itself, was seen as being alive with spirits of all kinds. These spirits could be helpful or harmful to humans and had personalities that could be offended or flattered. Therefore, it became a part of the life of "primitive" societies to pray to these spirits, offer sacrifices to them, seek to appease them, and avoid offending them.

From this understanding of the world developed the practice of ancestor worship or veneration, in which one attended to the spirits of the dead. An awareness of the existence of spirits in nature led to the worship of various aspects of nature, such as

water, trees, stones, and so on. Ultimately, this spirit-infused view of nature produced religions that worshiped sky, earth, and water deities. Finally, monotheistic religions developed, which is to say, religions that recognized only one god. Tylor's theories were widely accepted and regarded as classic for many years. An alternative theory of religion was developed by an Oxford professor, Max Müller (1823–1900). Müller's interests were mythology and the religions of India, but he entered the debate over the nature of religion with Tylor and others. From his studies, he became convinced that human beings first developed their religions from their observations of the forces of nature. According to this theory, "primitive" people became aware of the regularity of the seasons, the tides, and the phases of the moon. Their response to these forces in nature was to personalize them. Thus they gave a name to the sun, the moon, and so on, and began to describe the activities of these forces with tales that eventually became mythology. An example of this process is found in the Greek myth of Apollo and Daphne. Apollo was in love with Daphne, but she fled from him and was changed into a laurel tree. By searching out the etymology of these names, Müller found that Apollo was the name given the sun and that Daphne was the name given the dawn. Thus, the original myth simply described how the sun chases away the dawn. Müller further believed that all of the stories of the gods and heroes in Indo-European cultures were originally solar myths. Müller became convinced that he had found the key to the origin of all religions: "Primitive" people identified the forces in nature, personified them, created myths to describe their activities, and eventually developed pantheons and religions around them.

Between 1890 and 1915, Sir James George Frazer (1854–1941), a fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, produced his encyclopedic work on religion, *The Golden Bough*. Frazer constructed his theories by reading the reports of anthropologists, colonial officials, missionaries, and ancient writers. On the basis of his studies, Frazer came to agree with Tylor that the human mind had developed in a linear fashion in the same way as the process of physical evolution. He taught that humankind had gone through three phases of development regarding the spirit world. First, people had attempted to control the world of nature through what Frazer called "magic." In Frazer's evolutionary framework for human development, when humanity realized nature could not be coerced through magic, it turned to a second stage of development—religion—whose premise was that nature can be implored to cooperate. When religion was also seen to fail, humankind, in a third phase, turned to science, in which a more rational understanding of nature is operative. Therefore, the modern farmer who needs rain turns to neither the magician nor the priest. He turns to the scientist, who will seed the clouds and cause it to rain, although a skeptic might note that there is little proof that seeding the clouds produces rain any more frequently than rain dances or prayers.

Modern proponents of theories of religion that focus on people's relationship to the supernatural have done away with Tylor's and Frazer's evolutionary thinking about "primitive" and "advanced" societies. In other words, scholars no longer maintain that there are stages of human and cultural development that move naturally from nature worship, to multiple deities, to one god, to science. Even a cursory look at the modern world demonstrates that peoples with a wide variety of religious beliefs and practices embrace science; moreover, religions are not more or less "advanced" than other religions. However, these kinds of theories focus on what they perceive to be a unique feature of all religions. Namely, religion is the one aspect of human experience that (almost) always dedicates itself to interactions with gods, spirits, and other supernatural forces.

Functional Theories of Religion

Other theorists have focused on what religion does, that is, how religion functions. A well-known example of this kind of thinker is Karl Marx (1818–1883). Marx saw the

origin and development of religion in terms of his personal view of history and the economic and social struggle between classes. Marx said:

Man makes religion, religion does not make man. In other words, religion is the self-consciousness and self-feeling of man who has either not yet found himself or has already lost himself again. . . . Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, just as it is the spirit of a spiritless situation. It is the opium of the people.⁴

Marx also believed that religion was used by the ruling classes to suppress the underclass. According to Marx, the social principles of Christianity preach the necessity of a ruling and an oppressed class, and for the latter all they have to offer is the pious wish that the former may be charitable. The social principles of Christianity declare all the vile acts of oppressors against the oppressed to be either just punishment for original sin and for other sins, or trials that the Lord, in his infinite wisdom, ordains for the redeemed. Sigmund Freud (1856–1939), the founder of psychoanalysis, theorized about religion from a psychological perspective. Freud saw religion as having originated as guilt that men supposedly feel in hating their fathers. Freud saw in the ancient Greek myth of Oedipus a pattern of human experience. Oedipus was a man who, through a long and tragic series of events, killed his father and married his mother. Freud saw that in all males there was a similar tendency to desire their mothers and therefore hate their fathers.⁵

Freud further referred to practices of “primitive” people he believed to be representative of the total human experience. The dominant male/father kept the women of the group for himself and drove the younger males away from his territory. Finally, the younger males joined together in killing the father and eating his flesh. Freud proposed that guilt from this desire for the mother and this great act of patricide was at the heart of every religion. He believed that totemic religion arose to allay the filial sense of guilt and appease the father through deferred obedience to him and that all later religions are attempts at solving the same problem.⁶

Because of this subconscious hatred and ensuing guilt, Freud believed humans project in the sky a great father image called God. He also thought that religious ideas are “illusions, fulfillments of the oldest, strongest, and most urgent wishes of mankind.”⁷ The truly healthy and mature person, according to Freud, is content to stand alone and face the problems of life without gods or religions.

Religions of the World

In the long period of human life on Earth, there have been thousands of religions. Because recorded history covers only the last 5,000 years of our existence, there are undoubtedly more unknown than known religions. In addition, many religious systems have lived and died within the relatively short span of recorded history. This text does not pretend to address all religions, historical or prehistorical. It deals only with religious systems that are active and viable today.

Religions Originating in Africa and the Americas

The hundreds (perhaps thousands) of religions that originate in the continents of Africa and North and South America have often been neglected in world religions textbooks. One reason for this neglect has to do with the colonial realities of European expansion and the massive missionary efforts that have occurred around the world that converted many in these areas to Christianity and Islam. Colonial attitudes in academia likewise sidelined these traditions; the evolutionary notions of Tylor, Frazer, and many others often supposed that these important religions were superstitious vestiges of “primitive” peoples. Another reason these religions have not enjoyed the

same scholarly attention as other religions is because of their vast diversity. The many different tribes, nations, and peoples in Africa and the Americas each practiced their own unique religious traditions, rituals, and customs. In this text, we have endeavored to discuss some of the common themes that tie together these diverse religions across large geographic areas. Today, many religions that originated in Africa and the Americas work alongside, and sometimes in tension, with the missionary religions of Christianity and Islam.

Religions Originating in India

Four of the great religions of the world originated in India: Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism, and Sikhism. India remains the home of Hinduism, Jainism, and Sikhism. Buddhism is now found in other Asian nations, such as China, Japan, Korea, Vietnam, Burma, Cambodia, and Thailand. The basic beliefs of these religions are that there are many gods (Sikhism is the exception, taking its belief in one god from Islam) and that one person may lead many lives through a system of reincarnation. A common objective of these religions is release from the cycle of life, death, and rebirth. Sometimes this goal is achieved through the aid of the gods, but often believers are expected by their actions, or lack thereof, to work out their own release.

Religions Originating in China and Japan

Religions that originated in China and Japan include Daoism, Confucianism, and Shinto. Daoism and Confucianism expand our notion of what constitutes religion because both of these traditions, and especially Confucianism, focus on philosophical concepts, nature, and social relationships rather than on worship of a supernatural deity, which is not to say that they deny the existence of gods. Indeed, these religions have in common the belief in many gods and include the worship of nature, the worship or veneration of ancestors, and, in the case of Shinto, a reverence for the nation itself.

Religions Originating in the Middle East

Religions originating in the Middle East include Judaism, Christianity, Islam, and Baha'i. All believe in one Supreme Creator God; they believe each person lives only one earthly life; they regard the material universe positively, hold a linear view of time, and believe in divine judgment of the world. Christianity and Islam have been two of the great missionary religions of the world. Today, their adherents are found all over the globe and number in the billions.

Religion and Public Life

A common notion is that religion is strictly a private matter. However, the histories of the various religions covered in this text immediately demonstrate that religion has always had a tremendous impact on public life. Although sometimes practiced individually, religions are normally expressed in a community of others. Rituals and worship services bring people together to perform meaningful activities, which remind the group of their common stories and heritage. Religions are well known for their ethical content; here again, religion—as a force for ethical and moral guidance—is intrinsically relational. Even personal beliefs, which often contribute to one's sense of self, are forged in communities. Therefore, one of the express objectives of this text is to highlight how important religion is in political, social, and economic spheres. To that end, special sidebars occur throughout the text to accentuate religion's role in public life.

Of course, an unavoidable feature of religion's public role is that it often plays a part in conflicts. These conflicts can range from minor disagreements between two

like-minded co-religionists all the way to brutal warfare between nations. We know that religion can be the inspiration—or at least the justification—for horrific acts of violence. But, religions can also be a force for reconciliation between peoples. Many acts of service toward the poor and the disenfranchised are carried out by religious people. James Calvin Davis, a professor of religious studies, challenges us to consider what religion can accomplish in public life, both for weal and for woe:

To the extent that religion has contributed to the *disintegration* of political discourse, it has been because religious communities have too zealously incorporated the worst strategies and values from our current political environment, not because of some fundamental incompatibility between religion and public life. To the contrary, religious perspectives at their best provide necessary correction to our downward slide. Critics of religion in politics may be unconvinced, given the media's apparent preference to cover religion only when it is polarizing, so it remains for us to demonstrate the substantial contributions religious perspectives can and do make.⁸

All of this brings us back to the point with which we began this introduction: religion demands our attention and study because it is one of the most vital forces on the planet. To understand the religions of the world is intrinsic to responsible global citizenship.

THINK ABOUT IT

1. List several advantages of a knowledge of the differing religious viewpoints of the world.
2. Define *religion*.
3. What was the focus of Tylor's theory of religion?
4. According to Müller, what role did nature play in the formation of religion?
5. Contrast the Marxist view of religion with the Freudian view.
6. Why is religion not merely a private matter?

Part I

Religions Originating in the Americas and Africa

In this first section, we turn our attention to the great diversity of Native American religions and African religions. Many of the religions in these regions are oral traditions. Their systems of knowledge and behavior are inscribed upon human memory, not in some form of writing. Another characteristic of these religions is that they are usually intrinsically tied to a specific tribe, people, or nation. Because of this, we can say that there have been as many religions on these continents as there are unique groups of people. Nevertheless, in both Africa and the Americas, we can talk about some general features of religions that are common across these respective regions. By studying the characteristics of these religions, the student will be able to compare their unique features with other world religions, such as Hinduism, Christianity, and Islam. To help us approach these subjects, this part of the book begins with a chapter on the study of religion itself.

Native American Religions—Basic Teachings

Native American Religions Are Very Diverse

There are hundreds of Native American religions. It is difficult, if not impossible, to generalize about them. Native American cultures are equally diverse, ranging historically from small bands of hunter-gatherers to large-scale states and empires. Today most Native Americans are Christians, although in many cases they retain elements of traditional beliefs and practices.

Many Native American Religions Emphasize Geographic Space and the Natural Environment

Plants, animals, and some geographic and geological features are understood as living beings with whom humans can establish relationships. This has often brought native people into conflict with Euro-American communities.

A Great Importance Is Placed upon the Dead

In some cases—including the Navajo of Arizona and New Mexico—the dead are greatly feared. Even their clothing and other possessions are avoided. Many Native Americans are greatly concerned by the fact that the skeletal remains of their ancestors have been disinterred and are stored in museums.