CHAPTER 6
RELIGION
WHERE ARE RELIGIONS DISTRIBUTED?

There are two types of religions

Universalizing and Ethnic
As the name suggest is, a universalizing religion is one that attempt to appeal to all people, and spread globally.

This includes: Christianity

Islam

Buddhism
• More than 2 million followers and wide distribution.

• Predominant in North America, South America, Europe, as well as in Africa and Asia.

• Three major branches: Roman Catholic (51%), Protestant (24%), and Orthodox (11%).

• Christianity in Europe: Roman Catholics in southwest & east, Protestants in northwest, Orthodox in the east and southeast.

• Christianity in the Western Hemisphere: 90% are Christian

• Latin America: 93% Catholic

• North America: 40% Catholic clustered southwest and northeast, 28% Protestant found in the southeast, Lutherans upper midwest.
• 1.3 billion adherents known as Muslims

• Predominant in the Middle East, North Africa to Central Asia

• Two branches of Islam: Sunni & Shiite

  • Sunni: 83% of Muslims, found in the Middle East and Asia

  • Shiite: 16% of Muslims. 30% are in Iran, 15% in Pakistan, and 10% in Iraq.

• Europe: 5% are Muslim, 4 million in France.

• North America: Numbers vary from 1 million to 5 million.
BUDDHISM

• 400 million adherents

• China and Southeast Asia

• Three branches: Mahayana, Theravada, and Tantrayana.

• **Mahayanist:** 56% of Buddhist, found in China, Japan, and Korea.

• **Theravadists:** 38% of Buddhist, found in Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, and Thailand.

• **Tantrayanists:** 6% of Buddhist, found in Tibet and Mongolia.
An ethnic religion will only appeal to one group of people.
HINDUISM

- World’s third largest religion even though it is ethnic.
- 97% of all Hindus are in India and the rest in the neighboring country Nepal.
- Believe it is up to an individual to find their path to God.
• **Confucianism**: Ethical principles based on teaching of Confucius, found in China.

• **Daoism (Taoism)**: Outlawed in China by the Communist in 1949, yet still is practiced as well as in Taiwan.

• **Shintoism**: Ethnic religion of Japan.

• **Judaism**: 14 million adherents. 1/3 is found in the U.S. 1/3 in Israel, and the rest around the world.

• **Ethnic African Religions**: Animist, believing inanimate objects have discrete spirits and conscious life.
WHY DO RELIGIONS HAVE DIFFERENT DISTRIBUTION?

- Origin
- Diffusion
- Holy Places
- The Calendar
ORIGIN OF CHRISTIANITY, ISLAM, AND judaism

These three religions trace their origins to a common place all claiming to be descendants of Abraham.

**Christianity:** Founded over the teachings of Jesus, who was raised as a Jew. Christians believe he died to cleanse the sins of mankind. Roman Catholics and Eastern churches split during the fifth century, Protestants separating during the sixteenth. Both Christians and Jews trace their heritage back to Isaac, the son of Abraham and Sarah.

**Islam:** Follows the teachings of Muhammad, the Prophet of Islam. He is thought to be a descendant of Abraham’s other son, Ishmael, and his second wife Hagar. Muslims believe he preached the truth as so revealed to him by God.
Buddhism: was founded by Siddhartha Gautama. He is believed that after witnessing pain and suffering, was taught by a monk to withdraw from the world. After being ‘enlightened’ he set across India to preach his views.

Sikhism: Founded by Guru Nanak who traveled across South Asia, preaching his faith.

Bahá’í: Bahá’u’lláh declared to be the messenger of God. It was established in Iran in the nineteenth century.
Hinduism and other ethnic religions do not have a specific founder. Hinduism is thought to have existed even before recorded history.
Christianity: First diffused through missionaries by relocation diffusion. These missionaries taught about Jesus through the Roman Empire and would eventually spread widely through contagious diffusion. Emperors, such as Constantine and Theodosius, spread Christianity through hierarchical diffusion. Through migration, Christianity reached all of the other continents.

Islam: Having conquered Palestine and the Persian Empire, Muslim armies converted non-Arabs to Islam. While Christianity diffused through Western Europe, Islam diffused through southeastern Europe and Turkey. It has reached sub-Saharan Africa and Southeast Asia.

Buddhism: Was mainly diffused by Emperor Asoka. Having converted himself, he brought the practices to South Asia. Missionaries were sent to Sri Lanka, Kashmir, the Himalayas, Myanmar, and India.
By definition, ethnic religions will only appeal to only one group of people and have very limited diffusion.

Judaism is the exception. Jews were banished from their Eastern Mediterranean homeland. This prompted them to move to Europe, North Africa, and Asia. In Europe, Jews were forced to live in ghettos and during World War II were killed by Nazis.
Buddhism: Buddhist have eight holy places in accordance to Buddha’s life. Half of these are in northeast India and southern Nepal.

Islam: Holy places to the Muslim are associated with the life of Muhammad. Makkah was the birthplace of him and now has the largest Mosque. Pilgrimages, a journey to a religious place, are highly encouraged.

Sikhism: The Darbar Sahib (Golden Temple) is found in Amritsar, holding the holiest book, Guru Granth Sahib.
Holy places in ethic religions are more closely tied with the physical geography.

**Hinduism:** Hindus will travel to Mt. Kailās as Siva is believed to live there. The Ganges is also a very holy river as it is thought as the hair of Siva and many will go to bathe in it.
Universalizing and Ethnic religions also differ in their calendars. Ethnic religions celebrate the seasons. Holidays are based on the agricultural calendar.

Universalizing religion instead focus their holidays around their founder’s life. For example Christians observe Easter as the resurrection of Jesus and Buddhists celebrate the Buddha’s birth, enlightenment, and death.
With me so far?
WHY DO RELIGIONS ORGANIZE SPACE IN DISTINCTIVE PATTERNS?

Places of worship

Sacred space

Administration of space
A church, meaning gathering of believers, is a very important part of the Christian religion. Collective worship is highly valued and part of their religious principle. In traditional communities, churches were the largest and tallest buildings. It is depicted as an environment in the image of God, making it critical in Christians’ beliefs.
PLACES OF WORSHIP IN OTHER RELIGIONS

Muslim Mosques: Unlike in Christianity, mosques are not seen as a holy place. Instead it is a place for community assembly. They are usually organized around a courtyard, and has a minaret which summons people to worship. The pulpit inside the mosque always faces Makkah as they pray.

Hindu Temples: Temples are built as shrines to their gods. Hindus practice religion individually in their own homes.

Buddhist and Shintoist Pagodas: Pagodas are usually elaborate towers, containing relics having to do with Buddha, such as a portion of his body or clothes. Like in Hinduism, pagodas aren’t made for community worship.

Bahá’í Houses of Worship: Bahá’í’s Houses of Worships have been built in many continents to further diffuse it’s religion. They are open to followers of all religions and in their services will read scriptures of different religions.
Burial: Christians, Muslims, and Jews bury their dead in a cemetery. Traditionally, Muslims and Christians used to use cemeteries as public green space, and Muslim communities still do today. Problems faced with burying the dead is limited space. In China, the government has even encouraged practicing agriculture over burial mounds.

Cremation: Hindus usually practice cremation as disposal of the dead. Nomads would not want to subject the body to evil spirits, so instead cremated the body to release the soul into the afterworld.
Even though many settlements are established for economic reasons, there are settlements established because of religious factors. These are called utopian settlements. Utopia is defined as “a community or society possessing highly desirable or near perfect qualities”. In this case they are religious qualities trying to integrate itself in all aspects of life. By 1858, there were 130 utopian settlements in the U.S. This includes New York, Oneida, and Pennsylvania to name a few. Many of these settlements fell apart, as they could not attract any new settlers or people moved out in search of economic advantages.
Hierarchical Religions: A hierarchical religion is one with a well-defined structure and organization. An example of a hierarchical religion is Roman Catholicism. Dioceses are divided into parishes with priests leading one of them. Bishops take care of each one of these dioceses and report to an Archbishop, which lead a province. At the highest level is the Pope who is in charge of the Diocese of Rome. Latter-day Saints also have a hierarchical system. Territories are organized into wards which are combined into a stake and ruled over by a board and president.

Locally Autonomous Religions: Autonomous religions are self-sufficient. Islam, Protestant Christians, Judaism, and Hinduism are good examples of autonomous religions. They do not have a centralized structure of religious control. Such as in Hinduism, worship is usually done on one’s own instead of in a community.
WHY DO TERRITORIAL CONFLICTS ARISE AMONG RELIGIOUS GROUPS

Religion versus government policies

Religion versus religion
Taliban versus Western Values: When the Taliban, meaning religious students, took control of Afghanistan, they banned so called ‘Western, non-Islamic’ activities. People were punished for shaving their beards, committing adultery, being homosexual, prostitution, stealing, and even painting their nails. Anything not being purely Islamic was eradicated.

Hinduism versus Social Equality: Hinduism has a caste system. This caste system breaks down individuals into one of four categories, which determines their social and economic position: Brahmans, Kshatriyas, Vaisyas, and Shudras. Even below that are the “untouchables”. Based on their rank, individuals are treated differently, the untouchables receiving the worst treatment of all. The Indian government has tried to abolish such ranking, yet the fight for equality continues.
Orthodox Christianity and Islam Versus the Soviet Union: In 1917, the Communist government of the Soviet Union wanted to establish anti-religious programs. Churches could only be used with permission of the government. The goal was to loosen people’s ties with religion. But with the end of communist rule, came a religious revival.

Buddhism Versus Southeast Asia Countries: With the end of the Vietnamese War, came much misfortune to the Buddhist in Southeast Asia. Buddhist shrines were destroyed and vandalized. The Communist government have discouraged many religious practices and let old remnants die down.
Religion Wars in Ireland

Religion Wars in the Middle East
In the Republic of Ireland, 87% are Roman Catholic, while the Northern Ireland that is part of the United Kingdom is more Protestant than Catholic. Because of this religious clash, when Ireland declared independence from Britain, Northern Ireland instead chose to stay a part of the United Kingdom.
Crusades between Christians and Muslims: As Arabs conquered land in the Middle East, they converted Christians into Muslims. Charles Martel and his victories were to make Islam the predominately religion. European Christians have fought to regain what they had lost.

Jews versus Muslims in Palestine: Because of reoccurring tension between Muslims and Jewish in Palestine, the UN decided to create two separate states. Israel has then engaged in many wars with its neighboring countries, including Jordan and Egypt.

Conflict over the Holy Land: Palestinian Perspectives: Palestinians saw themselves as rulers of Israel. They sought to protect their land from Jewish settlers even though they saw it as their home land.

Conflict over the Holy Land: Israel Perspective: Israel was a Jewish country surrounded by Muslims. The Palestine Mandate in 1947 assigned the coastal plain to Israel and the hills between the coastal plain to Jordan.
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