

# The Uniqueness of Christianity

David Scott Nichols MD

# Curriculum Vitae

- David Scott Nichols MD
- Brandon Ophthalmologist since 1983
- Univ. of Miami–B.S. -Engineering Science 1971
- Massachusetts Institute of Technology-MS-1972
- University of Miami – Medical Degree - 1976
- Internship – Internal Medicine WHMC - 1977
- Residency – Ophthalmology BAMC 1980
- Separated USAF after 13 years – 1985
- Sandra (wife), Laura, Christine & Sarah

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- Lifelong interest in Bible study
  - Early interests included Apologetics and Prophecy
  - I have spent decades studying theology including the Liberty Home Bible Institute (2-year program)  
Dean Harold Wilmington
  - Now, I am developing approximately ten lecture series on various Christian/Bible topics...

# Lecture Series Topics

- Apologetics
- Old Testament Survey
- Romans – commentary
- Hebrews – commentary
- The New Testament Church
- Job and the “problem of pain”
- The Uniqueness of Christianity
- The Life of Christ
- Eschatology
- Potpourri of various topics

# Introduction

- Many religions exist in the world today
- Which one is true?
- Many say that “all” religions are paths to God and heaven
- Logic says otherwise

# Ten Popular World Religions

- Christianity
- Judaism
- Hinduism
- Buddhism
- Islam
- The Mormons
- Christian Science
- Jehovah Witness
- Scientology
- New Age Religion

# Topics of Discussion

- The origin and history of each religion's scriptures and belief system
- Characteristics of God in each religion
- Eternity – concepts of heaven, eternity, salvation
- Evidence for and against the veracity of each religion

# Origin and History of Each Religion

- Overview
- Founder(s)
- Theology
- Scriptures
- Concept of God

# Hinduism – origin and history

- Religion common to the people of India
- 3 ½ thousand years old
- The Vedas – ancient religious writings
- Upanishads – summation of their teachings
- An impersonal god(s), re-incarnation, karma
- Brahman, atman
- Epic tales: The Ramayana and The Mahabharata
- The Bhagavad Gita
- Caste system

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- Many forms of Hinduism (ex. TM, Hare Krishna)
  - The essence of Hinduism – the concept of an *eternal soul* and *rebirth* and *moksha*
  - Hindu concept of God

# Vedanta

- A dominant form of Hinduism in the United States
- Systemized the teachings of the Upanishads
- Brahman – an impersonal god of the universe
- Brahman is real – everything else is an illusion
- Man is an illusion ... actually man is one with Brahman
- Man's goal is to become enlightened – realize one's inner nature as Brahman... god
- How should man go about doing this?

# Quest toward enlightenment

- Strive to find this via altered states of consciousness
- A series of re-births will lead, eventually, to this “enlightenment” (re-incarnation)
- Our “karma” determines how we come back in our next life
- Some day, some life, we will reach our goal... everyone’s goal – to merge with Brahman
- Then it is all over... but, what happens then?

# One final point...

- There are many, many forms of Hinduism
- Massive volumes of scripture have been written over the millennia – much of it is contradictory
- Some say there are many gods, some say there are no gods, etc.... But all say:
- There is a never ending cycle of life – never a beginning, never an end
- All have the concept of karma and re-incarnation
- Mankind's goal is to merge with Brahman ... what that results in will be discussed at a later time

# Buddhism – origin and history

- Siddhartha Gautama (born in 563 B.C.) – founder
- An outgrowth of Hinduism
- The history of Siddhartha (the *Buddah*) was written down 300-400 years after his death
- Intriguing history of his birth, life and death
- His birth
- His early years
- His enlightenment

# The “Middle Way”

- Finally, Buddha finds the answer to life
- He reaches “enlightenment”
- Important aspects of his teachings include:
- Karma
- Re-incarnation
- The goal of life... to escape Samsara and reach...
- Nirvana

# Four Noble Truths

- Diagnosis – to exist is to suffer
- Cause – selfishness and desire
- Prognosis – a cure is possible
- Treatment – the **‘Eightfold Path’** – a system of therapy to rid the person of desire and selfishness

# The Eightfold Path

- Right views
- Right resolve
- Right speech
- Right behavior
- Right occupation
- Right effort
- Right contemplation
- Right meditation

# Nirvana

- The goal of life is to gain control over one's self to such a degree that a state of peace and eternal bliss is reached... this is called Nirvana
- A person goes through many re-incarnations until this ability is reached
- Nirvana – the state where a person enters into a union with reality...
- this is often referred to as complete annihilation!

- Buddhism has spread far outside of India
- There is a large sect in China - Mahayana Buddhism
- In the USA, Zen Buddhism, a branch of Mahayana, has become popular
- Since the original scriptures were compiled 300-400 years after the death of Siddhartha Gautama, massive volumes have been composed – some quite contradictory to others
- Different sects of Buddhism take certain favorite sections of these varied scriptures and adhere to their particular teachings

# Quick Review

- Hinduism – began approximately 3500 years ago
  - Believe in re-incarnation, eventual moksha
  - Brahman – god (pantheism)
  - Everything except Brahman is an illusion
  - Our karma will determine our next life – eventually we will reach enlightenment > Brahman
  - Caste system, sacred cow
- Buddhism – Siddhartha Gautama > 6<sup>th</sup> century B.C.
  - Believe in re-incarnation & karma and samsara
  - Goal is to escape samsara and reach nirvana
  - Rx – eight fold path

# The Mormons – origin and history

- Originated by Joseph Smith, born in Vermont, Dec 23, 1805
- Joseph and his father – their treasure hunting exploits
- Peep-stone enthusiast, treasure hunter, fortune teller
- Convicted of money-digging in New York in 1920's

# The Origin of Mormonism

- A Godly visit to a young teenager – 1820
- The angel Moroni – 1823
- The Pearl of Great Price – was it Moroni or Nephi?
- The golden plates > The Book of Mormon
- Urim and Thummin – special glasses
- Translation of plates (1828-1829) – book published in 1830
- Oliver Cowdery – the meeting with the apostles
- June 9, 1830 – the church begins

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- From New York to Ohio to Missouri
  - Revelations from God keep coming
  - Mormon Scriptures:
  - The Book of Mormon
  - The Pearl of Great Price
  - Doctrine of Covenants

# Joseph Smith

- What the people think about Joseph
- The disaster at Nauvoo – the end of the line

# One opinion on Mormon Scripture

- Professor Charles Anthon of Columbia University
- “reformed Egyptian hieroglyphics”
- “it was all a trick, perhaps a hoax”
- “a part of a scheme to cheat the farmer of his money”

# Islam – Origin and History

- The religion of the Muslims
- Muhammad (A.D. 570 – 632) born in Mecca
- A religious man as a young adult
- He marries Khadijah
- A vision from Gabriel (A.D. 610)
- A harmless “half-wit”
- Abu Bakr gets things rolling
- Mohammed’s “Companions” – the Koran

# The Growth of Islam

- Mohammed leaves Mecca – A.D. 620
- Mecca to Taif to Medina (July 16, 622) “Flight to Medina”
- The turning point for Islam
- A potent theocratic dictatorship
- Jews and Christians are tolerated at first
- Prayer - from Jerusalem to Mecca
- This new monotheistic religion gains acceptance
- A triumphant return to Mecca
- A religion of war!

# The Koran

- The visions of Mohammed
- The visions in print...
- The Koran
- Jews and Christians have corrupted the Bible
- Mohammed and the Jews
- One final point – the entire religion of Islam, including all of its scriptures, comes from one man... Mohammed... if he is wrong, the entire religion is a lie
- Modern Islam – *Five Pillars of Islam*

# Five Pillars of Islam

- Profession of Faith in Allah
- Worship five times per day
- Alms-giving to the poor (2%)
- Fasting during Ramadan
- Pilgrimage to Mecca

# Jehovah's Witness – origin and history

- Charles Taze Russell – founder
- Elected pastor in Pittsburgh in 1876
- Published the “Watchtower” and, later, “Awake”
- “Magic seeds”
- A proven charlatan – convicted in court of law
- My writings more important than the Holy Bible
- Joseph Rutherford and the 144,000
- Modern day Jehovah Witness – linked to Russell

# Christian Science – origin & history

- Mary Baker Eddy – founder
- Born in New Hampshire in 1821
- Troubled with many illnesses early in life
- A trip to Maine to see Dr. Quimby - 1862
- “Science of Health”
- A master plagiarizer say the “New York Times”
- A serious injury – healing follows
- *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* - 1875
- Horace T. Wentworth – the fraud revealed

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- Financial success in Lynn, MA
  - A multi-millionaire!
  - Some odd tenants in this new religion
  - Adherents are not as numerous as in past

# Scientology—origin and history

- L. Ron Hubbard – born 1911, founder
- Science fiction writer of 30's and 40's
- *Dianetics: A Modern Science of Mental Health* - 1950
- Religion founded in 1953
- An “interesting” resume
- Difficulties in marriage – Sara Northrup
- A friend of Alister Crowley... Satanist
- Mary Sue Whipp – his last wife

# What is Scientology?

- The Science of the Mind
- “You are a Thetan”
- *The Way to Happiness*
- Other essential tenants of Scientology
- Survival – everyone human’s goal
- The urge for survival... Eight Dynamics
- *Engrams* of past experiences must be removed
- Our goal... to clear our “reactive” mind... to reach the...
- “Clear”

- *A cleared Thetan* can control the universe
- How does one reach the *clear*?
- Money certainly helps a lot!
- A little more about the Thetan
- The first *cleared* person...
- Sonya Bianca... her story...
- Scientology – Hinduism – Buddhism ... basically the same thing
- A few quotes of Hubbard

# New Age Religion – Origin and History

- Became popular in the 1960's
- There is a New World coming
- An age of enlightenment... brought in by the mass of humanity
- “Time” magazine’s definition...
- How can we bring in this New Age?
- Use of ancient pagan practices
- Their basic belief is that all is one and one is all – more on this later

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- The New Age movement has no basic set of scriptures
  - They have no clergy, no creed, no central organization
  - Their basic beliefs are very similar to Hinduism and Buddhism
  - They have varied concept of God
  - They believe in re-incarnation and karma
  - Adherents are encouraged to believe whatever they want to believe – “it all is true”... i.e. there are many paths to the truth

# Practices of New Agers

- Many occult practices are used, such as...
- Channeling
- Crystals
- Meditating
- TM
- Yoga
- Divination
- Astrology
- Human Potential Movement
- EST

# Judaism – origin and history

- Religion of the Jews
- Scriptures written from approx. 1400-400 B.C.
- They consist of the Torah, the Prophets and the Writings
- God, through the Holy Spirit, wrote these Scriptures... as told to men
- God is outside of time and creation
- God created the universe sometime in the past
- We should be able to tell a great deal about this God through these Scriptures

# A Brief History of Judaism

- The story of the Old Testament
- Who wrote the Old Testament? And when?
- What does the writing of the Old Testament reveal?
- Note the differences between the Jewish Scriptures and so many of the other religious writings
- Note the amazing consistency running through the Jewish Bible

# Judaism today

- Orthodox
- Conservative
- Reformed
- Moses Maimonides and the Jewish “statement of faith”
- The Jews believe that their scriptures ended with the Old Testament
- They await the coming of the Messiah as predicted in their scriptures

# Christianity – origin and history

- Jesus Christ is the centerpiece of Christianity
- Mere Christianity by C.S. Lewis
- What is a Christian?

# A Christian is...

- “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved. He that believeth on Him is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. John 3: 16-18
- “For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.” 1 Timothy 2:5

- “Jesus said unto them, **I am the way, the truth and the life, no man cometh unto the Father but by me.**” John 14:6
- “For Christ sent me... to preach the Gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made none effect. For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.” 1 Corinthians 1: 17-18
- “For by Grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God. Not of works lest any man should boast.” Eph 2: 8-9

# The Gospel

- Further explanation of the Gospel...
- First God taught His people via the Old Testament
- Then He came to save them from their sins and show them how to live
- Christianity rests entirely on one person...
- Jesus Christ
- The Christian Bible... is it true?
- The Old Testament
- The New Testament

# Summary

- Hinduism
- Buddhism
- Mormons
- Islam
- Jehovah Witness
- Christian Science
- Scientology
- New Age
- Judaism
- Christianity

# The god(s) of each religion

- Every one of these ten religions have a different conception of god
- There are many ways that people view god... here are few of the ways people view “god”
- There is only one god in the universe - monotheism
- There are multiple gods – polytheism
- Pantheism – everything is god
- There are even other concepts of god
- Let us take a look at the ten religions we are studying...

# The Hindu god...

- The Hindus have no set concept of god
- It is impossible to state one specific concept of the Hindu god
- The following is a general view of how Hindus look at the god of the universe...
- Early period (1400-800 B.C.)– more polytheistic view of god(s)
- In the Upanishads, Brahman was introduced as the power sustaining the cosmos

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- In the Hindu epic, the Bhagavad Gita – Krishna, Visnu and Siva are introduced
  - Modern day Hinduism has a variety of conceptions and beliefs concerning god or the gods
  - In America, today, the general consensus is that god is an impersonal divine essence called Brahman
  - Everything is part of this essence
  - Some recent quotes from experts in Hindu theology...

# The Buddhist god...

- God to the Buddhist is not an Absolute Creator God
- They do not believe in a “first cause”
- God is not to be worshipped or prayed to
- They do not have an equivalent for the Brahman of Hinduism
- They also do not believe in the individual “soul” – also a difference from the Hindu religion – the Hindus believe in the concept of the “Atman” or soul of the individual

# The Mormon concept of god...

- There is a council of gods... at one point in time they decided to create our world
- The god of our universe was once a man
- Man can become a god someday
- Brigham Young taught that Adam was the Archangel Michael and the god of this earth
- There are many gods in heaven... they have wives – they married before they became gods
- A quote from Joseph Smith...

# Islam – concept of god...

- Allah is god... not a triune god
- Allah is unapproachable
- Allah is totally different, untouchable and unknowable ...  
neither physical or spiritual
- Allah is the author of good and evil
- Jesus is certainly not god

# Jehovah Witness – god is...

- Jehovah is a singular god
- Jehovah is not all-knowing nor everywhere
- Jesus is not a god – he used to be Michael, the Archangel

# Christian Science – god is...

- God is infinite – there is no other power
- God is a universal principle and not a personal god
- God is the *only* intelligence in the universe
- God is mind
- God is the father-mother
- Trinity – life, truth, love
- Belief in the Trinity of Christianity is polytheism

# Scientology – god is...

- “although the existence of the Supreme Being is affirmed in Scientology, His precise nature is not delineated, since the Church holds that each person must seek and know the Divine Nature in and for himself”
- Any concept of god will do.

## **New Age Religion – god is...**

- God is an impersonal force pervading all creation
- Monism – all is one and one is all
- Every person is part of God

# Judaism – God is...

- God is the creator of the universe – it has not always existed
- There is only one true God
- He has always existed
- He is an all loving, omnipotent, omnipresent and omniscient God
- He is a personal God, interested in His creation
- He has given people Laws to live by – to break a law is to sin
- God expects His people to follow Him

# Christianity – God is...

- The Christian God is the same God as the Jewish God with certain critical differences...
- The Christian God is a triune God:
- God the Father
- God the Son – Jesus Christ (the Messiah)
- God the Holy Spirit
- Jesus was sent to earth to die for our sins and to show people how to live – Jesus lived a perfect life
- Jesus is wholly God and wholly Man

# Eternity and Salvation

- This next section will lead us into a discussion of the concepts that these various religions have concerning what happens when a person dies
- Is there life after death?
- If so, what is it like?
- Are there any specific requirements that a person need fulfill to assure eternal life?
- What are these religions ideas concerning salvation?

# Hinduism – eternity and salvation

- The ‘law of cycles’
- Souls are without beginning and without end
- All souls contain all power, etc.
- The *manifestation* varies among different souls
- A soul is referred to as *Atman*
- The mind is the *Sukshma Sharira*
- The *Atman* pursues excellence/perfection during each life cycle until it reaches it during one cycle of rebirth
- At this point, liberty from the cycle of sansura is attained...

- The Hindu idea of heaven(s)
- Indra – the ruler of heaven
- Gods and men are found in heaven
- Heaven is not the ultimate goal of the Atman...
- It is only a stopping off place for men and gods
- Earth is the ‘jumping off’ place to total liberation of the Atman (soul) for gods and men
- The goal is to reach *moksha* – liberation of the soul

# The Hindu “Moksha”

- There are different concepts in the varying sects of Hinduism of what happens when *Moksha* is reached
- Advaita Vedanta
- Dvaita (dualistic) schools
- In general... Hindus believe that in some way they will when they reach *Moksha* they will “blend” into whatever their concept of Brahman is. This is a very nebulous concept but most Hindus do not believe that they will have any consciousness of this event when it finally happens.

# Buddhism – eternity and salvation

- Idea of eternity is very analogous to that of the Hindu religion
- Virtually endless “cycles” of beings until that final *release* is reached
- Many *parallel planes* exist where this is going on
- Interesting concept of heaven and gods – similar to that of the Hindus
- Salvation for the Buddhists - *Arhats* – those who have attained Nirvana
- Nirvana – “the blowing out of existence” – not a place but a state of being (never explained by Buddha)
- Nirvana – individual consciousness ends, therefore when a person reaches it, he/she will be unaware of that fact!

# Mormons – eternity and salvation

- Matter and the universe are co-existent with God and have always existed
- Salvation to the Mormons is a very important topic
- It involves many things including “good works”
- Pre-existence of the human soul
- Bodies are provided for these souls – polygamy is of value
- Jesus was provided as the god of this world to sacrifice himself for mankind
- The Mormons have a unique view of Jesus
- Brigham Young – interesting words on salvation

# Mormon view of mankind

- Every person is born as a son of God – then it is up to that person to pursue their salvation
- Possible eternal “resting” places are:
- *telestial* kingdom of Heaven
- *terrestrial* kingdom of Heaven
- *celestial* kingdom of Heaven
- The *Exalted* Life
- Universal Salvation
- Prayer for the dead

# Islam – eternity and salvation

- The way to salvation in heaven is through the following of the teachings of Islam plus have Allah choose him/her
- *Five Pillars of the Faith*
- Good deeds will be stacked up against the bad
- Only one sure way to heaven – but a tough one to choose
- Muslims do not believe Jesus died on the cross, let alone died for our sins

# Eternity to the Muslim

- People will end up in heaven or hell
- Eternity past is not discussed in Islam writings – apparently, they accept the Biblical concept
- There is mention of the Garden of Eden and the fires of hell

# Jehovah Witness – eternity and salvation

- The death of Jesus was necessary for salvation but not sufficient
- 144,000 people will die and go to heaven – all faithful Jehovah Witness adherents
- The fate of everyone else depends on their relationship to Jesus and the 144,000
- You can live Forever in Paradise on Earth – spells out how to gain eternal life for the average Jehovah Witness devotee

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- Salvation also requires literature distribution
  - With proper adherence to the instructions of the leaders of the religion, the typical Witness may earn his/her entrance onto earth for the Millennial Kingdom... not into heaven
  - Later, they may also earn further life after this thousand years draws to a close

# Christian Science – eternity and salvation

- A very esoteric concept of evil and death... they are simply illusions
- Man is "incapable of sin, sickness, and death"
- Christian Science denies the existence of all matter, including man's physical body
- Man's real problem is the *belief* of sin
- "Christ came to destroy the belief of sin."
- So the ultimate task of each person is to realize that sin is an illusion as is death... then all will be "rosy pink"
- And the Bible? It is full of errors.

# A few other beliefs

- There is no need for salvation as there is no sin... therefore, no need for Christ's sacrificial death
- Yet, they do teach a salvation through victory over suffering and temptation
- There is no hell or devil
- Disease and death are only illusions
- Eddy taught, Man already has everlasting salvation; there is no final judgment. We save ourselves; no one else can. "Universal salvation rests on progression and probation ... No final judgment awaits mortals ..." (*Science and Health*, p. 291)

# Scientology – eternity and salvation

- Scientology holds that man is basically good, and that his spiritual salvation depends upon himself, his relationships with his fellows and his attainment of brotherhood with the universe
- It is concerned with the full rehabilitation of man's innate spiritual self
- Dianetics - Hubbard described the method that he had found to obtain “salvation” for mankind.
- He uses terms such as “reactive mind” and the “clear”
- A person must use the methods and resources found in Scientology to reach the “clear” for his/her “Thetan”

# The final “resting place”?

- Once a person reaches the “clear”, they can live out the remainder of their life on earth in perfect harmony
- When they die, they will not be re-cycled any more
- What happens, though, is left a mystery
- However, the entire concept is very much like the Buddhists conception of reaching Nirvana... also a mystery
- Hubbard says that Scientology is simply an updated form of Buddhism with more effective techniques that he developed to reach the clear – Nirvana (also more lucrative for him)

# Scientology - Creation

- **Creation – Eternity past:** Before the beginning was a Cause and the entire purpose of the Cause was the creation of effect. (L. Ron Hubbard writing in The Factors – Appendix 1 - 1954)

# New Age Religion – eternity and salvation

- Each person is god, therefore there is no sin that is in need of repentance and forgiveness
- There is only the need for enlightenment
- A person needs to unite with the “One”
- Through a series of re-incarnations based on the concept of karma, eventually everyone will become a part of the Universal Life Force – god, so to speak

# New World Order

- “We believe it is possible that concentrated thought can play a major role in facilitating positive changes across the earth.”
- Someday prayer will bring in a New Age on this earth
- People will all someday be “saved’ by realizing their own godhood and the world itself will someday enter into a New Age of enlightenment.

# Judaism – eternity and salvation

- Orthodox Jewish beliefs – those Jews who best follow the Holy Scriptures of the Jews
- Eternity – God existed since eternity past. He created the universe and all that is in it at some time in the past. There will be an eternal future.
- Heaven – a place where those who trust in God and follow His Laws will spend eternity
- Hades – the place where all others will spend eternity
- Salvation – faith in God will lead to heaven

# Christianity – eternity and salvation

- **Eternity** – same concept as Judaism
- **Heaven** – the place where God and the angels and saved humans will spend eternity
- **Salvation:** Christians are saved by the Grace of God, not by any works. “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life.” John 3:16
- “I am the Way, the Truth and the Life, no man comes to the Father but through Me.” John 14:6

# Evidence for and against each religion

- Not all of these religions can be true
- Maybe none are true
- Let us evaluate several key aspects of each of these religions to see if one or more may be true and worthy of our trust – to see if the god of any of these religions may be worthy of our worship
- Finally, should we be a disciple of any of these religions or any of their Gods?

# Facts to consider

- Is there scientific and philosophic compatibility?
- Historical accuracy
- Personal character of those who introduced the religion
- External evidence for the veracity of the religion
- The effect of the religion on the world

# Science and Philosophy

- Science – what does science tell us about the universe?
- Philosophy – what does logic suggest about God and the nature of the universe?
- The logical consequence of *cause* and *effect*
- *there is nothing that can cause itself to come into existence – that is, no thing can create itself.*
- it is certainly *possible to have an uncaused Cause – typically, this Ultimate Cause is referred to as God.*
- *God has always existed.*
- This Creative Force, God, must have been the Creator of the universe

# Cosmological Argument

- The “Argument from Contingency” – St. Thomas Aquinas
- Every finite and contingent being has a cause
- Nothing finite and contingent can cause itself
- A causal chain cannot be of infinite length
- Therefore a First Cause (or something that is not an effect) must exist

# Cosmological Argument cont.

- 1. Whatever begins to exist has a cause
  - 2. The Universe began to exist
  - 3. Therefore, the Universe had a cause
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- And now let us begin to evaluate each religion. Could one or more be true?

# Other aspects to consider...

- Historical accuracy
- Personal “character” of those men (or woman) that introduced the religion
- External evidence for supernatural aspects of the religion
- How a religion has affected the world when followed properly.

# The Evidence for Hinduism

- The Hindu believes that the universe always existed... in a cyclical manner. This is contrary to our present day scientific understanding. According to current cosmology, the universe came into existence at some time in the past... very suddenly. They refer to this event as the “Big Bang”.
- Cyclical universe – also contrary to current cosmological understanding
- The Hindu concept of god does not require him to be a creator... since there never was a creation event.
- This concept is not consistent with logic or science

# Historicity of Hindu Religion

- There is a major difference of opinion in the Hindu religion concerning god(s) – they cannot all be true
- Will Durant, in his History of Civilization, points out that in some cases, “these gods are human in figure, in motive, almost in ignorance.” Then he goes on to give examples of the stupidity of one of these gods...
- How the earth came into existence...

# The practice of Hinduism

- from the great Hindu saint, Ramakrishna as he describes an *enlightened soul*...
- Paul Claudel notes, “The objects of the worship are brutal, inhuman deities who know how to scare, punish, avenge, mock and cheat, not to elevate and forgive.”
- “Everybody may do his thing just like the monkeys and the cows, sinking slowly into Nirvana. Intelligence and purposefulness dissolve on the trash heap, the body rots until it becomes one with the road, the grass, the dung. The great nothingness envelops all, and the ashes go into the river” (P.Claudel – ambassador to India)

# Methods to reach Nirvana

- Marked dependence upon practicing various methods of achieving “altered states of consciousness”
- Yoga, Transcendental Meditation, astral projection, etc. can result in some serious problems.
- A few quotes from modern day Hindu masters...

# The Hindu World...

- Women - the “Code of Manu “
- The practice of Hinduism can lead to a strange attitude toward life and the environment
- One final point – I was unable to find any evidence for the veracity of this religion... none.

# The Evidence for Buddhism

- The scientific and philosophical problems of the Buddhist religion are the same as those of the Hindu's
- Historicity – let us take a look at some historical information...
- Siddhartha Guatama was the founder of Buddhism
- He never claimed to be God – in fact, he made it clear that he was not God.
- No documentation of his life was made for 300-400 years after his death... some points of agreement:

# The Buddha

- Buddha wished that he had never been born
- His belief system was an outgrowth of Hinduism
- The dharma, was *not inspired* by the gods (or God) according to Buddha himself
- He did not believe that God intervened in human affairs
- Buddha's goal was to escape this world of pain

# Difficulties with Buddhist concepts

- Upon death, our individual personality will not survive
- There are literally tens of thousands of writings in the collection of dharma (writings) of the various subsets of Buddhism
- Does it make sense to follow Siddhartha?

# The Evidence for the Mormon Religion

- Their concept of God and eternity past is not consistent with science and philosophy
- Mormons believe that gods were once men... how did they get here in the first place?

# Historicity of the Mormons

- Many changes to the Book of Mormon
- Where is the evidence of the Americas described in the Mormon Holy Books?
- Thomas Ferguson, a Brigham Young professor for decades had assiduously searched for any evidence of two great civilizations described in the Mormon scriptures. His result...
- There are many, many additional errors in Mormon scriptures...

# The Character of Joseph Smith

- A review of the life of Joseph Smith
- Don't forget Brigham Young
- Conclusion – do you want to trust your life to these men?  
To this evidence?

# The Evidence for Islam

- Not contradictory to science
- Allah (God) is the author of good and evil
- Next, consider the historical evidence

# Historical Evidence - Islam

- This religion owes its entire existence to one human... Mohammed
- Let us review his life and character...
- The Koran – subject to *abrogation* – it is not necessarily the same yesterday, today and tomorrow
- This is not the same as *progressive revelation*
- When Muhammad died, nothing of note happened to evidence his power from Allah
- Allah is portrayed in many places in the Koran as a deceiver and conniver.

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- Salvation is by works
  - Women are treated poorly in the Islam religion
  - Heaven to the Muslim is a sensual place
  - Muhammad had between nine and 29 wives.
  - Muhammad on at least one occasion, delivered a message that did not come from God
  - Muhammad was a man of war with great sensual appetites

# Scripture Discrepancies

- Sura 11:42 says that Noah had a son that died... not so
- Sura 3:41 contradicts Luke 1:18-20 as the Koran says Zechariah was speechless for three days. In fact he was mute for months.
- Sura 61:6 notes that Muhammad fulfilled prophecies noted in the Torah and the Gospels. There were certainly no prophecies of him in the Bible.

# Islam Apologetics

- The Gospel of Barnabas – many errors
- The “year of jubilee” comes every 100 years
- There is a verse that is amazingly similar to the description that Dante uses in his Inferno
- Speaks of storing wine in **wooden wine-casks** (para 152), a common practice in medieval Europe but not in first-century Palestine where wine was stored in **skins**
- The author’s ignorance of the geography of Palestine is found in various statements...
- It contradicts the Koran
- Conclusion – this attempt at “proving” showing that the Islam religion is the one true religion, instead shows it to be a lie

# Evidence for the Jehovah Witnesses

- Their cosmology is consistent with science and logic
- A review of the history of this religion shows an inordinate amount of errors – let me mention several...
- Several additional false prophecies...
- Some false statements of fact...

# Modern day issues

- Dis-fellowshipping
- Doctrine of Theocratic War Strategy
- We will do the thinking for you...
- An attempt to distance the society from Russell
- A nice life for a few select people...

# Charles T. Russell: man of questionable character

- “Miracle” Wheat
- China tour
- The infamous lawsuit
- Conclusion...

# Evidence for Christian Science

- Mary Baker Eddy's unbelievable idea
- Modern day deceit – publishing a book by Eddy that they long ago rejected
- Eddy's major issues...
- Mary Eddy accused some of her former students of mesmerizing her husband and mentally poisoning him with arsenic through this mind control.
- Science and Health With Key to the Scriptures is replete with plagiarized writings from Phineas Quimby
- Eddy would frequently re-write her Science and Health “scripture book”. Why?

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- “Jackets for mother”...
  - Many deaths from following this religion
  - One must abandon common sense and logic to accept this religion
  
  - Mary Baker Eddy – a prototype of the modern day religious shyster

# Evidence for Scientology

- “We have no dogma in Scientology (*concerning God*) and each person’s concept is different.” - this kind of dogma is certainly not consistent with science or logic
- The history of Scientology...
- Strong-arm tactics are used at times
- Scientology is the most litigious religion in U.S. history
- Scientology often becomes an all consuming life-style with negative effects

# Points to ponder

- How is it that those Scientologists at the higher levels still suffer from all the ills of humanity?
- Scientology, as per L. Ron Hubbard, is capable, via reaching the *clear*, of:
  - Improving eyesight
  - Increase IQ
  - Cure the common cold
  - Speed thinking by 120 times
- Scientologists were involved in a massive covert illegal operation against the U.S. Government in the mid 1970's
- All of L. Ron Hubbard's Scientology writings are considered scripture. He notes that the Hindu Veda writings are used in his scripture writings.

# L. Ron Hubbard

- Hubbard was named as an unindicted co-conspirator involved in serious crimes against the U.S. Government
- Scientologists were hit with the biggest libel fine in Canadian history
- L. Ron Hubbard was convicted of fraud in France.
- L. Ron Hubbard (1951) – “If a man really wanted to make a million dollars, the best way would be to start his own religion.” One year later, he did.
- He was married three times
- Hubbard made several significant false claims in his biography

# In Conclusion

- Hubbard says Scientology is basically Hinduism or Buddhism. However, with his flair for science fiction, he was able to give it a modern day scientific appeal, and provide himself with a fine source of income! Simply to call the whole thing Hinduism or Buddhism wouldn't have worked. That had been done before, and would be done again in a big way in the United States in the 1960's (the New Age Movement).
- Does it make any sense to trust your eternal life to a man like Hubbard?

# Evidence for New Age Religion

- Science and logic contradict the “god” of New Age religion
- Is there any evidence for the veracity of the New Age beliefs?
- The New Age belief system is another form of Hinduism
- It too believes in re-incarnation - are we evolving to a better world?
- Occult methods of ‘worship’ – spirit guides can be dangerous
- There is no evidence for the truthfulness of this religion - none

# Evidence for Judaism

- The God of the Jews is totally consistent with science and logic (philosophy)
- God exists outside of the universe
- God created the universe at some point in the distant past

# Historical evidence of truth...

- Archaeology has established that the cradle of civilization is the lower Tigris-Euphrates valley – this is the location of the Garden of Eden
- Farming, cattle and world-wide flood
- Much evidence to corroborate the Torah historically
- The Ebla tablets
- The Mari tablets
- Many other archaeological evidences...
- Quotes of four great archaeologists: William Albright, Merrill Unger, Millar Burrows, Sir Frederick Kenyon

# Holy Scripture

- Amazing unity of all books of the Bible
- The Old Testament was meticulously brought down from one generation to the next
- Miracles are noted and accepted
- Fulfilled prophecy is very amazing... let us review just a few...
- Conclusion...

# Evidence for Christianity

- The Christian God is a Triune God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit – this God has the same characteristics as the God of the Jews – omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent, all loving, creator of the universe at a point in time. God has always existed.
- Secular history has much to say concerning Christianity
- Much different than other religions – very unique in its tenants

# The Story of Christianity

- The Life of Christ
- The external evidence for Christianity
- Historian Eusebius notes...
- Irenaeus, in 180 A.D., a student of Polycarp a disciple of John wrote...
- A.N Sherwin-White, historian...
- Dr. Clark Pinnock states...
- Josephus: famous Jewish historian of the first century
- Ignatius...
- Justin Martyr: (110-166 A.D.) and many others
- There is no doubt concerning the life and activities of Jesus

# Is Jesus God?

- Evidence from the scriptures
- The authors
- The blood, the Lamb
- Feasts of Israel
- Genesis dovetails with The Revelation
- “Types”
- Fulfilled prophecies – hundreds have been fulfilled with 100% accuracy
- Christian Witnesses

# Christian Witnesses

- Sir Isaac Newton
- Sir Francis Bacon
- Theodore Roosevelt
- Robert E. Lee
- Oliver Cromwell
- Woodrow Wilson & Dwight D. Eisenhower
- Benjamin Franklin & Patrick Henry
- Winston Churchill
- Daniel Webster
- John Locke
- Charles Dickens
- Abraham Lincoln & Helen Keller

# Why should we believe Jesus is God?

- What about those miracles?
- Did Jesus believe He was God?
- Maybe He was just a great man? Not a chance! Just who was Jesus?
- The resurrection – did it happen?
- The testimony of the apostles
- Jesus – a unique God of a unique religion

# Concluding remarks

- Ten religions have been compared in some detail – their origin, their God, their ideas on eternity and salvation and the evidence for and against each religion as being the one true religion
- What makes Christianity unique?
- Christianity is the only religion requiring the sacrificial death of God Himself – in order for mankind to achieve salvation
- Christianity is the only religion we studied where good works (at least in some measure) was not required for salvation
- The Christian God is the only God that uses prophecy as a major component of His scriptures – no other god can do so without embarrassment

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- The Christian religion is the only religion where its founder was resurrected from the dead and rose into Heaven as an example (the *firstfruits*) to His followers
  - The Christian religion is one of the few religions in the world that holds the same view of eternity, past and present... and the view that the Creator had to exist outside of the universe we occupy.
  - Christianity and Judaism are the only religions that are totally consistent with historical and archaeological findings

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- Christianity is the only religion based on Love and Grace and Sacrifice
  - Christianity and Judaism are the only two religions we have studied that have no contradictions in their scriptures
  - The Christian God is the only God that combines omniscience, omnipotence, omnipresence, and is described as being Love, never the author of evil, only the author of Good and the dispenser of Grace
  - Only religion with tens of thousands of martyrs ready and willing to die for their beliefs

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- “The Bible is a book that men would not write if they could, and the Bible is a book that men could not write even if they would.”
  - There is no way anyone could devise scriptures with the prophecy that is in the Bible – the religion would never succeed as the predictions would fail to materialize one after another. Obviously, the Holy Bible is very unique... and true! Let no one therefore miss the main message of this Bible...

# What is a Christian?

- For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life. John 3:16
- I am the way, the truth and the life, no man comes to the Father but through Me. John 14:6
- It is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God-- not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. Eph 2:8-10

# Christianity – the One True Religion

- Christianity is the one true religion
- God is a Triune God:
- God the Father
- God the Son – Jesus Christ
- God the Holy Spirit
- Belief by faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord will result in a person having great meaning for his/her life on earth and, eventually, eternal life in heaven.