

“UNDERSTANDING WORLD RELIGIONS FROM A CHRISTIAN POINT OF VIEW”

Lecture #1

I. WHAT IS A RELIGION, ANYWAY?

A. Definition

“A religion is a system of beliefs and practices that provides values to give life meaning and coherence by directing a person toward transcendence.” Winfred Corduan, Taylor University

B. Multifaceted Nature of Religion

- RITUAL
- STORIES
- DOCTRINAL
- ETHICAL
- SOCIAL
- EXPERIENTIAL

C. Religions tackle five universal questions:

1. ULTIMATE REALITY:
2. HUMAN BEINGS:
3. THE HUMAN CONDITION:
4. MORALS AND VALUES:
5. DESTINY:

D. How religions *answer* the questions leads to a WORLDVIEW.

2. WHY STUDY OTHER RELIGIONS?

A. More than 8 in 10 (84%) worldwide identify with a religious group.

B. Our religious world

C. America’s changing religious landscape

	Global Population	American Population
Christian (of all kinds)	2 Billion	243 Million
Muslim	1.6 Billion	2.7 Million
Hindu	1 Billion	1.8 Million
Buddhist	500 Million	3.6 Million
Sikhs	25 Million	300,000
Jews (both secular and religious)	14 Million	5.7 Million
Mormons	15 Million	6.3 Million
Tribal, Traditional	400 Million	unknown
“Unaffiliated”- “spiritual not religious”, uninterested, agnostic, atheists, etc.	1 Billion	50.9 Million

D. The global nature of the great commission

3. HOW CAN I BEST UNDERSTAND OTHER RELIGIONS?

- Let the religions speak for themselves.
- Be aware of significant diversity within the religions.
- Realize there may be tensions between various branches of a particular religion.
- Know that levels of adherence vary widely.
- Recognize that nobody fully live up to the highest ideals of their faith.

4. WHAT IS A BIBLICAL APPROACH TO OTHER RELIGIONS?

A. Creation

B. General Revelation

C. The Effect of Sin

D. Evil Influence

E. Uniqueness of Christ

5. WHAT SHOULD MY ATTITUDE BE TOWARD PEOPLE OF OTHER FAITHS?

- First and foremost, love. Matthew 5:43-45
- Live at peace. Romans 12:18
- Treat others with gentleness and respect. 1 Peter 3:15-16
- Be humble and teachable. Ephesians 4:2
- Stay on message. 2 Corinthians 5:18-21
- Rely on the Spirit. Titus 3:5
- Remember who is the enemy. Ephesians 6:12

OTHER NOTES: