

Definitions of “Religion”

Encarta Dictionary re·li·gion [ri líjǝn] (plural re·li·gions)

noun

1. religion beliefs and worship: people’s beliefs and opinions concerning the existence, nature, and worship of a deity or deities, and divine involvement in the universe and human life
2. religion particular system: a particular institutionalized or personal system of beliefs and practices relating to the divine
3. personal beliefs or values: a set of strongly-held beliefs, values, and attitudes that somebody lives by
4. obsession: an object, practice, cause, or activity that somebody is completely devoted to or obsessed by

Paul Tillich “Religion is man’s ultimate concern.”

David Bradley “Religion usually has to do with man’s relationship to the unseen world, to the world of spirits, demons, and gods. A second element common to all religions ... is the term salvation. All religions seek to help man find meaning in a universe which all too often appears to be hostile to his interests. The word salvation means basically, health. It means one is saved from disaster, fear, hunger, and a meaningless life. It means one is saved for hope, love, security, and the fulfilment of purpose.”

Martineau “Religion is the belief in an ever living God, that is in a Divine Mind and Will ruling the Universe and building moral relations with mankind.”

Schleiermacher “The essence of religion consists in the feeling of absolute dependence” upon a being higher than ourselves.

Kant “Religion is [considered subjectively] the recognition of all duties as divine commands.”

Lyon “ Religion is commitment of the person or group to a way of life based on certain beliefs or attitudes, and conceived as most likely to guarantee the conservation and increase of life’s dearest values.”

William James “ ...we understand religion to be that which demands our ultimate allegiance, or that which involves our beliefs about God or what we consider sacred”

Divisions of World Religions

I. Primitive Religions...

200 million

Location - Central Africa, South America, North Asia, and the Pacific Island.

A. Characteristics.

1. Emotional Awareness.
2. Panpsychism - Everything is alive. (Hitting a car door or wall. Heart attack,)
3. Mana - life force, energy in action, a-moral, Kami (Shinto), Or Animism.
- 4 Tabu (Tapu) Tapu channels manna (false cause, post hoc, ergo, propter hoc.)
Example fall from bridge,
5. Fetish - Portuguese Feitico...charm, lucky coin.
6. Magic - An attempt to coerce nature's forces to do man's bidding.
7. Shaman, Medicine man or woman.

II. Religions originating in the fertile crescent. (Near Eastern, Western)

1. 1 1/4 billion,
2. Judaism, Zoroastrianism, (Parsis), Christianity, Islam, Bahai, (Sikhism)

A. Characteristics.

1. Monotheism (Objection by Islam. Zoroastrianism is Dualism with Ahura Mazda(h) and Angra Mainyu, Christianity has four Gods, Father, Son, Holy Ghost, Virgin Mary, Judaism has God and Shaitan.)
2. Creator God
3. Space is real

4. Time is real
5. Matter is real. (Materialistic) Take an offering.
6. We live only one life time.
7. We are judged based on one lifetime, and go to a heaven or hell (Judaism an exception, possibly)
8. Evangelistic. Repent today. Hurry
9. Intolerant in theory, Other groups will not be saved. Tolerance is not a virtues.
10. Natural man/woman is bad, sinful, or disobedient, stiff necked. Two definitions of sin, deliberately do what is bad because it is bad, or make errors, disobey God.
 - a. Augustine's confession. Tell the story. Augustine is a Platonist. Socrates and Plato's belief. Do evil because it is evil.
11. Doctrinally orientated with major completed scriptures.

III. Religions originating in India

Hinduism, Jainism, Hinayana Buddhism, Mahayana Buddhism, Lamaism, Sikhism, Zen Buddhism

1. Six hundred million, eight hundred million.
2. South Asia
 - A. Characteristics
 1. Reincarnation based on life lived Karma, Darma
 2. Space is not real
 3. Time is not real
 4. Highest goal is to escape, rise above rebirth,
 5. Experience oriented, not doctrinally orientated.
 6. Many views about gods from atheism to polytheism to pantheism.
 7. Tolerant in theory.

8. Experientially orientated with fluid canon of scriptures.

IV. Religions originating in East Asia
Tao, Confucianism, Shinto (Zen Buddhism)

1. One billion

2. China, Japan, Southeast Asia.

A. Characteristics

1. Space is real

2. Time is real

3. No creator God

4. Nature worship

5. Ancestor worship

6. Natural man (following nature or the rules of the ancestors) is good.

7. Pragmatically and societally orientated with fluid collection of wise sayings and religious authorities to interpret sayings.