

Access Points to 'The Religious Components' of a Worldview.

Animism

[As found among the Kabiye of Togo, W. Africa] By Jane Schmitz

DEFINITION

“the belief that personal spiritual beings and impersonal spiritual forces have power over human affairs and, consequently, that human beings must discover what beings and forces are influencing them in order to determine future action and, frequently, to manipulate their power.” (Communicating Christ in Animistic Contexts, Gailyn Van Rhee, Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1991, p. 20.)

“To the animist, religion is a system of beliefs, feelings and behaviors which issue in rites, rituals, and liturgies, by which spirit-beings are manipulated to secure power to provide success, happiness and security in all of life.” “Animist man has discovered that there truly are spirit-beings all too ready to accommodate themselves to his central desire: **power**. (“God’s of Power”, Philip M. Steyne, read at AEP, San Diego, Nov 18, 1989.)

GENERAL INFORMATION ON ANIMISM

Animism has also been called primal religion. Van Rhee estimates that 40% of the world population is animistic. (p. 30). It is attractive as it offers people a way to cope with everyday problems and needs. (The Compact Guide to World Religions, Minnesota, Bethany House, 1996, p.39). Animism isn’t a dying religion, but rather it is changing its form as in the New Age Movement. In animism there isn’t a consistent world view, but rather a multiplicity of world views with similar characteristics. (Ibid., 27). There are a number of religions that coexist with animism. Syncretism is common. Animists are generally receptive to the gospel.

THE KABIYE OF TOGO, W. AFRICA

It is important to understand that many Kabiye in the villages may be illiterate, so explaining the story rather than reading all verses may be of help to them. They love stories and use parables. Rural Kabiye are more committed to animism than urban Kabiye, but I was surprised to see a medical doctor come to the village to sacrifice to a certain fetish in order to receive power and help. The villages are the center of traditional animistic practices for the Kabiye. They always go back to their home village to perform necessary ceremonies. Education may influence the traditional thinking of the Kabiye.

General things to consider:

-Many young people are forced to continue traditional religious practices. They often feel they have no choice.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Many Africans will say “yes” to Christ, but this is often done to be polite, to please you or possibly get you to leave. -Fatalism is common in their thinking. -Dreams are important and have meaning. -There are many superstitions. -Many believe that if you go to church or follow Christ you will become mentally ill. -Relationships are more important than anything.
Categories and Questions	Responses
What is the name of the society or people group?	The Kabiye of Togo, W. Africa
Does the society view life holistically [so that religion is not a part of life but is infused through all of life]?	Yes.
Name the predominant religious system(s) in the society.	
How many adherents does each religion have?	
God	
Q: Does the religion express belief in a god or gods?"	The Creator God is distant and impersonal. They have no concept of God as love, or God’s holiness. God’s (Eso) name is called when prayers are offered with sacrifices to idols or representatives of ancestors. There is a preference to worship dead ancestors or protector spirits than the Creator God . Many Kabiye have understood that their animistic worship is directed to Satan, but there are some that haven’t understood that. Many say that Satan works much faster than God does, so they work with him or use the sorcerer as a mediator to get what they want, or to gain favors.
Q: What are the characteristics of the god(s)?	They believe that since God created Satan, God is the author of evil.

Q: What is the really real?	
Creation	
Q: Does the religion have an influential creation story?	
Q: What is the nature of external [to man] reality [the external world]?	The physical world is effected by spiritual forces.
Man	
Q: What is a human being?	“Man is the center of the universe—a universe he will seek to manipulate for his own purposes ((Steyne, p.1)
Q: Is man made up of both material and immaterial parts?	Traditional Kabiyes believe that man is made of three parts that come from a spider, a star and a source of water. There is also a being behind you called the <i>wayitu</i> . At birth, a traditional Kabiye has a clay dish made by the family to represent their soul. Christians usually request that this dish be destroyed. Some children are believed to have the spirit of another who has passed away. I also saw people looking for a small bug that they said held the soul of a person that had died in accident in that area.
Q: What is the meaning of human history?	Everything that happens in daily life has a source or cause in the spirit world. “The first assumption of most animists is that reality is all of one piece.” (<u>Introducing Animism</u> , Eugene Nida and William Smalley, New York: Friendship Press, 1959, p. 50). “He is merely a link in the chain of existence, a transmitter of life force”. (Ibid., p. 51). There is no adequate answer to the meaning of life and the significance of history in animism. (Ibid. , p.57) The focus is on the past.
Sin	
Q: What is the basic human problem?	In animism, sin is offending traditional customs observed by all, rather moral standards. (<u>The Living Christ and Dying Heathanism</u> , John Warneck, Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1954, p.110.) The Kabiye have a very vague concept of sin. There isn’t even a good word for sin in the language, so it needs explanation. <i>Kiweekim</i> comes from the root word “to ruin, to be rotten or spoiled, broken”. Many Kabiye have no idea that they are sinners. Doing wrong isn’t the issue, but being caught is. The shame is being caught in sin, not the actual act. To the Kabiye, only churchgoers are the real sinners and that is why they need to go to church. Most church attendees are seen as hypocritical and the worst sinners in the village. There are unwritten, yet know laws to the Kabiye that are much like

	<p>the 10 commandments. One that varies is that adultery is considered sin to the Kabiye, but not fornication. There are socially defined sins. Most Kabiye will admit to insulting other people, but they have no idea that this is sin. “Socially defined sins are violations of culturally defined mores and laws that destroy social harmony.”(Van Rheenan, p. 278) The greatest social sin in animism is sorcery or “eating of souls” as the Kabiye call it. Van Rheenan mentions that there are also “theologically defined sins” which break relationships with the spirits. (p.281) One example of this would be the couple in the Lama village who upset the spirits by their act of adultery. They were required to parade around the village half-naked and then to sacrifice a white sheep at the exact place of the sinful act.</p>
<p>Q: What is the cause of the problem?</p>	<p>Some Kabiye think that man has no free choice. A person is a thief because he is destined to be a thief. On the other hand, many animists are centered around themselves, seeking to make everything feel right.</p>
<p>Death</p>	
<p>Q: What happens to a person at death?</p>	<p>Death for the Kabiye is passage into the spirit world. They believe that their dead ancestors are in another world where they can help the living. The dead can also be in our world as ghosts. At traditional funerals, the old are sent into this world using traditional burial methods. Children may be named after certain dead relatives, as if the spirit of the dead were present in the newborn. Mounds of dirt represent some ancestors and they are in turn sacrificed to for certain favors. Many elderly Kabiye would rather join their dead ancestors than know anything about living with God forever.</p>
<p>Christ</p>	
<p>Q: Is there a savior figure [in some cases, men who have delayed their final transformation to help others]?</p>	<p>In Kabiye thinking there is no need for a Savior. The Kabiye use a mediator to settle differences or to even make arrangements. They do understand the need for someone to reconcile a difference, a third party steps in or is assigned to mediate and reconcile two parties having problems.</p>
<p>Q: If he is known, how is Jesus seen by this religion?</p>	<p>The Kabiye have heard of Jesus through the churches that are among them. He doesn't seem to have any significance to a traditional Kabiye.</p>

Cross	
Q: Is there a concept of substitutionary death?	They have an interesting word for “to be saved”(nuu yabu) which means: to have one’s head purchased. It may come from slavery times when some were saved from leaving Africa on slave ships and purchased by African kings. In history the Kabiye were slaves to another tribal group.
Faith	The word for faith (<i>lidau</i>) isn’t understood and needs explanation, though it does exist. It is a foreign word to many and to others it means “promise”. The word for believe is explained as “accept and receive”(muu ne tisi) in Kabiye. There is a false understanding of what it means to follow Christ. Becoming a Christian to a Kabiye means you can’t drink <i>chouk</i> (millet beer) any more. Some Christian churches have been quite legalistic in their approach of following Christ and that has turned some Kabiye off.
Q: What are the means of a transformation?	
Life	
Q: What is the end of transformation?	They have no concept of heaven or living eternally with God. The Kabiye focus on the spirit world where the ancestors are and who are perceived as active in the lives of the living as well.
Truth	
Q: Can absolute truth be known?	For the Kabiye truth would be interpreted by experiences. There are no sacred writings, but all is passed down verbally from generation to generation.
Scriptures (Sacred Writings)	
Q: Why is it possible to know anything at all?	
Morality / Ethics	
Q: How do we know what is right or wrong?	
Spirit Beings	
Q: What is the spirit world	It is the spirit world that controls the animists’ environment. Their daily struggle is with spirit beings.

<p>like [beings, places, authority, status]?</p>	<p>Satan has great powers and acts much quicker on their behalf than God, who is far away. There are also demons active in people’s lives, but they are considered to be behind them, not in them. Many know that Satan is the source of supernatural powers that take place through idols, etc, but some haven’t realized that it is Satan . Many live in fear of offending Satan and the spirits. Mermaids are real, can be visited at bodies of water, and offer favors and can give children. “Animists are virtually powerless and at the mercy of these powers... and man seeks to get control of his life through empowerment from these same spirits by manipulating them and appeasing them”. ”. (<u>Quest for Power</u>, Robert C. Blaschke, Ontario: Guardian Books, 2001, p.49).</p>
<p>Powers (Power objects)</p>	
<p>Q: Are certain objects viewed as being sacred or filled with awe-producing power?</p>	
<p>Rituals</p>	<p>“It is through the practice of rites and rituals that the animist regains a sense of control and security that give meaning to his existence.” (Blaschke, p.43). Sacrifices are made to idols, ancestors represented by mud mounds, fetishes, and protectors of the village and family. These are usually chickens, but can also be goats or sheep, depending on what is required by the witchdoctor. These sacrifices involve the spilling the blood on the idol or fetish. <u>Divination</u>: at the death of someone another is blamed and required to pay something. The divining is done by prophets through a meeting with friends and family after their death. <u>The significance of cross roads</u>: Cross roads are where sacrifices can be placed or other objects such as money, eggs, etc. hoping someone else will pick these up and receive the other persons problem. <u>Burials and ceremonies</u>: Burials for older men involves sitting the corpse on a stool, putting beer to the lips, placing his hunting tools in his hands and then placing the body in a room underground, right in the compound. Along with the corpse, a baby chick is killed and smeared with red oil to accompany the body into the spirit world. The round hole over the room is then covered with a stone and sealed. Five years later the room can be used once again. At the death of a parent, the children are required to go through a purification ceremony at the river, which includes shaving the head and bathing in the river. <u>Habiye</u>: This is when people show their powers by eating dead frogs, putting knives into their</p>

	tongues and othe mutilations without feeling any pain. It is held every 2 years.
Q: What rites (such as rites of passage) and events do they observe?	<u>Rights of passage</u> : adolescents have Akpema for the girls and Evalaa for the guys. Akpema is a month long process where the girls wear only a bra and scarf around their waste. At the end of that time, they climb up naked to a sacred site and sit on a sacred rock. If you are not a virgin you will be cursed, so it is better not to sit on the stone if you're not a virgin. The rock knows. There is then a coming out party of dancing and gifts. The girl is then ready to be married. If you don't do this ceremony you're not considered a person. For the guys, Evalaa is much like a wrestling match. One village is against another. In preparation you kill a dog with your bare hands and then eat it's meat before the actual wrestling match. Afterwards you are proven and can be married. At other stages of life there is Kondona, which involves a certain dance wearing antelope horns on the head.
Q: What 'secular' rituals, rites, events, or superstitions are artifacts of an earlier religious significance?	
Ancestor Worship	
Q: What part do deceased ancestors play in the religion? Is there interaction with the living?	There is a preference for worship of dead ancestors or protector spirits rather than the Creator God. They believe that their dead ancestors are in another world where they can help the living, but they can also walk among the people as ghosts. Sacrifices are made to idols, ancestors represented by mud mounds, fetishes, and protectors of the village and family. The ancestors are perceived as being intimately involved in the lives of the living, capable of granting favors if they are satisfied with the sacrifices given them.
Shaman	
Q: Are there people who serve as intermediaries to the spirit world?	In most animistic practices there are medicine men, mediums, diviners, shamans, ritual experts, priests, witches and sorcerers. (<u>World Religions: A Guide to the Faiths that Shape the World</u> , Myrtle Langley, Oxford: A Lion Manuel, 1993, p. 14) They are "interpreters of the source of problems and the prescribers of solutions to the spiritual imbalance". (Blaschke, p.47-48.) With the Kabiye these are all animated by Satan and receive their power from him: the sorcerer, the witchdoctor and the charlatan. The sorcerer has the power to take a life through mystical ways and also through poisonings. Much of this happens at night and they also have the power to transform themselves into

	<p>owls, animals, etc. The witch doctor and charlatan are generally involved in healing people or helping them know what to do in case of a problem. Many Kabiye will claim that they have been helped with sickness or a problem through these people. On the other hand, many aren't helped and do die as well. They consult the spirits that work with them, calling on them using special bells. They also use objects such as cowry shells, bones, etc, to know what to do. They can put a curse on another person by making them sick or taking their lives. The traditional high priest (<i>cojo</i>) oversees traditional ceremonies. There are others that have clairvoyance and special powers to perform certain miracles. These ceremonies are held every 2 years at Habiye. Some people are given to fetishes and are to take care of them and go into trances receiving the spirit involved with that certain idol or fetish. This is often passed down from one generation to another.</p>
Prophets / Holy men	
Founder(s) / Heroes / Savior(s)	
Q: What is the foundation story of the religion?	
Witchcraft / Magic / Healing	See "Shaman" above.
Totemism	
Q: Is there a division of the people into groups identified with animals or other things in nature?	
Major Contemporary Divisions of the Religion	
Q: What sects, denominations, or off-shoots	<p>SYNCRETISTIC PRACTICES In Togo and Benin, the Celestial Church was created in the 1960s. It is one of the most popular</p>

of the religion exist today?	churches and fastest growing in Africa and even in Europe. It is a mixture of Biblical teaching and certain animistic practices and ceremonies. Divining, visions, curses, praying to angels, interpretation of dreams and other rituals are practiced along with preaching from the Bible. Many church attenders of various denominations, practice both their faith and animism at the same time.
Q: What are the basic differences between the sects, denominations, or off-shoots?	
Geographic / Sociological variables	
Q: Do people in rural areas hold more tenaciously to the basics of the religion?	
Q: Do people only become “religious” at certain times?	
Q: Is there a religious caste system?	
Redemptive Analogies	
Q: Are there any apparent redemptive analogies in their belief system?	Blood sacrifices are used to appease spirits or to ask favors and even to cover certain sinful acts such as adultery. Often these sacrificial animals have to be white.
Q: Where does/do the analogy/-ies break down?	
Q: Which of their beliefs are most obviously examples of “broken” revealed truth?	
Q: Which of their beliefs am I most likely to misunderstand based upon	

my beliefs and prejudices?	
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Major World Religions Worldview Analysis	Buddhism By Jim Ruff
God	
Q: Does the religion express belief in a god or gods?"	<p>“Buddhism does not embrace a personal, absolute being who transcends the universe.”¹</p> <p>However, in some branches of Buddhism, the Buddha himself is treated as a deity, and in other branches the Bodhisattva – enlightened beings who refuse liberation from the wheel of Samsara, and who postpone their own salvation by helping other beings to discover the way to enlightenment – are treated as deities. In Hinayana Buddhism, it is believed that there is only one Buddha per world cycle, while in Mahayana Buddhism, there can be many.</p> <p>Gradually the sutras came to view the Buddha as more and more of a god: “Whatever wealth there is in this world or the next, or whatever splendid jewel there is in the heavenly realm, none is equal to our Tathāgata. This splendid jewel exists in the Buddha; through this truth may there be happiness.” [68] As Buddhism grew and became virtually the state religion during the Maurya dynasty [Chandragupta Maurya ruled northern India from c. 325 B.C. to c. 297 B.C.], Gotama was increasingly regarded less as a human being than as a godlike existence with supernatural powers. He was called “transcendent deity” (<i>atideva</i>) and “god of gods” (<i>devadeva</i>). [69] In later times we find also the expression “deity who surpasses all others” (<i>devatideva</i>). The Buddha was no longer thought of as a man.</p> <p>The deified Buddha exhibited supernormal powers.²</p>
Q: What are some of the	Deification* is essentially an emphasis on greatness. Why the figure of Gotama lent itself to such

¹ Timothy C. Tennent, *Christianity at the Religious Round Table* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 2002), 101.

² Hajime Nakamura, *Gotama Buddha*, Vol. 2 (Tokyo: Kosei Publishing Company, 2005), 220.

<p>characteristics of the god(s)?</p>	<p>magnification stems from his role as people's savior. He did not seek only his own well-being; he liberated not only himself but others as well. This characteristic has been a part of Buddhism since its inception. The Buddha was the Compassionate One (kārunika).³ [</p> <p>*Why call them <i>deities</i>; why not <i>gods</i>?</p> <p>Although the word <i>deity</i> was originally a synonym for <i>god</i>, experience has shown that some practices such as those performed by Buddhists consist of a type of address in which the intent is rather different from the usual ancient one. That is, the general intention is not to propitiate; not to flatter, placate or enter into contracts.</p> <p>There is another important difference between Buddhist deities and mythological gods or goddesses. The latter are, or were once, considered real -- described as motivated by jealousy, power and other appetites and not very different from physical creatures such as people. The deities of Buddhism are ultimately regarded as manifestations of Emptiness. Some practitioners eventually abandon deity devotion as a method for attaining an enlightened state when it has outlived its utility.</p> <p>Some well-known Buddhist deities are Amitabha (<i>Opameh</i>, in Tibetan), his emanation Chenrezi (Avalokiteshvara in Sanskrit) and Tara, the female bodhisattva (who is also a Buddha) called upon particularly in times of distress. Kwan Yin (or, <i>Gun Yom</i>,) beloved by Buddhists of east Asia, is a combination form with the qualities of both Chenrezi and Tara.⁴</p>
<p>Q: What is the really real (ultimate reality)?</p>	<p>Buddha considered discussion of Ultimate reality to be a hindrance in reaching freedom from desire and attaining nirvana; thus the ultimate reality was not defined.</p>
<p>Creation</p>	
<p>Q: Does the religion</p>	<p>Creation is <i>maya</i> or illusion, less than Ultimate Reality. The Buddha taught in such a way as to prevent</p>

³ Nakamura, *Gotama Buddha*, 222

⁴ <http://www.khandro.net/deities.htm>

have an influential creation story?	<p>the claim that there is an Ultimate being that created the universe.</p> <p>Although the universe has always existed, it goes through cycles of formation and destruction, with each of those cycles lasting an enormously long time. The complexity of the cosmology, combined with the impersonality and impermanence of the “reality” that is the universe, guarantees that the ‘average’ Buddhist believer will not be greatly influenced by them.</p>
Q: What is the nature of external [to man] reality [the external world]?	Objective reality is denied by the teachings of the Madhyamika view, and is internalized to be only in the mind by the Yogacara view. All “reality” is impermanent.
Man	
Q: What is a human being?	<p>Man is a bundle of properties, activities which give rise to other groups of activities. The deeds man does are either pure deeds or evil deeds, and the two produce similar kinds of deeds. The bundles of properties survive when the body dies, and they are reincarnated according to the <i>karmic</i> results of the deeds done.</p> <p>There is “no self” (<i>anatman</i>). When the “person” is broken down into his constituent parts, there is nothing left to be called the “self.”</p> <p>Every person possesses a Buddha nature, which consists of emptiness.</p>
Q: Is man made up of both material and immaterial parts?	The distinction between my material and my immaterial parts is a false distinction because of the doctrine of <i>anatman</i> . Also the Buddhist view of things is a monistic view, not a dualistic view. However, some Zen Buddhists believe that the mind can exist separate from the body.
Q: What is the meaning of human history?	Knowledge of human history is a lower form of knowledge that will not free the mind or contribute to attaining the greatest form of knowledge. Ultimately it must be asked if a Buddhist “philosophy of history” is possible.
Sin	
Q: What is the basic	The basic human problem is that of suffering.

<p>human problem?</p>	<p>'Now[1] this, O Bhikkhus, is the noble truth concerning suffering.</p> <p>'Birth is attended with pain[2], decay is painful, disease is painful, death is painful. Union with the unpleasant is painful, painful is separation from the pleasant; and any craving that is unsatisfied, that too is painful. In brief, the five aggregates which spring from attachment (the conditions of individuality and their cause)[3] are painful.⁵</p> <p>However, since sin, the self, illness, etc., are all unreal (Mahayana Buddhism), ignorance of one's true self is sin in that it keeps one trapped in the cycle of death and rebirth.</p>
<p>Q: What is the cause of the problem?</p>	<p>'Now this, O Bhikkhus, is the noble truth concerning the origin of suffering.</p> <p>'Verily, it is that thirst (or craving), causing the renewal of existence, accompanied by sensual delight, seeking satisfaction now here, now there--that is to say, the craving for the gratification of the passions, or the craving for (a future) life, or the craving for success (in this present life).⁶</p>
Death	
<p>Q: What happens to a person at death?</p>	<p>There are hells in many schools of Buddhism, and these are stops along the way in <i>samsara</i>, the cycle of rebirth.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Nibbana</i> is extinction or non-becoming while the ultimate state in Christianity is fullness of becoming in heaven. <i>Nibbana</i> is not a place to go. It is merely a state of being or rather nonbeing (Post-Mortal <i>nibbana</i>).</p>

⁵ T. W. Rhys Davids, trans., *Dhamma-Kakka-Ppavattana Sutta* [Introduction to the Foundation of the kingdom of Righteousness], in *Buddhist Suttas*, Vol. XI of The Sacred Books of the East (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1881), 148.

⁶ Rhys Davids, Dhamma, 148.

Q: What happens to an adherent (believer) at death?	The state of bliss after death is referred to as <i>parinirvana</i> (a state which, after it is attained, is not followed by rebirth).
Christ	
Q: Is there a savior figure [in some cases, men who have delayed their final transformation to help others]?	Particularly in Mahayana Buddhism, the bodhisattva was seen as a “savior” figure, in that the bodhisattva was a being who delayed entering into <i>nirvana</i> , returned to the wheel of <i>samsara</i> (constant return through reincarnation) in order to show others the way to liberation. He becomes a model of the middle way in that he is not dwelling fully in <i>nirvana</i> , nor is he fully in <i>samsara</i> . The extremely influential Shinran, a priest in 12 th century Japan, claimed that salvation could be obtained in no other way but naming the name of Amida Buddha.
Q: Are there intermediaries between “the ultimate” (god) and mankind?	No.
Q: How is Jesus seen by this religion?	Obviously, since Buddhism predated Christianity, Jesus was not mentioned during the early formation of Buddhism. However, some adherents of Buddhism believe that Jesus was a “bodhisattva,” who sacrificed his own entry into nirvana for the sake of others.
Cross	
Q: Is there a concept of substitutionary death?	No.
Faith	
Q: What is/are the means of a transformation? (What must be believed or done to move into the ideal state)	In Theravada Buddhism, vipassana (insight meditation) is used to prepare the mind for enlightenment. Some sects of Mahayana Buddhism teach that entry into paradise is obtained through faith.

of existence?)	
Life	
Q: What is the end of transformation (the ideal state of existence to be reached)?	<p>Nirvana is the ultimate, ideal state of existence which, because it is the state of awakening at which all craving stops, is the state at which one ceases to be reborn – thus it is beyond both being and non-being.</p> <p>Some schools of Mahayana Buddhism believe that it is possible to attain a kind of paradise where they can avoid rebirth by endeavoring to become a Buddha.</p> <p>Zen Buddhists believe that the mind is separated from the body at death, and that it seeks to be joined to a body that has a compatible karma.</p>
Truth	
Q: Can absolute truth be known?	Enlightenment is the ultimate attainment of truth, yet it is total emptying at the same time. <i>Satori</i> (enlightenment), in some forms of Japanese Buddhism, is an instantaneous “aha;” a flash of insight.
Q: Why is it possible to know anything at all?	There are lower forms of knowledge, but the higher forms of knowledge come only through meditation and stillness of mind. It rises up as the discernment that comes from meditation.
Scriptures (Sacred Writings)	
Q: How authoritative are the Sacred Writings?	The primary Buddhist scripture is the Tripitaka. It contains the teachings of Gautama Buddha and his disciples, plus rules of conduct for those who would follow Buddha as monks. Different teachers and schools have different attitudes about the authority of these writings and others of the hundreds of venerated writings of Buddhism; some granting them no authority, others considering them authoritative – though the meaning may only be accepted, or accurate as to source.
Q: If the Bible constitutes the Scriptures, what other	N/A

authoritative books are there?	
Worship	
What forms of worship (rituals/ceremonies; Corporate/individual) are practiced by adherents?	Tantric Buddhists use prayer wheels; members of the strict Soka Gakkai do nembutsu (naming the name of Buddha) with formal bowing procedures daily; priests chant, light incense, beg for alms, beat drums and bells, and meditate. Many Buddhists have miniature Buddhist shrines in their homes where they bow and pray. Buddhist priests usually officiate at funerals, practice calligraphy by writing Buddhist texts and prayers. Buddhists will go on retreats, and practitioners may use various forms of asceticism. In Vajrayana Buddhism, certain secret methods and techniques are used to hurry one toward nirvana. Zen Buddhists use <i>koan</i> or pithy sayings to encourage <i>satori</i> (flashes of insight).
Morality / Ethics	
Q: How do we know what is right or wrong?	<p>Buddha taught the Middle Way, and the Middle Way is between the intellect and the emotions of humanity. The Noble 8-fold path is equally divided between four intellectual, and four ethical disciplines. Before Gautama, the concept of non-injury (ahimsā) was already an ethical principle in Hinduism and Jainism.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Buddhist training traditionally cultivates three key areas in the life of a Buddhist known as the threefold training: meditation leading to proper mental discipline; knowledge leading to true wisdom; and compassion leading to ethical conduct.</p>
Q: What are some of the moral/ethical requirements of the religion?	<p>The Noble 8-fold path (The Middle Way of ethical conduct, mental discipline, and wisdom) is the moral/ethical path that leads to Nirvana. It includes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Right Understanding, 2. Right Thought, 3. Right Speech, 4. Right Action, 5. Right Livelihood, 6. Right Effort, 7. Right Mindfulness, and 8. Right Concentration

<p>Major Contemporary Divisions of the Religion</p>	
<p>Q: What sects, denominations, or off-shoots of the religion exist today?</p>	<p>Two Main Branches:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mahayana (“The Great Vehicle”) Buddhism, with many sects in Tibet and East Asia. • Theravada (Hinayana – “The Small Vehicle”) Buddhism, with several sects in Sri Lanka and Southeast Asia. <p>A few of the hundreds of sects: Tibetan Buddhism (also known as Vajrayana and Lamaism) [an amalgam of a folk religion (Bon); Tantrism (Indian philosophy of male-female complementarity); and Mahayana Buddhism] (found primarily in Tibet and Mongolia); Pure Land (China, Korea, and Japan); Chan/Zen (China and Japan); and Nichiren Shoshu [parent school of the now international Soka Gakkai] (Japan, now worldwide).</p> <p>The complications of understanding the schools of Buddhism often result from the tendency of Buddhist schools and sects to have many elements derived from folk religions, state religious requirements, other established religions, and the philosophical bents of the founders; all bound together with elements of a larger branch of Buddhism in a syncretistic package.</p>
<p>Q: What are the basic differences between the sects, denominations, or off-shoots?</p>	<p>This is a difficult question to answer because the number of sects, or schools, is so great, and because the variations are equally numerous. However, see discussions above and below for some examples.</p>
<p>Impact/Consistency</p>	
<p>Q: What is the impact of the religion on the daily life of adherents?</p>	<p>The impact of Buddhism on the daily life of its adherents differs from place to place, and school to school. For those in countries where Buddhism is both the predominant and dominant religion, like Sri Lanka and Thailand, every day life is heavily influenced by the teachings of Theravada Buddhism. In Tibet, Tantric Buddhism has a strong influence on daily life. For those in countries like Japan, where Mahayana Buddhism is a major religion, only those who belong to the strictest schools (like Nichiren and Soka Gakkai) are intensely active in their religion on a daily basis. Most of the rest of the people are busily</p>

	involved in non-religious activities most of the time, and take time out only for certain ceremonies and services.
<p>Q: Do what degree do adherents live comfortably with values, beliefs, and life-ways that conflict with their religion?</p>	<p>This can be answered in two ways.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Historically, Buddhism has often entered people-groups in a syncretistic blend with the folk religion(s) of the people. The combined set of tenets/beliefs that results from this syncretism is filled with elements that are in conflict one with another. Most adherents do not try to make sense of these, or to make them elements ‘logically’ consistent [especially since the “logic” involved in our attempts to point them out is Aristotelian logic, not their logic of daily life].</p> <p style="text-align: center;">The other response is that many adherents live comfortably with materialism and western influences.</p>
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“For the Hindu, the aim of religion is the integration of personality which reconciles the individual to his own nature, his fellowmen and the Supreme Spirit. To realize this goal there are no set paths. Each individual may adopt the method which most appeals to him, and in the atmosphere of Hinduism, even inferior modes of approach get refined. A mediaeval Indian mystic wrote: “ There may be different kinds of oil in different lamps, the wicks may also be of different kinds, but when they burn, we have the same flame and illumination.””# Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, (former Vice President of India) in Mahadevan (1956:vii) Outlines of Hinduism

Hinduism is truly a catholic religion. Yamamoto (1998:20) says thirteen percent of the world’s population is Hindu. So, it is significantly smaller than Christendom (33%) and Islam (21%). However, as Radhakrishnan implies, the theology of Hinduism hijacks every devotee of every religion, and defines him or her as an adherent of the one god Hinduism proclaims. That is catholic!

Almost every time I share the gospel with a Hindu, I get the same response: “god is one.” This cameo of Hindu theology provides the best defense against the call to repent and trust Christ. “There is no need for alarm and rash reaction because god is one.” “We all worship the same god.” In my experience, the evangelization of Hindus requires teaching and connecting more than it does “witnessing” in the North American sense. We must teach, pray, teach, love, teach, live, teach, pray, and then teach some more.

Remember, Hindus are people, not religious objects defined by this paper or some other study on the Hindu faith. As unique people their needs vary. This material may or may not help you deal with any particular person. Don’t use it to “attack” Hinduism. If your Hindu friend sees the tension between the two religions, be prepared to openly discuss the differences. At times good apologetics involves helping a person see the internal contradictions in his or her belief system. However, do not over estimate the impact this will have on a Hindu. Generally, Hindus have no problem saying, “only God knows” when faced with contradictions and anomalies.

Principle No. 1: Hindus must understand the Creature / Creator distinction

Chronological Bible Teaching is a great method for the evangelization of Hindus because it immediately exposes them to the creature / Creator distinction. A concept that is foreign to the Hindu worldview, but the very foundation of the Christian worldview and hope. You might say the Hindu hope is to discover you are god. The Christian hope is to discover there is a God who can save you and the world.

The Hindu Perspective on the Creature / Creator distinction

“One of the fundamental beliefs of Hinduism is that there is one all-pervading and all-transcending Spirit which is the basic reality - the source and ground of all beings. This is usually referred to as God (Isvara) ; but the wise realize it as the impersonal Absolute (Brahman). The reality conceived of as God is the cause of the universe-its sole and whole cause. The universe rises from, remains in, and returns to God. There is no other creator alongside, or opposed to God. God does not create the world out of nothing, nor out of any stuff external to

him.” Mahadevan (1966: 22-23).

The Hindu worldview is one dimensional. Ultimate reality is Brahman – the impersonal, transpersonal reality, the source and essence of all things. Note that the universe is not external to god. It is god. In a story from the Chandogya Upanishad 6:2.1 (Eknath Easwaran, 1987:183), Uddalaka finishes his explanation of reality by telling Shvetaketu, “you are that.” You are the ultimate reality – Brahman.

In the beginning was only being, One without a second. Out of himself he brought forth the cosmos and entered into everything in it. There is nothing that does not come from him. Of everything he is the inmost Self. He is truth; he is the Self supreme. You are that Shvetaketu; you are that.

A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (1995:11), the founder of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, underscores this lack of distinction between the creator and the creature when he says, *The Vedas teach us that we are not this matter. We are Brahman. Aham brahmasmi. Lord Sankaracarya preached this gospel to the world. We are not this matter; we are Brahman, spirit.*

In this configuration the world is illusionary. Not in the sense that it has no real material existence, but in the sense that it offers the illusion of happiness in itself. As one writer said, (http://hinduwebsite.com/hinduism/h_maya.htm) *It is something like a mirage which misleads you into wrong thinking and wrong actions.* The world is the source of countless distractions, exploited by desire, leading ignorant people away from true knowledge. Desire for the manifestations of the world must be renounced. They are deceitful alternatives to the discovery of Self.

Hinduism considers the world in which we live as a projection of God and unreal. It is unreal not because it does not exist, but because it is unstable, impermanent, unreliable and illusory. It is unreal because it hides the Truth and shows us things that lead to our ignorance. It is unreal because it changes its colors every moment. What is now is not what is next. (http://hinduwebsite.com/hinduism/h_maya.htm)

The Christian Perspective on the Creature / Creator distinction

The Christian sees reality in two dimensions. The first dimension is the triune God: independent, free, immaterial, personal, eternal and self-existent. The second dimension is creation, both material and immaterial. Creation is temporal, finite, personal and impersonal, visible and invisible, and dependent upon but separate from God. Reality was one dimensional before God created. When God created, reality changed. It became two dimensional: God and his Creation.

Carefully telling the story of God helps a Hindu grapple with the goodness of the material creation (Genesis 1:31). Our ultimate hope is not heaven, and the blessed hope is not the rapture. The blessed hope is the return of Christ to earth to rule and reign. Our ultimate hope is the new heaven and new earth. With Paul (2 Corinthians 5:4), we do not want to be naked - without a body - because our human existence is defined by body. Even our temporary sojourn in heaven is no substitute for ruling and bearing God’s image on a planet perfectly designed for the bodily display of God’s glory.

Christians hope for the redemption of creation. The Creature / Creator distinction is the root of that hope. It speaks of someone totally outside the realm of human experience, not bound by human consciousness, who is able to do what people, even enlighten people, cannot do. Since Hindus do not hope for the moral and spiritual reconstitution of the cosmos, it is easy to believe, "I am god." Make this point or your hearer will interpret the Christian talk of heaven as nothing more than nirvana or moksha, both of which are escapes from material existence.

Principle No. 2 – Hindus must understand the Nature of God

The ideas of divine unity and multiplicity are found throughout Hinduism. This makes the idea of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit more difficult to understand.

The Hindu Perspective on the Nature of God

Adherents to ritualistic Hinduism are unashamedly polytheistic. Neo-Hindu groups consider themselves to be monotheistic. At the same time it is safe to say that in some ways all Hindus agree that god is one. This essential unity of God is expressed in the famous Rig-Veda (Book 1, Hymn 164,46, Ralph T.H. Griffith, translator 1889), *They call him Indra, Mitra, Varuna, Agni, and he is heavenly nobly-winged Garutman. To what is One, sages give many a title they call it Agni, Yama, Matarisvan.* Mahadevan (1966:24) represents the monotheistic position of Neo-Hinduism when he says,

It is wrong, therefore, to characterize Hinduism as an idolatrous religion. The idols are symbols of the invisible Spirit. It is after the devotee has invoked the presence of God therein that they become sacred objects of worship. The Hindu, it is true, bows his head before many a form of the Deity. On that account, however, he is not to be dubbed a polytheist. What the Hindu adores is the One God in the many gods.

Pratap Kumar believes (2000:207) these monotheistic ideas crept into Hinduism as a result of Western and Islamic influences. His surveys (2000:220) of South African Hindus found that many (34-36%) still hold to the traditional polytheistic views. For our purposes it is safe to say the average Hindu believes God is one, but that there are many gods. This is fertile soil for misunderstanding the Trinity and we do well to teach it chronologically following its development in the story line of the Bible.

When it comes to the attributes of God, informed Hindus talk of god as omnipotent, eternal, and changeless. The Bhagavad-Gita ascribes many divine attributes to Krishna (viewed as the supreme being by his devotees). The list reads like one from a standard Christian work on Theology Proper.

Arjuna asked: Thou art the Supreme Spirit, the Eternal Home, the Holiest of the Holy, the Eternal Divine Self, the Primal God, the Unborn

and the Omnipresent. So have said the seers and the divine sage Narada; as well as Asita, Devala and Vyasa; and Bhagavad-Gita, The Bhagavad-Gita (Chapter 10 – Translation by Shri Purohit Swami, p. 27 (<http://www.thebigview.com/download/bhagavad-gita.pdf>)

*My Lord! O Immutable One! My delusion has fled. By Thy Grace,
O Changeless One, the light has dawned. My doubts are gone, and I stand before Thee ready to do Thy will.” Ibid, Chapter 18, p. 51*

The Christian Perspective on the Nature of God

The Bible carefully reveals God’s tri-unity over a long period of time. The attempt to find Trinitarian evidence in the Old Testament is both unnecessary and misleading. The Old Testament establishes the unity and oneness of God. As the story unfolds the one true God reveals His qualities and prerogatives. Creation may share some of these (such as love, truth, grace, personhood), but others are essential to the divine nature - they can only be true of an infinite being. In the New Testament these essential qualities and prerogatives are ascribed separately to the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit leading New Testament believers to see that the one God revealed in the Old Testament exists as three eternal persons. Our ability to understand this most mysterious doctrine is in part related to the process God used to reveal it. We do well to follow His example with Hindus. The process can be summarized like this:

The Old Testament clearly establishes...

There is one God

The essential characteristics of this one God

The titles associated with the essential character of this One God

Worship is restricted to this One God

The New Testament clearly establishes...

God has not changed

The God of the Old Test. is the God of the New Test. Therefore, there is one God

The Father has the essential characteristics, the titles, and the worship of the One God

The Son has the essential characteristics, the titles, and the worship of the One God

The Spirit has the essential characteristics, the titles and the worship of the One God

Principle No. 3 – Hindus must understand what it means to be Human

Hinduism brilliantly analyzed the dynamics of human suffering. It demonstrated a keen insight into the depth of human psychology. But in response to these profound insights it recommended the denial of all that is most beautifully human – renunciation of desire. Christians would agree with much of what Hinduism says about human suffering and psychology, but we do not believe the solution lies in escaping our material humanness. Our goal is to display God’s glory through all that is uniquely human.

The Hindu Perspective on Human Existence

Atman is the core of human existence in Hindu thought. The word means “self”. Westerners think of “self” as unique individual identity. Atman is the exact of opposite. It is the non-particularized self, the universal self about which no predication can be made. It is the collective one not the individual. The Katha Upanishad, 1:3:15 (Easwaran, 1987:88-89) describes it this way, “*The supreme self is beyond name and form, Beyond the senses, inexhaustible, without beginning, without end, beyond time, space, and causality, eternal, Immutable. Those who realize the Self are forever free from the jaws of death.*”

The self is eternal and good. It needs no redemption. The body will die, but the self never dies. It is born again and again in a new body. As the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad says,

The Self, pure awareness, shines as the light within the heart, surrounded by the senses. Only seeming to think, seeming to move, the Self neither sleeps nor wakes nor dreams. 8 When the Self takes on a body, he seems to assume the body's frailties and limitations; but when he sheds the body at the time of death, the Self leaves all these behind. 4:7-14 (translated by Eknath Easwaran, 1987:43-44).

Atman (self) is realized by renouncing the desire for the things of material existence (this includes people and relationships). The Katha Upanishad 2:3:13-14 (Easwaran, translator, 1987:97) states this is the “teaching of all the scriptures.”

*When all desires that surge in the heart Are renounced, the mortal becomes immortal.
When all the knots that strangle the heart Are loosened, the mortal becomes immortal.
This sums up the teaching of the scriptures.*

This prescription is rooted in the insight that human anger and pain are the direct result of human desire. Simplistically speaking it is a matter of “desire nothing and nothing can hurt you.” Krishna makes this point to Arjuna when asked how to identify an enlightened man. The perfect man, says Krishna, is untouched by all the issues of material existence.

When a man has given up the desires of his heart and is satisfied with the Self alone, be sure that he has reached the highest state. The sage, whose mind is unruffled in suffering, whose desire is not roused by enjoyment, who is without attachment, anger or fear – take him to be one who stands at that lofty level. He who wherever he goes is attached to no person and to no place by ties of flesh; who accepts good and evil alike, neither welcoming the one nor shrinking from the other – take him to be one who is merged in the Infinite. Bhagavad-Gita, Chapter 2 – Translation by Shri Purohit Swami, p. 7 (<http://www.thebigview.com/download/bhagavad-gita.pdf>)

Prajapati’s final lesson to the god Indra in the Chandogya Upanishad says escape from body consciousness is the key to life. This enables people to embrace their “real form” - non-material self.

12. 1 *"It is true the body is perishable, but within it dwells the imperishable Self. This body is subject to pleasure and pain; no one who identifies with the body can escape from pleasure and pain. But those who know they are not the body pass beyond pleasure and pain to live in abiding Joy. 12.2 "Like the wind, like clouds, like thunder and lightning, which rise from space without physical shape and reach the transcendent light in their own form, those who rise above body-consciousness ascend to the transcendent light in their real form, the Self. 8:12:1ff translated by Eknath Easwaran, 1987:199*

The Upanishads often discuss human desire and the difficulties it brings to the human experience. Michael Nagler (The Upanishads, 1987:290) gives a good summary of Hinduism's logic in this regard.

The Upanishads go a step further: Insecurity is a perturbation in consciousness. When we have the sensation "I want such-and-such" what we really mean is, I want the relative tranquility that follows when my desire subsides. (In other words, pleasure-it's referred too.) Naturally if that desire had not arisen in the first place we would be free of the need to pursue it. We would be free of the increased confusion and entanglement that come when we do satisfy a desire (building up what Freud called a "repetition compulsion"), and the frustration when we can't. It is clear how "renunciation" is a misleading word for this self-liberating process, which may feel painful at times but is really opening up our capacity for much greater fulfillment by orders of magnitude. It is clear that the process is connected not with deprivation but with freedom.

The Christian Perspective on Human Existence

In the story of God, people are presented as personal beings, created in God's image (Gen. 1:26). The Bible does not apologize for the soulfulness of human existence (Gen. 2:7), that is, people driven by desire. All personal beings are motivated by desire. This includes God, who is constantly portrayed as one who acts according to his desires, Eph. 1:11, Isa. 55:11, Ps. 132:14. In the Proverbs the fruit of godly desire is righteous behaviour, 10:24, 11:23, 13:4; but the fruit of ungodly desire is wicked behaviour, 11:6, 12:12. Indeed, so basic is desire to life the writer of Ecclesiastes describes those who are old and about to die as people no longer stirred by desire, Ecc 12:5. Desire is a wonderful part of what it means to be human. It is not something to escape. It is something to enjoy as it is brought under the sway of God's promise to shape both the desiring and the doing of His good desires, Phil. 2:12.

Material existence is not the problem – sin is. People are corrupt at the core of their existence (Jeremiah 17:9). All of the magnificent capabilities of human personhood – desiring, willing, thinking, acting – are under sin's sovereignty. Yet God promises redemption!

1 Thessalonians 5:23 *May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. 24 The one who calls you is faithful and he will do it.*

Principle No. 4 – Hindus must understand sin, death and Salvation

In telling a Hindu the story of God he or she must come to see sin as rebellion against the revealed will of God. Hindus do not believe in a fallen human race. They believe at the core level people are good and god. The idea that sin has contaminated the human species is quite foreign to their way of thinking.

The Hindu Perspective on Sin, Death and Salvation

There are many law codes in Hinduism. Works like the Code of Manu with its endorsement of caste, and extreme social subjugation of women seem oppressive to Westerners. But they do indicate Hindus have a cognitive grid for understanding righteousness in terms of code keeping or breaking. However, Hindus do not believe people act sinfully because they are fallen (evil). They believe people act sinfully (break the code) because they have been deceived by the material world. It is desire (covetousness) for material existence rather than spirit existence that leads to sin.

Yudhishtira said: I desire, O bull of Bharata's race, to hear in detail the source from which sin proceeds and the foundation upon which it rests. Bhishma said: Hear, O King, what the foundation is of sin. Covetousness alone is a great destroyer of merit and goodness. From covetousness proceeds sin. ... It is covetousness that makes men commit sin. The Mahabharata Upanishad, Book 12 - Santi Parva, Section CLVIII, Translated by Sri Kisari Mohan Ganguli, <http://www.sacred-texts.com/hin/m12/m12a157.htm>

The Gita puts it this way,

Arjuna asked: My Lord! Tell me, what is it that drives a man to sin, even against his will and as if by compulsion? Lord Shri Krishna: It is desire, it is aversion, born of passion. Desire consumes and corrupts everything. It is man's greatest enemy. As fire is shrouded in smoke, a mirror by dust and a child by the womb, so is the universe enveloped in desire. Bhagavad-Gita Chapter 3 – Translation by Shri Purohit Swami, p. 11 (<http://www.thebigview.com/download/bhagavad-gita.pdf>)

Inescapably connected with the Hindu concept of sin is the law of Karma. A person's actions determine their lot in life. Karma is not about fate. It is about a strict application of justice. It is the law of sowing and reaping applied over multiple lives within the Hindu wheel of life (birth – life – death – birth – life – death, etc.). Mahadevan (1966:58-59) explains it this way.

According to this law there is nothing chaotic or capricious in the moral world. As we sow, so we reap. What we are and what circumstances we find ourselves in are dependent on what we were and what we did; similarly what we shall be and how we shall be circumscribed will depend on what we are and what we do at present.

Karma is not fatalistic because every person has free will. Circumstances are determined by past actions, but the individual's will is free to choose how he or she will react to those circumstances. At any point a person can make choices that lead to better karma, and the next life will bear the fruit of these choices.

Karma works because of reincarnation. People do not always reap what they sow in this life. The rich often prosper, and wicked people often go to their graves in peace. Reincarnation is the guarantee (philosophically) that people will bear the fruit of their actions – if not in this life – in the next. Though the Self takes a new body after death, the law of karma is inseparable from the self. Karma determines whether the Self enjoys heavenly blessings for short while after death (Prabhupada, 1984:283), and it determines the circumstances of the Self's rebirth.

“Salvation” for a Hindu involves escaping the law of Karma and entering the blessings of spirit existence forever. This state goes by various names; we will refer to it as Moksha.

Moksha is the highest and truest form of knowledge. But this knowledge does not involve the processing information. Rather it is a state of consciousness where one knows only the self. It is a state recognizable only to those who have attained it. Moksha is emancipation from all moral and finite bonds. This type of knowledge is described in the Mandukya Upanishad (Easwaran, 1987:60-61) by contrasting it with other states of consciousness. The brief Upanishad states,

A U M stands for the supreme Reality. It is a symbol for what was, what is, And what shall be. AUM represents also What lies beyond past, present, and future. 2 Brahman is all, and the Self is Brahman. This Self has four states of consciousness. 3 The first is called Vaishvanara, in which One lives with all the senses turned outward, Aware only of the external world. 4 Taijasa is the name of the second, The dreaming state in which, with the senses Turned inward, one enacts the impressions Of past deeds and present desires. 5 The third state is called Prajna, of deep sleep, in which one neither dreams nor desires. There is no mind in Prajna, there is no separateness; but the sleeper is not conscious of this. Let him become conscious in Pra'na and it will open the door to the state of abiding joy. 6 Praj'na, all-powerful and all-knowing, Dwells in the hearts of all as the ruler. Praj'na is the source and end of all. 7 The fourth is the superconscious state called Turiya, neither inward nor outward, beyond the senses and the intellect, in which there is none other than the Lord. He is the supreme goal of life. He is infinite peace and love. Realize him! 8 Turiya is represented by A U M. 12 The mantram A U M stands for the supreme state of Turiya, without parts, beyond birth And death, symbol of everlasting joy. Those who know A U M as the Self become the Self, Truly they become the Self.

Perdition is ignorance. The person who remains at the first level of consciousness (Vaishvanara) never understands life. He or she is captivated by the illusion that life can be found through the experiences of the senses. This person remains in the endless cycle of rebirth unless there is enlightenment.

At this point we need to ask, "How does one attain Moksha?" The various branches and cults of Hinduism will answer that question differently.

However, there are three common paths to enlightenment.

Bhajati Marga: the way of devotion.

The clearest explanation of this path is found in the Bhagavad Gita. There Bhajati is devotional service to Krishna. This involves any service undertaken out of love for Krishna without thought of reward. The Bhagavad-Gita 15:19 says, *Whoever knows me as the Supreme personality of Godhead, without doubting, is the knower of everything. He therefore engages himself in full devotional service to Me.* In commenting on this verse Prabhupada (1984:519) says,

The word bhajati is very significant. In many places the word bhajati is expressed in relationship with the serviced of the Supreme Lord. If a person is engaged in full Krsna consciousness, in the devotional service of the Lord, it is to be understood that he has understood all the Vedic knowledge.

Earlier Prabhupada (1984:431) clearly stated the importance of devotion when he said,

“It is explicitly stated here (Gita 12:6-7) that the devotees are very fortunate to be delivered very soon from material existence by the Lord. In pure devotional service one comes to the realization that God is great and that the individual soul is subordinate to Him. His duty is to render service (bhajati) to the Lord – and if he does not, then he will render service to maya” (material existence)

Karma Marga- the way of action.

Karma yoga or marga involves right actions as prescribed in the Vedic writings. Actions lead to enlightenment when performed without regard for the pleasure they bring or anticipation of the fruit that may arise from them. They are undertaken with detachment from all that is material out of love for god alone. The Shvetashvatara Upanishad 6:3-4 (Easwaran, 1987:230) describes them in this way.

Those who act without thought of personal profit and lead a well-disciplined life discover in the course of time the divine principle that all forms of life are one. Those who work in the service of the Lord are freed from the law of karma.

Jnana Marga- the way of knowledge.

Here salvation is gained through philosophic, contemplative knowledge. Through meditation one is able to achieve union with the self, and thereby escape karma. The Shvetashvatara Upanishad 2:1-9 (Easwaran, 1987:220) explains it in this way.

1. May we harness body and mind to see the Lord of Life, who dwells in everyone. 2. May we ever with one-pointed mind strive for blissful union with the Lord. 3. May we train our senses to serve the Lord through the practice of meditation. 4. Great is the glory of the Lord of Life, infinite, omnipresent, all-knowing. He is known by the wise who meditate and conserve their vital energy. 5. Hear, O children of immortal bliss, you are born to be united with the Lord. Follow the path of the illumined ones and be united with the Lord of Life. 6. Kindle the fire of kundalini deep in meditation. Bring your mind and breath under control. Drink deep of divine love, and you will attain

the unitive state.

Though mercy and grace are frequently mentioned in Hindu scriptures, one's destiny is determined by human will and action, not grace and mercy.

The Christian Perspective on Sin, Death and Salvation

As the story of God unfolds in the early chapters of Genesis the nature of sin is clearly illustrated. Adam and Eve disobeyed the command of God. Eve desired the forbidden fruit. Why did she desire it? She was deceived. Satan's reasoning lead to confusion and misunderstanding. She thought the fruit would make her wise, even godlike. Satan continues to exploit human desiring at every turn: an easy task given the fallen nature of the human heart.

As the story goes on it is easy to show how sin became an individual and social contaminant. Individually the children of Adam and Eve brought sacrifices to God because of their awareness of sin. Socially, the earth becomes totally corrupt and liable for destruction. Your Hindu friend must see that sin moves through mankind and society like blood through the circulatory system. In spite of this dark picture of human existence, from the very beginning there are promises of redemption. Make sure these shine brightly against this dark backdrop as you tell the story.

The revelation of God's law at Sinai is a key part of the story for a Hindu. Here we stumble over a standard that is essential for life (Lev. 18:5), but humanly out of reach. Underscore the social / relational nature of God's law. God does not want people to escape material existence, but to live as he requires within it. Sensing the impossibility of this requirement leads to brokenness and an understanding of the need for mercy & grace. Enlightenment brought by the Holy Spirit is experienced as brokenness. Rather than discovering god within our hearts we discover sin deeply rooted, and thoroughly integrated into every aspect of our being. To see this is to experience the in-breaking of God given repentance.

Of course, the teachings of resurrection and reincarnation are antithetical. They have nothing in common, and you will need to teach the Christian worldview so clearly summarized in Hebrews 9:27 – *“Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment.”*

The genius of the good news is grace and mercy. Much must be made of this, but remember, this is about God saving, not just overlooking or forgiving sin. Grace is about God writing his law to our hearts and perfecting us in Christ. It is about delivering us from sin by the power of God. Generally, Hindus think grace is about God being soft on sin.

Principle No. 5 – Hindus must change their mind about Jesus Christ and God's Judgment

In telling a Hindu the story of God, you must establish God's identity as judge before you discuss the identify of Jesus. Hindus respect Jesus as a teacher (though they are generally ignorant of His true teaching), but they will not understand his role as savior until they work through the concepts of the divine judgment.

The Perspective of Hinduism on Jesus and the Judgment of God

There are various perspectives on judgment within Hinduism. Many Neo-Hindus deny there is anything like Christian Judgment. They see god as loving and accepting, and believe that the issues of justice are worked out through Karma. Folk Hinduism believes the god Yama will judge the dead, and that his judgment leads to time spent in heaven and hell before rebirth occurs.

Hindus often say the teaching of Jesus is similar to that of Krishna or Buddha. They love to quote KJV verses like Matthew 6:22 *“The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light”* claiming it supports the idea of the third eye and inner light. To them, Jesus is a guru. In the following quote the ideas of judgement are nowhere to be found.

The religion of Christ was a religion of love, renunciation and self-control; it was a religion of God-consciousness. As these are the highest ideals among the Hindus, they accept Christ and His true religion in so far as it is one with their ideals;
<http://www.hinduism.co.za/jesus.htm#>

Hinduism has no concept of substitutionary atonement though sacrifice is a virtue and is promoted.

The Christian Perspective on Jesus and the Judgment of God

The best way to help a Hindu understand the judgment of God is to simply tell the Story of God. The stories of Eden, Cain, Noah, Babel, Sodom and Gomorah, the Exodus, and many more reveal this important aspect of God's character. His just judgment is a primary focus of the story if it is faithfully told. Hindus generally do not like this teaching, but that should not lead us to skirt around it. Soft pedaling the judgment of God makes the cross look grotesque. If you work your way to the cross through the unfolding of the story in the Old Testament then it looks like what it is – the place where God is both just and the justifier.

Conclusion

I believe the best way to bring the gospel to a Hindu is to befriend him or her, get involved in their life, and then over a period of time, tell and explain the story of God to them. In doing this, if you give special emphasis to the principles outlined above, you will have done all you can do to prepare them to hear the good news of God's redeeming love and grace.

Access Points to ‘The Religious Components’ of a Worldview	Hinduism (From its own primary sources)
What is the name of the society or people group?	Predominantly Indian
Does the society view life holistically [so that religion is not a part of life but is infused through all of life]?	"Hinduism has no founder and no prophet. It has no particular ecclesiastical or institutional structure, nor set creed. The emphasis is upon a way of living rather than on a way of thought. Radhakrishnan, a former president of India, once remarked: "Hinduism is more a culture than a creed", Hammer, 1982:170
Name the predominant religious system(s) in the society.	“There are various cults in Hinduism and a variety of creeds. But conflict among them is avoided by the twin doctrines of adhikara and ista. Adhikara means eligibility. A person's faith is determined by the kind of man he is. There is no use, for instance, in putting a boy in the Honours Class, if he is fit only for the Pass Course. What is meat for one may be poison for another. A man's creed depends upon his adhikara. And it is his eligibility that determines his ista or ideal. Hinduism prescribes to each according to his needs. Hence it is not to be considered as a single creed or cult, but as a league of religions, a fellowship of faiths.” 1966:Mahadevan, 21
How many adherents does each religion have?	Yamamoto (1998:20) says thirteen percent of the world’s population is Hindu.
God	
Q: Does the religion express belief in a god or gods?”	“One of the fundamental beliefs of Hinduism is that there is one all-pervading and all-transcending Spirit which is the basic reality - the source and ground of all beings. This is usually referred to as God (Isvara) ; but the wise realize it as the impersonal Absolute (Brahman). The reality conceived of as God is the cause of the universe-its sole and whole cause. The universe rises from, remains in, and returns to God. There is no other creator alongside, or opposed to God. God does not create the world out of nothing, nor out of any stuff external to him.” Mahadevan (1966: 22-23).

	<p>“The great mountains and the big rivers, majestic trees and fine animals, heroic men and women-in fact, all things that have excellence, thus, become objects of veneration. When the Hindu worships these or the idols in the shrines, he is aware that it is to God that he really offers his worship. It is wrong, therefore, to characterize Hinduism as an idolatrous religion. The idols are symbols of the invisible Spirit. It is after the devotee has invoked the presence of God therein that they become sacred objects of worship. The Hindu, it is true, bows his head before many a form of the Deity. On that account, however, he is not to be dubbed a polytheist. What the Hindu adores is the One God in the many gods. Even as early as the rg-veda we have a philosophical monotheism culminating in monism or non-dualism. What Max Muller characterizes as the henotheism of the Vedas-viz., the worshipping of each divinity in turn, as the occasion demands-is really a tendency towards a philosophical monotheism. The Hindu mind is averse to assigning an unalterable or rigidly fixed form or name to the Deity. Hence it is that in Hinduism we have innumerable godforms and countless divine names. And, it is a truth that is recognized by all Hindus that obeisance offered to any of these forms and names reaches the one supreme God.” Mahadevan, 1966:24</p>
<p>Q: What are the characteristics of the god(s)?</p>	<p>The Chandogya Upanishad (6:2.1) “In the beginning was only being, One without a second. Out of himself he brought forth the cosmos and entered into everything in it. There is nothing that does not come from him. Of everything he is the inmost Self. He is truth; he is the Self supreme. You are that Shvetaketu; you are that.”</p> <p>The Bhagavad-Gita (Chapter 10 – Translation by Shri Purohit Swami, p. 27 http://www.thebigview.com/download/bhagavad-gita.pdf) “Arjuna asked: Thou art the Supreme Spirit, the Eternal Home, the Holiest of the Holy, the Eternal Divine Self, the Primal God, the Unborn and the Omnipresent. So have said the seers and the divine sage Narada; as well as Asita, Devala and Vyasa; and Bhagavad-Gita,”</p> <p>Ibid, Chapter 18, p. 51 “My Lord! O Immutable One! My delusion has fled. By Thy Grace, O Changeless One, the light has dawned. My doubts are gone, and I stand before Thee ready to do Thy will.” “</p>
<p>Q: What is the really real?</p>	<p>Atman – Brahman – the Supreme spirit</p>

	<p>A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (1995:11), “The Vedas teach us that we are not this matter. We are Brahman. Aham brahmasmi. Lord Sankaracarya preached this gospel to the world. We are not this matter; we are Brahman, spirit.”</p>
<p>Creation</p>	
<p>Q: Does the religion have an influential creation story?</p>	<p>Reg Veda is interesting (Book 10, HYMN CXXIX. Ralph T.H. Griffith, Translator). “1. THEN was not non-existent nor existent: there was no realm of air, no sky beyond it. What covered in, and where? and what gave shelter? Was water there, unfathomed depth of water? 2 Death was not then, nor was there aught immortal: no sign was there, the day's and night's divider. That One Thing, breathless, breathed by its own nature: apart from it was nothing whatsoever. 3 Darkness there was: at first concealed in darkness this All was indiscriminated chaos. All that existed then was void and form less: by the great power of Warmth was born that Unit. 4 Thereafter rose Desire in the beginning, Desire, the primal seed and germ of Spirit. Sages who searched with their heart's thought discovered the existent's kinship in the non-existent. 5 Transversely was their severing line extended: what was above it then, and what below it? There were begetters, there were mighty forces, free action here and energy up yonder 6 Who verily knows and who can here declare it, whence it was born and whence comes this creation? The Gods are later than this world's production. Who knows then whence it first came into being? 7 He, the first origin of this creation, whether he formed it all or did not form it, Whose eye controls this world in highest heaven, he verily knows it, or perhaps he knows not.”</p> <p>Chandogya Upanishad, III, 19, 1-2 – Translated by Max Muller http://www.sacred-texts.com/hin/sbe01/sbe01077.htm “1. Âditya (the suum) is Brahman, this is the doctrine, and this is the fuller account of it:-- In the beginning this was non-existent 2. It became existent, it grew. It turned into an egg. The egg lay for the time of a year. The egg broke open. The two halves were one of silver, the other of gold. 2. The silver one became this earth, the golden one the sky, the thick membrane (of the white) the mountains, the thin membrane (of the yoke) the mist with the clouds, the small veins the rivers, the fluid the sea. 3. And what was born from it that was Âditya, the sun. When he was born shouts of hurrah arose, and all beings arose, and all things which they desired. Therefore whenever the sun rises and sets, shouts of hurrah arise, and all beings arise, and all things which they desire. 4. If any one knowing this meditates on the sun as Brahman, pleasant shouts will approach him and will continue, yea, they will continue.”</p>

	<p>(ibid, vi 2, 1-4)</p> <p>“1. 'In the beginning,' my dear, 'there was that only which is one only, without a second. Others say, in the beginning there was that only which is not, one only, without a second; and from that which is not, that which is was born. 2. 'But how could it be thus, my dear?' the father continued. 'How could that which is, be born of that which is not? No, my dear, only that which is, was in the beginning, one only, without a second. 3. 'It thought, may I be many, may I grow forth. It sent forth fire 'That fire thought, may I be many, may I grow forth. It sent forth water .'And therefore whenever anybody anywhere is hot and perspires, water is produced on him from fire alone. 4. 'Water thought, may I be many, may I grow forth. It sent forth earth (food). 'Therefore whenever it rains anywhere, most food is then produced. From water alone is eatable food produced.”</p>
<p>Q: What is the nature of external [to man] reality [the external world]?</p>	<p>“Hinduism considers the world in which we live as a projection of God and unreal. It is unreal not because it does not exist, but because it is unstable, impermanent, unreliable and illusory. It is unreal because it hides the Truth and shows us things that lead to our ignorance. It is unreal because it changes its colors every moment. What is now is not what is next.” (http://hinduwebsite.com/hinduism/h_maya.htm)</p> <p>The Isha Upanishad, 1, translated by Eknath Easwaran, 1987:208 “<u>The Lord is enshrined in the hearts of all. The Lord is the supreme Reality. Rejoice in him through renunciation.</u> Covet nothing. All belongs to the Lord.”</p>
<p>Man</p>	
<p>Q: What is a human being?</p>	<p>The Brihadaranyaka Upanishad 4:7-14 (translated by Eknath Easwaran, 1987:43-44)</p> <p>“JANAKA 7 Who is that Self? YAJNAVALKYA The Self, pure awareness, shines as the light within the heart, surrounded by the senses. Only seeming to think, seeming to move, the Self neither sleeps nor wakes nor dreams. 8 When the Self takes on a body, he seems to assume the body's frailties and limitations; but when he sheds the body at the time of death, the Self leaves all these behind.”</p> <p>Bhagavad-Gita Chapter 2 – Translation by Shri Purohit Swami, p. 5 (http://www.thebigview.com/download/bhagavad-gita.pdf) “Be not anxious about these armies. The Spirit in man is imperishable.</p>
<p>Q: Is man made up of</p>	<p>Chandogya Upanishad, 8:12:1ff (translated by Eknath Easwaran, 1987:199)</p>

<p>both material and immaterial parts?</p>	<p>“12. 1 "It is true the body is perishable, but within it dwells the imperishable Self. This body is subject to pleasure and pain; no one who identifies with the body can escape from pleasure and pain. But those who know they are not the body pass beyond pleasure and pain to live in abiding Joy.”</p> <p>“12.2 "Like the wind, like clouds, like thunder and lightning, which rise from space without physical shape and reach the transcendent light in their own form, those who rise above body-consciousness ascend to the transcendent light in their real form, the Self”</p> <p>“12:3"“In that state, free from attachment, they move at will, laughing, playing, and rejoicing. They know the Self is not this body, but only tied to it for a time as an ox is tied to its cart. Whenever one sees, smells, speaks, hears, or thinks, they know it is the Self that sees, smells, speaks, hears, and thinks; the senses are but his instruments.”</p> <p>“12:4 "Worshipping this Self in the world of Brahman, the gods obtained all worlds and all desires. Those who know this Self and realize this Self obtain all worlds and all desires." So said Prajapati; so taught Prajapati.”</p>
<p>Q: What is the meaning of human history?</p>	<p>The outworking of karmic forces.</p> <p>“According to this law there is nothing chaotic or capricious in the moral world. As we sow, so we reap. What we are and what circumstances we find ourselves in are dependent on what we were and what we did; similarly what we shall be and how we shall be circumscribed will depend on what we are and what we do at present.” Mahadevan (1966:58-59)</p>
<p>Sin</p>	
<p>Q: What is the basic human problem?</p>	<p>Bhagavad-Gita Chapter 3 – Translation by Shri Purohit Swami, p. 11 (http://www.thebigview.com/download/bhagavad-gita.pdf)</p> <p>“Arjuna asked: My Lord! Tell me, what is it that drives a man to sin, even against his will and as if by compulsion?”</p> <p>“Lord Shri Krishna: It is desire, it is aversion, born of passion. Desire consumes and corrupts everything. It is man’s greatest enemy. As fire is shrouded in smoke, a mirror by dust and a child by the womb, so is the universe enveloped in desire. It is the wise man’s constant enemy; it tarnishes the face of wisdom. It is as insatiable as a flame of fire. It works through the senses, the mind and the reason; and with their help destroys wisdom and confounds the soul.”</p>

The Mahabharata, Book 12 - Santi Parva, Section CLVIII

Translated by Sri Kisari Mohan Ganguli

<http://www.sacred-texts.com/hin/m12/m12a157.htm>

“Hear, O King, what the foundation is of sin. Covetousness alone is a great destroyer of merit and goodness. From covetousness proceeds sin. It is from this source that sin and irreligiousness flow, together with great misery. This covetousness is the spring of also all the cunning and hypocrisy in the world. It is covetousness that makes men commit sin. From covetousness proceeds wrath; from covetousness flows lust, and it is from covetousness that loss of judgment, deception, pride, arrogance, and malice, as also vindictiveness, loss of prosperity, loss of virtue, anxiety, and infamy spring. Miserliness, cupidity, desire for every kind of improper act, pride of birth, pride of learning, pride of beauty, pride of wealth, pitilessness for all creatures, malevolence towards all, mistrust in respect of all, insincerity towards all, appropriation of other people’s wealth, ravishment of other people’s wives, harshness of speech, anxiety, propensity to speak ill of others, violent craving for the indulgence of lust, gluttony, liability to premature death, violent propensity towards malice, irresistible liking for falsehood, unconquerable appetite for indulging in passions, insatiable desire for indulging in ear, evil-speaking, boastfulness, arrogance, non-doing of duties, rashness, and perpetration of every kind of evil act,- all these proceed from covetousness.”

“In life men are unable, whether infants or youth or adults, to abandon covetousness. Such is the nature of covetousness that it never decays even with the decay of life. Like the ocean that can never be filled by the constant discharge of even immeasurable rivers of immeasurable depths, covetousness is incapable of being gratified by acquisitions to any extent. “

“The covetousness, however, which is never gratified by acquisitions and satisfied by the accomplishment of desires, that which is not known in its real nature by the gods, the Gandharvas, the Asuras, the great snakes, and, in fact, by all classes of beings, that irresistible passion, along with that folly which invites the heart to the unrealities of the world, should ever be conquered by a person of cleansed soul.”

“Pride, malice, slander, crookedness, and incapacity to hear other people’s good, are vices, that are to be seen in persons of uncleansed soul under the domination of covetousness. Even persons of great learning who bear in their minds all the voluminous scriptures, and who are competent to dispel the doubts of others, show themselves in this

	<p>respect to be of weak understanding and feel great misery in consequence of this passion. Covetous men are wedded to envy and anger. They are outside the pale of good behaviour. Of crooked hearts, the speeches they utter are sweet. They resemble, therefore, dark pits whose mouths are covered with grass. They attire themselves in the hypocritical cloak of religion. Of low minds, they rob the world, setting up (if need be) the standard of religion and virtue. Relying upon the strength of apparent reasons, they create diverse kinds of schisms in religion. Intent upon accomplishing the purposes of cupidity, they destroy the ways of righteousness.”</p> <p>“When wicked-souled persons under the domination of covetousness apparently practice the duties of righteousness, the consequence that results is that the desecrations committed by them soon become current among men. Pride, anger, arrogance, insensibility, paroxysms of joy and sorrow, and self-importance, all these are to be seen in persons swayed by covetousness. Know that they who are always under the influence of covetousness are wicked.”</p>
<p>Q: What is the cause of the problem?</p>	<p>Ignorance & Desire Bhagavad-Gita Chapter 4 – Translation by Shri Purohit Swami, p. 14 (http://www.thebigview.com/download/bhagavad-gita.pdf) “Be thou the greatest of sinners, yet thou shalt cross over all sin by the ferryboat of wisdom. As the kindled fire consumes the fuel, so, O Arjuna, in the flame of wisdom the embers of action are burnt to ashes. There is nothing in the world so purifying as wisdom; and he who is a perfect saint finds that at last in his own Self. He who is full of faith attains wisdom, and he too who can control his senses, having attained that wisdom, he shall ere long attain Supreme Peace. But the ignorant man, and he who has no faith, and the skeptic are lost.”</p>
<p>Death</p>	
<p>Q: What happens to a person at death?</p>	<p>Brihadaranyaka Upanishad (4:4:3) “As the caterpillar reaching the end of one blade of grass draws itself together and reached out for the next, so the Self, having come to the end of one life and dispelled all ignorance, gathers in its faculties and reaches out from the old body to a new.”</p> <p>Bhagavad-Gita Chapter 4 – Translation by Shri Purohit Swami, p. 12 (http://www.thebigview.com/download/bhagavad-gita.pdf) “I have been born again and again, from time to time; thou too, O Arjuna! My births are</p>

	<p>known to Me, but thou knowest not thine.”</p> <p>Bhagavad-Gita Chapter 2 – Translation by Shri Purohit Swami, pp 4-5 http://www.thebigview.com/download/bhagavad-gita.pdf</p> <p>“The hero whose soul is unmoved by circumstance, who accepts pleasure and pain with equanimity, only he is fit for immortality. That which is not, shall never be; that which is, shall never cease to be. To the wise, these truths are self-evident. The Spirit, which pervades all that we see, is imperishable. Nothing can destroy the Spirit. The material bodies which this Eternal, Indestructible, Immeasurable Spirit inhabits are all finite.”</p> <p>“Therefore fight, O Valiant Man!”</p> <p>“He who thinks that the Spirit kills, and he who thinks of It as killed, are both ignorant. The Spirit kills not, nor is It killed. It was not born; It will never die, nor once having been, can It cease to be. Unborn, Eternal, Ever-enduring, yet Most Ancient, the Spirit dies not when the body is dead. He who knows the Spirit as Indestructible, Immortal, Unborn, Always-the-Same, how should he kill or cause to be killed? As a man discards his threadbare robes and puts on new, so the Spirit throws off Its worn out bodies and takes fresh ones. Weapons cleave It not, fire burns It not, water drenches It not, and wind dries It not. It is impenetrable; It can be neither drowned nor scorched nor dried. It is Eternal, All pervading, Unchanging, Immovable and Most Ancient. It is named the Unmanifest, the Unthinkable,”</p>
Christ	
<p>Q: Is there a savior figure [in some cases, men who have delayed their final transformation to help others]?</p>	<p>The enlightened person – the guru - not a savior but a guide Bhagavad-Gita, Chapter 2 – Translation by Shri Purohit Swami, p. 7 http://www.thebigview.com/download/bhagavad-gita.pdf</p> <p>“When a man has given up the desires of his heart and is satisfied with the Self alone, be sure that he has reached the highest state. The sage, whose mind is unruffled in suffering, whose desire is not roused by enjoyment, who is without attachment, anger or fear – take him to be one who stands at that lofty level. He who wherever he goes is attached to no person and to no place by ties of flesh; who accepts good and evil alike, neither welcoming the one nor shrinking from the other – take him to be one who is merged in the Infinite. He who can withdraw his senses from the attraction of their objects, as the tortoise draws his limbs within its shell – take it that such a one has attained Perfection. . . . When a man dwells on the objects of sense, he creates an attraction for them; attraction develops into desire, and desire breeds anger. Anger induces delusion; delusion, loss of memory; through loss of memory, reason is shattered; and loss of reason leads to destruction. But the self-controlled soul, who moves amongst sense objects, free from</p>

	either attachment or repulsion, he wins eternal Peace. Having attained Peace, he becomes free from misery; for when the mind gains peace, right discrimination follows.”
Q: If he is known, how is Jesus seen by this religion?	“The religion of Christ was a religion of love, renunciation and self-control; it was a religion of God-consciousness. As these are the highest ideals among the Hindus, they accept Christ and His true religion in so far as it is one with their ideals;” http://www.hinduism.co.za/jesus.htm#
Cross	
Q: Is there a concept of substitutionary death?	No
Faith	
Q: What are the means of a transformation?	<p>The Katha Upanishad 2:3:13-14 (Easwaran, translator, 1987:97) “When all desires that surge in the heart Are renounced, the mortal becomes immortal. When all the knots that strangle the heart Are loosened, the mortal becomes immortal.” This sums up the teaching of the scriptures.</p> <p>The Shvetashvatara Upanishad 2:1-9 (Easwaran, 1987:220) “1. May we harness body and mind to see the Lord of Life, who dwells in everyone. 2. May we ever with one-pointed mind strive for blissful union with the Lord. 3. May we train our senses to serve the Lord through the practice of meditation. 4. Great is the glory of the Lord of Life, infinite, omnipresent, all-knowing. He is known by the wise who meditate and conserve their vital energy. 5. Hear, O children of immortal bliss, you are born to be united with the Lord. Follow the path of the illumined ones and be united with the Lord of Life. 6. Kindle the fire of kundalini deep in meditation. Bring your mind and breath under control. Drink deep of divine love, and you will attain the unitive state. 7. Dedicate yourself to the Lord of Life, who is the cause of the cosmos. He will remove the cause of all your suffering and free you from the bondage of karma. 8. Be seated with spinal column erect and turn your senses and mind deep within. With the mantram echoing in your heart, cross over the dread sea of birth and death. 9. Train your senses to be obedient. Regulate your activities to lead you to the goal. Hold the reins of your mind as you hold the reins of restive horses.”</p> <p>Bhagavad-Gita Chapter 14 – Translation by Shri Purohit Swami, p. 39</p>

	<p>(http://www.thebigview.com/download/bhagavad-gita.pdf)</p> <p>“Lord Shri Krishna continued: Now I will reveal unto the Wisdom which is beyond knowledge, by attaining which the sages have reached Perfection. Dwelling in Wisdom and realising My Divinity, they are not born again when the universe is re-created at the beginning of every cycle, nor are they affected when it is dissolved. The eternal Cosmos is My womb, in which I plant the seed, from which all beings are born, O Prince! O illustrious son of Kunti! Through whatever wombs men are born, it is the Spirit Itself that conceives, and I am their Father. Purity, Passion and Ignorance are the Qualities which the Law of nature bringeth forth. They fetter the free Spirit in all beings. O Sinless One! Of these, Purity, being luminous, strong and invulnerable, binds one by its yearning for happiness and illumination. Passion, engendered by thirst for pleasure and attachment, binds the soul through its fondness for activity. But Ignorance, the product of darkness, stupefies the senses in all embodied beings, binding them by chains of folly, indolence and lethargy. Purity brings happiness, Passion commotion, and Ignorance, which obscures wisdom, leads to a life of failure. O Prince! Purity prevails when Passion and Ignorance are overcome; Passion, when Purity and Ignorance are overcome; and Ignorance when it overcomes Purity and Passion. When the light of knowledge gleams forth from all the gates of the body, then be sure that Purity prevails. O best of Indians! Avarice, the impulse to act and the beginning of action itself are all due to the dominance of Passion. Darkness, stagnation, folly and infatuation are the result of the dominance of Ignorance, O joy of the Kuru-clan! When Purity prevails, the soul on quitting the body passes on to the pure regions where live those who know the Highest. When Passion prevails, the soul is reborn among those who love activity; when Ignorance rules, it enters the wombs of the ignorant. They say the fruit of a meritorious action is spotless and full of purity; the outcome of Passion is misery, and of Ignorance darkness. Purity engenders Wisdom, Passion avarice, and Ignorance folly, infatuation and darkness. When Purity is in the ascendant, the man evolves; when Passion, he neither evolves nor degenerates; when Ignorance, he is lost. As soon as man understands that it is only the Qualities which act and nothing else, and perceives That which is beyond, he attains My divine nature. When the soul transcends the Qualities, which are the real cause of physical existence, then, freed from birth and death, from old age and misery, he quaffs the nectar of immortality.”</p>
Life	
Q: What is the end of transformation?	<p>Bhagavad-Gita Chapter 2 – Translation by Shri Purohit Swami, p. 6 (http://www.thebigview.com/download/bhagavad-gita.pdf) “The Vedic Scriptures tell of the three constituents of life – the Qualities(Purity, Passion</p>

and Ignorance djm). Rise above all of them, O Arjuna, above all the pairs of opposing sensations; be steady in truth, free from worldly anxieties and centered in the Self As a man can drink water from any side of a full tank, so the skilled theologian can wrest from any scripture that which will serve his purpose. But thou hast only the right to work, but none to the fruit thereof. Let not then the fruit of thy action be thy motive; nor yet be thou enamored of inaction. Perform all thy actions with mind concentrated on the Divine, renouncing attachment and looking upon success and failure with an equal eye. Spirituality implies equanimity. Physical action is far inferior to an intellect concentrated on the Divine. Have recourse then to Pure Intelligence. It is only the petty-minded who work for reward. When a man attains to Pure Reason, he renounces in this world the results of good and evil alike. Cling thou to Right Action. Spirituality is the real art of living. The sages guided by Pure Intellect renounce the fruit of action; and, freed from the chains of rebirth, they reach the highest bliss.”

Mandukya Upanishad (Easwaran, 1987:60-61)

“A U M stands for the supreme Reality. It is a symbol for what was, what is, And what shall be. A u m represents also What lies beyond past, present, and future. 2 Brahman is all, and the Self is Brahman. This Self has four states of consciousness. 3 The first is called Vaishvanara, in which One lives with all the senses turned outward, Aware only of the external world. 4 Taijasa is the name of the second, The dreaming state in which, with the senses Turned inward, one enacts the impressions Of past deeds and present desires. 5 The third state is called Prajna, of deep sleep, in which one neither dreams nor desires. There is no mind in Prajna, there is no separateness; but the sleeper is not conscious of this. Let him become conscious in Pra'na and it will open the door to the state of abiding joy. 6 Praj'na, all-powerful and all-knowing, Dwells in the hearts of all as the ruler. Praj'na is the source and end of all. 7 The fourth is the superconscious state called Turiya, neither inward nor outward, beyond the senses and the intellect, in which there is none other than the Lord. He is the supreme goal of life. He is infinite peace and love. Realize him! 8 Turiya is represented by A U M. 12 The mantram A U M stands for the supreme state of Turiya, without parts, beyond birth And death, symbol of everlasting joy. Those who know AU M as the Self become the Self, Truly they become the Self.”

Brihadâranyaka Upanishad IV, 4,5-7 – Translated by Max Muller

<http://www.sacred-texts.com/hin/sbe15/sbe15076.htm>

“5. 'That Self is indeed Brahman, consisting of knowledge, mind, life, sight, hearing, earth, water, wind, ether, light and no light, desire and no desire, anger and no anger, right or wrong, and all things. Now as a man is like this or like that 1, according as he acts and

	<p>according as he behaves, so will he be:--a man of good acts will become good, a man of bad acts, bad. He becomes pure by pure deeds, bad by bad deeds. 'And here they say that a person consists of desires. And as is his desire, so is his will; and as is his will, so is his deed; and whatever deed he does, that he will reap. 6. 'And here there is this verse: "To whatever object a man's own mind is attached, to that he goes strenuously together with his deed; and having obtained the end (the last results) of whatever deed he does here on earth, he returns again from that world (which is the temporary reward of his deed) to this world of action." 'So much for the man who desires. But as to the man who does not desire, who, not desiring, freed from desires, is satisfied in his desires, or desires the Self only, his vital spirits do not depart elsewhere,--being Brahman, he goes to Brahman. 7. <u>'On this there is this verse: "When all desires which once entered his heart are undone, then does the mortal become immortal, then he obtains Brahman. 'And as the slough of a snake lies on an ant-hill, dead and cast away, thus lies this body; but that disembodied immortal spirit (prāna, life) is Brahman only, is only light."</u>'</p>
Truth	
<p>Q: Can absolute truth be known?</p>	<p>“Though Hinduism accepts the authority of the Veda, it is not a dogmatic or 'authoritarian' religion. In India religion is hardly a dogma,' says Mr Havell, 'but a working hypothesis of human conduct adapted to different stages of spiritual development and different conditions of life.' The allegiance to the Veda does not mean the slavery of reason. There is a popular saying to the effect that not even a thousand scriptural texts will be capable of converting a pot into a piece of cloth. A great philosopher by name Vacaspati claims authority not for all Scriptures as such but only for purportful Scripture. And for determining the purport one has to use one's intelligence. Upapatti or intelligibility in the light of reasoning is one of the canons of scriptural interpretation recognized by orthodox Hinduism.” 1966:Mahadevan, 18</p> <p>“Those who think that truth is in their exclusive keeping and that their religion is the only approach to God, 'see only one side of a thing' like the blind men in the parable. Hinduism does not commit this mistake. It believes in the sanctity and efficacy of all religions.” 1966:Mahadevan, 20</p>
<p>Scriptures (Sacred Writings)</p>	<p>“To begin with, it must be pointed out that there is no single, supreme, religious textual authority in Hinduism the way there is in other religions. The Hindu scriptures include a very large, heterogeneous corpus of texts codified and evolved over a period of some four thousand years, beginning in the second millennium BC and stretching into the second millennium AD. These canonical works, along with commentaries and digests that were added from time to time over the centuries, recorded in careful detail the precepts and</p>

codes of the time, and became the rules that governed all aspects of religious, social and familial observances. However, because of the extraordinary time span that they are spread over, the large number of authors who contributed to this body of scriptures, and the changes that were inevitable in the ethos of a community over centuries, one often comes across contradictory edicts. As a result of this, scriptural sanction is claimed for a variety of diametrically opposed opinions.” Narasimhan, 1990:12

In Hinduism there are seven sets of writings which are viewed as canonical. These writings are said to be "Shruti" which means, "heard". The title indicates that the author claimed to have actually heard the words from a divine source. The "Shruti" are the authoritative books of Hinduism.

The Writings Identified as Shruti

1. Rig Veda-the oldest of the four Vedas, completed in 1000 B.C.

Contains 1028 poems or hymns from a number of different sources. The poems deal with a variety of subjects. The following is an example from Rig Veda X 129, a hymn dealing with creation. In this poem the ultimate source of all reality is an impersonal thing. In Hindu thought god is impersonal.

2. The Sama Veda

In this veda sections of the Rig Veda are arranged for ritual purposes.

3. Yajur Veda

This Veda contains sacrificial formulas to be chanted by the priest.

4. Atharva Veda

This Veda contains magical spells and incantations in verse. These spells cover a wide range of subjects from conceiving a child to preventing conception, from winning in gambling to confounding ones enemies.

5. The Brahmanas - i.e. priestlies.

This collection is totally lacking in order or coherence. In these writings the gods Brahman, Visnu and Sheva rise to greater importance than the old Vedic gods. It is in this collection that the priest rises to a place of authority over all of life. The Shatapatha Brahmana even states that the sun would not rise if the Brahman priest did not correctly perform the daily sacrifice.

	<p>6. The Aranyakas - forest books This is the record of the men who wrote the Upanishads. They were monk-like people who withdrew to the forests, and then taught those who came to sit with them.</p> <p>7. The Upanishads - to sit apart at the foot of a teacher The Upanishads mark the entrance of philosophy into the Old Vedic religion. Unlike Greek religion, where philosophy was always antagonistic to the pantheon of gods, Hinduism absorbed philosophic thought uniting it with the Old Vedic gods. The clearest account of this union is contained in the Upanishads. Of the 108 Upanishads, only 12 are of any real importance.</p> <p>The Smriti This word means, "remembered" and indicates that the writings were only remembered by their authors, and not heard like the Shruti. In western terms these writings would not be considered canonical in Hinduism, although the popular appeal of some of them exceeds that of the Vedic literature. Examples of the Smriti are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Ramayana - Narratives of the exploits of great leaders 2. The Mahabhartar - Narratives of the exploits of great leaders 3. Code of Manu - Codes of moral guidance 4. Code of Yajnavalkya - codes of moral guidance 5. Bhagavad Gita
Morality / Ethics	
Q: How do we know what is right or wrong?	<p>“The Hindu thinkers were alive to the danger of insisting on a purely juristic view of the moral standard. That was why they evolved a scheme of human ends (Purusdithas). These are four: artha (wealth), kama(pleasure), dharma (righteousness) and moksa (freedom). These ends are not all of the same kind. Only the last of them is the supreme end (summum bonum), and the others are minor ends. Artha and kama, wealth and pleasure, are not intrinsic goods. They are good only in so far as they lead to righteous living or a life of duty (dharma).” Mahadevan, 1966:66</p>
Spirit Beings	
Q: What is the spirit world like [beings, places, authority, status]?	Indescribable
Powers (Power objects)	

<p>Q: Are certain objects viewed as being sacred or filled with awe-producing power?</p>	<p>Yes, idols are very common. Phallic images occur in most temples. Snake mounds are venerated.</p>
<p>Rituals</p>	
<p>Q: What rites (such as rites of passage) and events do they observe?</p>	<p>There are rituals associated with every aspect of life, the phases of life, the seasons. They are innumerable.</p>
<p>Prophets / Holy men</p>	<p>Bhagavad-Gita Chapter 2 – Translation by Shri Purohit Swami, p. 7 http://www.thebigview.com/download/bhagavad-gita.pdf “Arjuna asked: My Lord! How can we recognise the saint who has attained Pure Intellect, who has reached this state of Bliss, and whose mind is steady? how does he talk, how does he live, and how does he act?” “Lord Shri Krishna replied: When a man has given up the desires of his heart and is satisfied with the Self alone, be sure that he has reached the highest state. The sage, whose mind is unruffled in suffering, whose desire is not roused by enjoyment, who is without attachment, anger or fear – take him to be one who stands at that lofty level. He who wherever he goes is attached to no person and to no place by ties of flesh; who accepts good and evil alike, neither welcoming the one nor shrinking from the other – take him to be one who is merged in the Infinite. He who can withdraw his senses from the attraction of their objects, as the tortoise draws his limbs within its shell – take it that such a one has attained Perfection. The objects of sense turn from him who is abstemious. Even the relish for them is lost in him who has seen the Truth. O Arjuna! The mind of him, who is trying to conquer it, is forcibly carried away in spite of his efforts, by his tumultuous senses. Restraining them all, let him meditate steadfastly on Me; for who thus conquers his senses achieves perfection. When a man dwells on the objects of sense, he creates an attraction for them; attraction develops into desire, and desire breeds anger. Anger induces delusion; delusion, loss of memory; through loss of memory, reason is shattered; and loss of reason leads to destruction. But the self-controlled soul, who moves amongst sense objects, free from either attachment or repulsion, he wins eternal Peace. Having attained Peace, he becomes free from misery; for when the mind gains peace, right discrimination follows. Right discrimination is not for him who cannot concentrate. Without concentration, there cannot be meditation; he who cannot meditate must not expect peace; and without peace, how can anyone expect happiness? As a ship at sea is tossed by the tempest, so the reason is carried away by the mind when preyed upon by straying senses.”</p>

Founder(s) / Heroes / Savior(s)	
Q: What is the foundation story of the religion?	"Hinduism has no founder and no prophet. It has no particular ecclesiastical or institutional structure, nor set creed. The emphasis is upon a way of living rather than on a way of thought. Radhakrishnan, a former president of India, once remarked: "Hinduism is more a culture than a creed", Raymond Hammer, 1982:170
Witchcraft / Magic / Healing	Very common
Totemism	
Q: Is there a division of the people into groups identified with animals or other things in nature?	Yes, most of the gods fit in this category
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<p>Prabhupada, A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami. 1972. Krsna Consciousness. London: Bhaktivedanta Book Trust</p> <p>----- 1984. Bhagavad-Gita As it is. London: Bhaktivedanta Book Trust</p> <p>----- 1995. Krsna – The Reservoir of Pleasure. London: Bhaktivedanta Book Trust</p> <p>Yamamoto, J Isamu. 1998. Hinduism, TM & Hare Krishna. Grand Rapids: Zondervan</p> <p>Complete references to web sites are identified with the citation.</p>
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[#] I have tried to use a number of primary sources in this essay. All italicized text is direct quotation. Quotation marks are not used. In the matrix at the end of the essay quotation marks are used

Major World Religions Worldview Analysis	Islam By George King
God	
Q: Does the religion express belief in a god or gods?"	One God, usually called <i>Allah</i> , regardless of mother tongue. <i>Allah</i> is said to be derived from the Arabic <i>al-ilah</i> , meaning "the god". It is related to the Aramaic <i>alaha</i> , and the Hebrew <i>el</i> and <i>eloah</i> .
Q: What are some of the characteristics of the god(s)?	Most importantly, Allah is One. He is not Three in a Trinity. He has no partners. He is neither father nor son. <i>Say: He is Allah the One and Only; Allah the Eternal Absolute; He begetteth not nor is He begotten; And there is none like unto Him. (Quran 112:1-4)</i> His characteristics are described in his 99 names. Some of his characteristics are that he is eternal, transcendent, almighty, judge of all, absolute sovereign, gracious, merciful, and forgiving.
Q: What is the really real (ultimate reality)?	1. Allah. <i>That is because Allah is the (only) Reality and because whatever else they invoke besides Him is Falsehood; and because Allah He is the Most High Most Great. (Quran 31:30)</i> Some may answer this without reference to Allah himself. The following are other possible answers: 2. The eternal state. <i>What is the life of this world but play and amusement? But best is the home in the Hereafter for those who are righteous. Will ye not then understand? (Quran 6:32)</i> 3. Judgment Day. <i>That Day will be the sure Reality: therefore whoso will let him take a (straight) Return to his Lord! (Q. 78:39)</i>
Creation	
Q: Does the religion have an influential creation story?	God created the universe in 6 days. <i>Your guardian-Lord is Allah Who created the heavens and the earth in six days and is firmly established on the throne (of authority): He draweth the night as a veil O'er the day each seeking the other in rapid succession: He created the sun the moon and the stars (all) governed by laws under His command. Is it not His to create and to govern? Blessed be Allah the cherisher and sustainer of the worlds! (Q. 7:54)</i> He created Adam and Eve, the parents of the whole human race. (Q. 2:30-34)

Q: What is the nature of external [to man] reality [the external world]?	It is God's creation and was created for man. <i>How can ye reject the faith in Allah? Seeing that ye were without life and He gave you life; then will He cause you to die and will again bring you to life; and again to Him will ye return. It is He who hath created for you all things that are on earth; moreover His design comprehended the heavens for He gave order and perfection to the seven firmaments; and of all things he hath perfect knowledge. (Q. 2:28,29)</i> Just as there was a beginning, there will also be an end to this universe. <i>He has created the heavens and the earth in just proportions and has given you shape and made your shapes beautiful: and to Him is the final Goal. (Q. 64:3)</i> <i>Yea to Allah belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth; and to Allah is the final goal (of all). (Q. 24:42)</i>
Man	
Q: What is a human being?	Man is God's viceregent on earth (Q. 2:30) and the highest of his creations. The angels bowed down to Adam at his creation (Q. 2:34). Man was made to serve God (Q. 51:56). He is mortal (Q. 21:34), destined to die (Q. 21:35). He has limited free-will (Q. 10:99-100). All men do wrong (Q. 16:61).
Q: Is man made up of both material and immaterial parts?	Man has both body and soul (<i>nafs</i>). The soul and body come into existence at the same time (Q. 91:7-10). However, some Sufi strains teach the pre-existence of the soul. The spirit (<i>ruh</i>) is equivalent to the mind and is one aspect of the soul. (Q. 91:7,8)
Q: What is the meaning of human history?	History is linear, a meaningful sequence of events leading to the fulfillment of Allah's purposes for humanity. For people living, history provides lessons to learn from and this life is a test, a time of probation. <i>Every soul shall have a taste of death: and We test you by evil and by good by way of trial: to Us must ye return. (Q. 21:35)</i>
Sin	
Q: What is the basic human problem?	Failure to recognize the Oneness of God. This manifests itself in idolatry and sinful actions. <i>Allah forgiveth not that partners should be set up with him; but He forgiveth anything else to whom He pleaseth; to set up partners with Allah is to devise a sin most heinous indeed. (Q. 4:48). Allah forgiveth not (the sin of) joining other gods with Him: but He forgiveth whom He pleaseth other sins than this: one who joins other gods with Allah hath strayed far far away (from the right). (Q. 4:116). Truly, man is given up to injustice and ingratitude. (Q. 14:34)</i>
Q: What is the cause of the problem?	Forgetfulness. <i>We had already beforehand taken the covenant of Adam but he forgot: and We found on his part no firm resolve. (Q. 20:115)</i> Weakness. <i>Allah wishes to lighten your difficulties: for man was created weak. (Q. 4:28)</i>
Death	
Q: What happens to a person at death?	After the body is placed in the grave, the conscious soul is interrogated by two fearsome angels about Muhammad. If a person fails to confess Muhammad as God's messenger, he will receive terrible torment until God calls him forth for judgment day. (Hadith, Al-Bukhari 2:456 in <i>The Alim CD-ROM</i>)

Q: What happens to an adherent (believer) at death?	He will answer the two angels correctly and find himself in conscious bliss and comfort until God calls him forth bodily for the final judgment (Al-Bukhari 2:456). Believers who die striving for Allah go directly to paradise (Q. 3:195).
Christ	
Q: Is there a savior figure [in some cases, men who have delayed their final transformation to help others]?	A person does not need a savior. Only God decides who will be saved. However, many people hope that Muhammad will intercede for them on judgment day, based on various Hadith and hints in the Quran (Q. 53:26). In addition, <i>al-Mahdi</i> (the guided one) is an end-time descendant of Muhammad expected by both Sunnis and Shiites. He will unite all Muslims and lead them into a brief period of prosperity before the appearance of the Antichrist (<i>ad-Dajjal</i>) who in turn, will be destroyed at the return of Jesus Christ. The belief in <i>al-Mahdi</i> is especially significant for some sects of Shiite Islam. For Twelve-Imam Shiites, the doctrine of the <i>Mahdi</i> is much more developed. The awaited <i>Mahdi</i> is known as "the Hidden Imam", now alive and gives light to men. He intercedes to God on behalf of believers and hears personal prayer. It is not uncommon to write letters beseeching his help and leave them at designated holy places.
Q: Are there intermediaries between "the ultimate" (god) and mankind?	The angels, and particularly Gabriel, the angel of revelation, bring God's message to the prophets (Q. 2:97). The prophets in turn speak God's message to the people. There have been prophets sent to every nation (Q. 10:47). Since creation there have been many thousands of prophets, 124,000 by one count. Muhammad is the last prophet (Q. 33:40), sent to all mankind (Q. 34:28). In folk Islamic practice, it is common for people to look for intermediaries to bridge the gap between God and man. People offer prayers at shrines of holy men and prophets, looking for Allah's blessing upon their daily lives.
Q: How is Jesus seen by this religion?	He is a great prophet (Q. 19:30) and the only person ever born of a virgin (Q. 3:45-47). Jesus is known as a miracle-worker and healer who could raise the dead and create life from inanimate material (Q. 5:110). He was sent to the children of Israel and brought a new book from God known as the Gospel (<i>Injil</i>). He is only a man (Q. 3:59) and not God's Son (Q. 19:35; 5:116). The Jews rejected his prophethood and tried to crucify him but God saved Jesus from their evil designs. It was made to appear to them that they killed Jesus, but he was raised to God while still alive (Q. 4:157). He will return to earth before the end of the world (Q. 43:61; Hadith). He will rebuke the Christians for worshiping him as God's Son and declare himself to be a follower of Prophet Muhammad. He will marry, have children, and die a natural death after some 40 years. He will be buried beside Muhammad in Medina. (from Hadith)
Cross	

<p>Q: Is there a concept of substitutionary death?</p>	<p>No one can give his life in ransom for another. <i>Then guard yourselves against a day when one soul shall not avail another nor shall intercession be accepted for her nor shall compensation be taken from her nor shall anyone be helped (from outside) (Q. 2:48).</i> Animal sacrifices have no value in obtaining forgiveness of sins. <i>It is not their meat nor their blood, that reaches Allah: it is your piety that reaches him (Q. 22:37).</i></p>
<p>Faith</p>	
<p>Q: What is/are the means of a transformation? (What must be believed or done to move into the ideal state of existence?)</p>	<p>Believe in Islam and do righteous deeds. <i>But give glad tidings to those who believe and work righteousness that their portion is Gardens beneath which rivers flow... (Q. 2:25)</i> <i>It is not righteousness that ye turn your faces toward East or West; but it is righteousness to believe in Allah and the Last Day and the Angels and the Book and the Messengers; to spend of your substance out of love for Him for your kin for orphans for the needy for the wayfarer for those who ask and for the ransom of slaves; to be steadfast in prayer and practice regular charity; to fulfil the contracts which ye have made; and to be firm and patient in pain (or suffering) and adversity and throughout all periods of panic. Such are the people of truth, the God-fearing. (Q. 2:177)</i> Obey Allah and Muhammad <i>And obey Allah and the messenger, that you may obtain mercy (Q. 3:132)</i> <i>...for any that disobey Allah and his Messenger, for them is hell: they shall dwell in it forever. (Q. 72:23)</i></p>
<p>Life</p>	
<p>Q: What is the end of transformation (the ideal state of existence to be reached)?</p>	<p>Paradise (<i>Firdaws</i>), also called "the Garden" (<i>al-Jannah</i>) and "the seventh heaven", a place of beauty and plenty that will delight its inhabitants. <i>As to those who believe and work righteous deeds they have for their entertainment the Gardens of Paradise (Q. 18:107). (Here is) a Parable of the Garden which the righteous are promised: in it are rivers of water incorruptible: rivers of milk of which the taste never changes; rivers of wine a joy to those who drink; and rivers of honey pure and clear. In it there are for them all kinds of fruits, and Grace from their Lord... (Q. 47:15).</i> <i>(They will be) on Thrones encrusted (with gold and precious stones). Reclining on them facing each other. Round about them will (serve) youths of perpetual (freshness). With goblets (shining) beakers and cups (filled) out of clear-flowing fountains: No after-ache will they receive therefrom nor will they suffer intoxication: And with fruits any that they may select; And the flesh of fowls any that they may desire. And (there will be) Companions with beautiful big and lustrous eyes-- Like unto Pearls well-guarded. A Reward for the Deeds of their past (Life). (Q. 56:15-24).</i></p>
<p>Truth</p>	

<p>Q: Can absolute truth be known?</p>	<p>The Quran is the standard or criterion (<i>al-Furqan</i>) for judging what is true or false (Q. 25:1). It was revealed from the heavenly "preserved tablet" (Q. 85:21,22), the "mother of the Book" (Q. 43:3,4). It is God's intention that men know and believe this timeless truth from their Lord. <i>And say: Truth hath come and falsehood hath vanished away. Lo! falsehood is ever bound to vanish. And We reveal of the Qur'an that which is a healing and a mercy for believers though it increase the evil-doers in naught save ruin. (Q. 17:81,82) But verily it is Truth of assured certainty. (Q. 69:51)</i></p>
<p>Q: Why is it possible to know anything at all?</p>	<p>God has blessed man with the gift of knowledge. This is what sets man apart from the animals, and through this knowledge, the first man named the animals (Q. 2:30-37). <i>And He taught Adam the nature of all things (Q. 2:31). Then learnt Adam from his Lord words of inspiration... (Q. 2:37). By the Soul and the proportion and order given to it; And its enlightenment as to its wrong and its right (Q. 91:7,8).</i></p>
<p>Scriptures (Sacred Writings)</p>	
<p>Q: How authoritative are the Sacred Writings?</p>	<p>Some 104 books have been revealed from heaven to mankind, of which 100 are lost. The 4 remaining heavenly books are the Taurat (Law of Moses), Zabur (Psalms), Injil (Gospel of Christ), and Quran. The Taurat, Zabur, and Injil were authoritative and inerrant as originally given, but have been corrupted. Now Allah has revealed the Quran. God has guaranteed to preserve it from corruption and error (Q. 10:64). The Quran is believed to be the very words of Allah dictated to the prophet through Gabriel. <i>Say: "Shall I seek for judge other than Allah? when He it is Who hath sent unto you the Book explained in detail." They know full well to whom We have given the Book that it hath been sent down from thy Lord in truth. Never be then of those who doubt. The Word of thy Lord doth find its fulfillment in truth and in justice: none can change His Words: for He is the one who heareth and knoweth all. (Q. 6:114,115).</i></p>
<p>Q: If the Bible constitutes the Scriptures, what other authoritative books are there?</p>	<p>The Quran is the main authority, however the Quran itself repeatedly commands believers to obey the prophet Muhammad also (Q. 3:32,132; 5:92; 24:54; 47:33). His teaching and example constitute the <i>Sunnah</i> (custom) of Muhammad. The <i>Sunnah</i> is not found in the Quran but in writings called the <i>Hadith</i> (Tradition). The <i>Hadith</i> contains primarily the words of Muhammad and events from his life. The <i>Hadith</i> has divine authority second only to the Quran. The two bases for authority in Islam are the Quran and the <i>Sunnah</i> of the Prophet.</p>
<p>Worship</p>	

<p>What forms of worship (rituals/ceremonies; Corporate/individual) are practiced by adherents?</p>	<p>Five times of obligatory ritual prayers (<i>salat or namaz</i>) each day, fasting (<i>saum or roza</i>) during the month of Ramadan, pilgrimage (<i>hajj</i>) to Mecca at least once (or by proxy if unable to go), and the welfare tax/almsgiving (<i>zakat</i>). These are all obligatory acts of worship.</p> <p>Weekly congregational worship in the mosque in on Friday at noon, called the <i>Jumah</i> prayers. There is a sermon (<i>khutbah</i>) followed by congregational prayers. Mosque attendance is a duty.</p> <p><i>Eid-al-Adha</i> (Feast of Sacrifice) is an annual memorial of Abraham's intended sacrifice of Ishmael, in which cattle, camels, and other animals are sacrificed, mimicking Abraham's sacrifice of the ram substituted for his son. It can be thought of as the Muslim counterpart to Good Friday and Easter.</p> <p>The second most important religious holiday is <i>Eid-al-Fitr</i> (Feast of Breaking Fast), at the end of Ramadan. Huge congregations gather for special <i>Eid</i> prayer, usually outdoors because of the large numbers. Celebrations continue for several days, making it similar to Christmas family celebrations among Christians.</p>
<p>Morality / Ethics</p>	
<p>Q: How do we know what is right or wrong?</p>	<p>Ultimately, the Quran is the criterion for knowing right and wrong (Q. 25:1). Along with that, man has a soul to know right from wrong (Q. 91:7,8).</p>
<p>Q: What are some of the moral/ethical requirements of the religion?</p>	<p>The greatest moral requirement is to worship only the one true God, and abstain from the greatest sin, that of ascribing partners to God (Q. 4:48,116). It is a moral obligation to do your prayers faithfully each day. Muslims are morally obliged to strive (<i>jihad</i>) for God's will to be accomplished. The greater <i>jihad</i> is personal, that of controlling inner evil desires and living the pure life Allah requires. The lesser <i>jihad</i> is that of outward physical conflict to defend Islam from outside aggressors. This requirement is normally fulfilled for all citizens in a Muslim nation by the existence of a standing army.</p> <p>Certain foods and practices are <i>haram</i> (forbidden), such as pork, alcohol, and taking bribes.</p>
<p>Major Contemporary Divisions of the Religion</p>	

<p>Q: What sects, denominations, or off-shoots of the religion exist today?</p>	<p>Most Muslims are either Sunni (nearly 90%) or Shiite (about 10%). The Ahmadiyyah sect of Islam is part of the Sunni majority, but branded heretical in some places for following a reformer/prophet after Muhammad. Sunnis follow 4 different schools of law (Hanafi, Hanbali, Maliki, Shafi'i) in different places, all considered acceptable.</p> <p>Shia Islam is much more divided than Sunnis. Some of the Shia groups include, 12-Imam Shiites (from which sprang the Bahai faith), 7-Imam Shiites (including Druzes, Alawis, and various Ismaili groups), and 5-Imam Shiites.</p> <p>Sufism is Islamic mysticism and is found within many branches of Islam. Sufi Muslims want to know God and look for ways to commune with him. Although some Sufi groups are heterodox in belief and engage in strange practices, many Sufis are completely orthodox regarding the fundamentals of Islam.</p>
<p>Q: What are the basic differences between the sects, denominations, or off-shoots?</p>	<p>The division between Sunnis and Shiites goes back to the early days of Islam. Muhammad died in 632 AD leaving no clear successor to lead the Muslims. His close friend Abu Bakr was hastily elected first <i>caliph</i> (successor), but some felt that Ali, Muhammad's son-in-law should have been selected. The second <i>caliph</i> was Umar, chosen by Abu Bakr, bypassing Ali again. Uthman became the third <i>caliph</i> and it wasn't until 656 that Ali became the fourth <i>caliph</i>. In 661, Hasan, son of Ali, became fifth <i>caliph</i>, but capitulated to Muawiyah, fearing attack. Then in 680, Husayn, the second son of Ali, revolted and was killed by Yazid, son of Muawiyah, at Kerbala. This marks the complete break between Sunnis, who followed the <i>caliphs</i>, and Shiites, who followed the descendants of Ali.</p> <p>Though both groups follow the Quran, the Shiites have their own <i>Hadith</i> literature, distinct from the <i>Hadith</i> of the Sunnis.</p>
<p>Impact/Consistency</p>	
<p>Q: What is the impact of the religion on the daily life of adherents?</p>	<p>Islam is said to be a "complete code of life." It effects everything from the food they eat, the clothes they wear, to what they name their babies and how they conduct business. Every aspect of life is touched by Islam, even among those who are secular or agnostic. Islam is very much a culture in itself.</p>

<p>Q: To what degree do adherents live comfortably with values, beliefs, and life-ways that conflict with their religion?</p>	<p>Muslims are generally uncomfortable with values that conflict with Islam. Polytheists such as Hindus are disdained as the worst of sinners. Christians are not much better for believing in 3 gods as Islam sees it. Western decadence and immorality are believed to be related to Christian influence, and is an object of constant disgust in the Muslim world. Where Muslims enjoy a majority, the non-Muslim minorities tend to be disadvantaged or persecuted. Where Muslims are in the minority, the coercive influence of the <i>ummah</i> (Muslim community) goes to work trying to keep Muslims from being corrupted by the hostile culture they are living in. Muslims are required to strive against that which conflicts with Islam. The question is how you should put that into action and how far you should go.</p>
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Access Points to ‘The Religious Components’ of a Worldview	Judaism By Dave and Susan Schmidt
Categories and Questions	Responses
What is the name of the society or people group?	Jewish People/Israel
Does the society view life holistically [so that religion is not a part of life but is infused through all of life]?	Religion is usually holistic, an essential part of a person’s identity
Name the predominant religious system(s) in the society.	Judaism
How many adherents does each religion have?	About 12.9 million
God	
Q: Does the religion express belief in a god or gods?”	One God
Q: What are the characteristics of the god(s)?	One indivisible God, Holy, Just, Righteous
Q: What is the really real?	God is unapproachable and unknowable
Creation	
Q: Does the religion have an influential creation story?	Yes

Q: What is the nature of external [to man] reality [the external world]?	General belief in the Genesis account
Man	
Q: What is a human being?	Made in the image of God, basically good, according the Genesis account
Q: Is man made up of both material and immaterial parts?	Most Jews believe man is temporal body and eternal soul
Q: What is the meaning of human history?	God testing man, man striving to please God
Sin	
Q: What is the basic human problem?	The need to be right with God
Q: What is the cause of the problem?	Rebellion against God
Death	
Q: What happens to a person at death?	Most believe in a resurrection, some believe in reincarnation, almost all believe that all Jews will eventually be in heaven.
Christ	
Q: Is there a savior figure [in some cases, men who have delayed their final transformation to help others]?	Yes, the Messiah, believed to be supernaturally empowered, but not divine.
Q: If he is known, how is Jesus seen by this religion?	As a false Messiah
Cross	The concept is offensive to the Jewish people
Q: Is there a concept of substitutionary death?	Not by a person, but by animal sacrifices in the Temple Cult of the Torah. Some Jews believe we have evolved past this primitive stage, but some plan for the return of the Temple and sacrifices.

Faith	
Q: What are the means of a transformation?	Repent and live a life according to the Torah Law, as taught by the Rabbis
Life	
Q: What is the end of transformation?	An eternal life in heaven
Truth	
Q: Can absolute truth be known?	No, absolute truth is unattainable because the Jewish religion is an evolving faith system that is being constantly redefined by the community.
Scriptures (Sacred Writings)	TNK, Torah, Nevaeem, Katuveem (Old Testament) Some would also say the Mishnah and Talmud are also Scripture
Q: Why is it possible to know anything at all?	To live a Torah life pleasing to God
Morality / Ethics	
Q: How do we know what is right or wrong?	By the Rabbinical interpretations of the 613 commands of the Torah
Spirit Beings	
Q: What is the spirit world like [beings, places, authority, status]?	There are demons, angels and spiritual struggles all around us.
Powers (Power objects)	
Q: Are certain objects viewed as being sacred or filled with awe-producing power?	The Temple, the Ark of the Covenant, Torah Scrolls and certain great Rebbes and Rabbis
Rituals	
Q: What rites (such as rites of passage) and events do they observe?	Circumcision, Bar Mitzvah, Bat Mitzvah, Marriage, Funerals

Q: What 'secular' rituals, rites, events, or superstitions are artifacts of an earlier religious significance?	Eastern Jews still guard themselves against the "Evil Eye"
Ancestor Worship	
Q: What part do deceased ancestors play in the religion? Is there interaction with the living?	No ancestor worship. No communication with the dead
Shaman	
Q: Are there people who serve as intermediaries to the spirit world?	No
Prophets / Holy men	Some smaller sects have Rebbes and Rabbis who are greatly esteemed, and thought to have the potential to be the Messiah
Founder(s) / Heroes / Savior(s)	Abraham, Moses, David, the Prophets, the Maccabees
Q: What is the foundation story of the religion?	The Torah accounts of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and the deliverance out of Egypt
Witchcraft / Magic / Healing	Usually not, but some Rebbes are believed to have healing power.
Totemism	
Q: Is there a division of the people into groups identified with animals or other things in nature?	No

Major Contemporary Divisions of the Religion	Orthodox, Conservative Reform
Q: What sects, denominations, or off-shoots of the religion exist today?	Hassidic, Habad, Lubavich, Etc.
Q: What are the basic differences between the sects, denominations, or off-shoots?	All consider each other to be Jewish, but they follow different community leaders and different interpretations of the Torah commandments
Geographic / Sociological variables	There are three main divisions of Jews, Ashkenazi (Europe descent) Sephardic (from the Middle East) and Oriental (From Persia)
Q: Do people in rural areas hold more tenaciously to the basics of the religion?	No. There is a tendency for urban Jews to be more religious
Q: Do people only become “religious” at certain times?	Yes, most Jews become more observant at times of rites of passage.
Q: Is there a religious caste system?	No
Redemptive Analogies	
Q: Are there any apparent redemptive analogies in their belief system?	The sacrificial animals of the Temple and the account of Abraham almost sacrificing Isaac
Q: Where does/do the analogy/-ies break down?	Since 70AD, when the Temple was destroyed, the Rabbis teach that prayer has replaced Temple sacrifice.

Q: Which of their beliefs are most obviously examples of “broken” revealed truth?	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Waiting for the Messiah,2. Celebration of Passover3. Observations of Yom Kippur
Q: Which of their beliefs am I most likely to misunderstand based upon my beliefs and prejudices?	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Waiting for the Messiah

<p>Access Points to ‘The Religious Components’ of a Worldview</p>	<p>Orthodox Understanding By Scott Carter</p> <p>Note: As with most world religions, distinction must be made between classical Orthodoxy and folk Orthodoxy. Classical Orthodoxy focuses on the writings of the Church Fathers, mystics, and ascetics, while folk Orthodoxy focuses on the beliefs of the typical person who considers himself Orthodox. Folk Orthodoxy is much broader than classical Orthodoxy, although even classical Orthodoxy has various ‘families’ of churches within its history (Orthodox in the Middle East, Orthodox in Central and Eastern Europe, Orthodox of the Diaspora).</p>
<p>Categories and Questions</p>	<p>Responses</p>
<p>What is the name of the society or people group?</p>	
<p>Does the society view life holistically [so that religion is not a part of life but is infused through all of life]?</p>	<p>Yes - or more accurately, classical Orthodoxy views life this way. Practically, a separation is often made between spiritual belief (private) and life itself (public). It is relatively common to see priests with alcohol issues, or mafia business men who consider themselves very devout Orthodox, and are often considered such by others (Viktor Yanukovich, 11/05 presidential hopeful and strongman, was backed staunchly and publicly by the Moscow Patriarchate Orthodox church).</p>
<p>Name the predominant religious system(s) in the society.</p>	<p>Eastern Orthodoxy Roman Catholicism Atheism Protestantism</p>

How many adherents does each religion have?	<table border="0"> <tr> <td>Eastern Orthodoxy</td> <td>25,299,500</td> <td>52.9% of total population</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Roman Catholicism</td> <td>4,100,000</td> <td>8.6% of total population</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Atheism</td> <td>1,993,168</td> <td>4.2% of total population</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Protestantism</td> <td>868,230</td> <td>1.8% of total population</td> </tr> </table>	Eastern Orthodoxy	25,299,500	52.9% of total population	Roman Catholicism	4,100,000	8.6% of total population	Atheism	1,993,168	4.2% of total population	Protestantism	868,230	1.8% of total population
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God													
Q: Does the religion express belief in a god or gods?"	Yes												
Q: What are the characteristics of the god(s)?	<p>Transcendent, sovereign, angry</p> <p>1) Architecture reflects this - visitor to church feels both his insignificance and the grandeur of God,</p> <p>2) Fifteenth century image of God Father: God cold, distant. Before that, only Christ could be reflected in icons, from 15th century Russian Orthodoxy added God the Father to the list of potential candidates. The Orthodox Church thought this would keep people in church.</p> <p>Orthodoxy takes a mystical approach to theology: God cannot be known intellectually but only experientially. This approach to theology, known as the negative way, affirms that God is above human language and reason. The negative way of the knowledge of God is an ascendant undertaking of the mind that progressively eliminates all positive attributes of the object it wishes to attain, in order to culminate finally in a kind of apprehension by supreme ignorance of Him who cannot be an object of knowledge. In other words, God is a mystery. This means He is beyond our intellectual comprehension. He is totally and "wholly other," not only invisible but inconceivable. Although in most other areas Orthodoxy agrees with other strains of Christianity concerning God, these differences have significant implications for understanding creation, sin, and faith.</p>												

<p>Q: What is the really real?</p>	<p>1) The physical world, which is full of pain and suffering. 2) Our flesh, which must be constrained or destroyed. It is an ascetic approach. 3) Architecture of the church - icons, liturgy. Reality is located in church buildings. Buildings illustrate authentic reality. The Orthodox person should be in the church building as often as possible to get his divine 'fix' to battle the world outside. Icons are theology in pictures. For many people, attraction to mysticism is a way of being spiritual without cost. It is the way of self deification. You become judge of your life, good and evil. It is a way of suppressing or avoiding transference of oneself to the True Deity.</p> <p>Diagnostic question: Do you believe that God desires a personal relationship with you?</p>
<p>Creation</p>	
<p>Q: Does the religion have an influential creation story?</p>	<p>Yes. Six-day creation.</p>
<p>Q: What is the nature of external [to man] reality [the external world]?</p>	<p>The external, outside world is sinful, therefore a monastic approach to life is most preferable. The physical world is real, not illusion. Sin is located in the world. Dress in black, to point out distance from the sinful world. There is a small element of societal reformation in Orthodoxy, but it is small. Much more emphasis is placed on the inner world and reformation. Catholicism has some of this, but Orthodoxy puts this much higher. Orthodoxy places much more emphasis on suffering than does Catholicism. The highest life is in a monastery. "Angels are the light to monks, monks are the light to other church attendees." "Hold your mind out of hell, and don't give in."</p>
<p>Man</p>	
<p>Q: What is a human being?</p>	<p>The presupposition underlying the Orthodox doctrine of man is that man was made for "participation" in God. The biblical account of creation of man after the image and the likeness of God is interpreted within Orthodoxy as indicating two different aspects of human beings. John of Damascus believed "the expression according to the image indicates rationality and freedom, while the expression according to the likeness indicates assimilation to God through virtue." Image relates to man's nature, while likeness relates to the will of man.</p>

Q: Is man made up of both material and immaterial parts?	Yes. Physical and spiritual world are equally important.
Q: What is the meaning of human history?	<p>1) Theosis, or participation in God (from human perspective). 2) Co-creation with God (from God's perspective). Person as creator. People have culture. In this man transfigures the world into that which is what God intended.</p> <p>Diagnostic question: Why did God create man? Is that goal still in effect, or not? Can man become a god on earth?</p>
Sin	
Q: What is the basic human problem?	<p>Adam was not a perfect human being but was endowed with the potential for perfection. Consequently, the doctrine of the Fall into sin is not as dramatic in Orthodoxy as in the Western tradition. Fall from God. Sin marred God's image in persons. 99% depends on the person, and what he does with that sin (Orthodox [semi-Pegalian] view of sin is seen in many Baptists in Ukraine and Russia as well.)</p> <p>As early as the second century, East and West developed distinct approaches to theology. The Western theological paradigm is creation-fall-redemption, while the Eastern is creation-deification, or theosis. The image of God in man refers to that aspect God placed in man from the beginning. Likeness, on the other hand, is a goal toward which man must aim. Likeness depends upon our moral choice, upon our 'virtue,' so it is destroyed by sin.</p>

<p>Q: What is the cause of the problem?</p>	<p>Adam started like a child who was supposed to grow and become perfect. God set Adam on the right path, but Adam’s fall essentially consisted in his disobedience to the will of God. Adam’s sin set up a barrier that man could never break down by his own efforts (not so much the legal barrier of sin as the existential barrier of mortality). The rebellion of Adam and Eve against God was their personal sin. This resulted in no inherited guilt for their descendants. Although the Orthodox emphasize the unity of humankind, this unity includes only hereditary death and not inherited guilt. Each child remains innocent until he or she personally sins.</p> <p>Diagnostic question: What is sin? Do your own choices produce sin or remit sin? To what degree has sin affected man?</p>
Death	
<p>Q: What happens to a person at death?</p>	<p>Separation of spirit from body, but only after 40 days of wandering the earth does his spirit leave the earth. Theodora (6th-8th century?) saw a vision, and wrote a book - after death spirit goes through a series of railroad barriers, each of which is one sin. Living ones left pray that the person makes it through the maze and tests. The living can pay priests to pray for the dead (30+% church income is from such prayers.) Soul (душа). No purgatory - either heaven or hell. The writings of ascetics and mystics lead the way for Orthodox in this area, as in others also.</p> <p>Diagnostic question: Is man finally responsible for his life on earth? Why or why not?</p>
Christ	
<p>Q: Is there a savior figure [in some cases, men who have delayed their final transformation to help others]?</p>	<p>Yes. Christ and the virgin Mary (Богородица - “God bearer”). 1% of salvation is Jesus, other 99% is individual effort. Some Orthodox say it’s 50/50, but it’s closer to 99/1 in practice. Prayer to Mary is in both classical Orthodoxy and in folk practice. Officially Jesus is higher than Mary, but in practice they are on almost the same level.</p>

<p>Q: If he is known, how is Jesus seen by this religion?</p>	<p>Since man could not come to God, God came to man in the incarnation of Christ. The Incarnation (more so than the Atonement) reopened for man the path to God.</p> <p>Diagnostic question: Why did Jesus come to earth, and is Mary necessary to that purpose?</p>
<p>Cross</p>	
<p>Q: Is there a concept of substitutionary death?</p>	<p>According to Orthodox belief, baptism imparts new and immortal life. Since Orthodoxy practices infant baptism it follows that repentance and faith are not essential. Salvation understood mystically as deification and not as forensic justification by faith obscures the biblical record about Christ's vicarious death.</p> <p>Diagnostic question: Why was it necessary for God Himself to sacrifice His human life, and what did His death accomplish?</p>
<p>Faith</p>	

<p>Q: What are the means of a transformation?</p>	<p>“New birth” as a term does not exist in Orthodox theology, even though some modern Orthodox believers use it. In baptism a person receives new, immortal life, and the Holy Spirit. John ch 3 means orthodox baptism, not new birth (Orthodox commentary on John ch 3). The Orthodox church places great important on orthopraxis, or right practice, which for Orthodox means participation in the liturgy and sacraments.</p> <p>Orthodox theologian John Meyendorff says the following: "The Orthodox, when asked positively about the sources of their faith, answer in such concepts as the whole of Scripture, seen in the light of the tradition of the ancient Councils, the Fathers, and the faith of the entire people of God, expressed particularly in the liturgy."</p> <p>The means whereby human beings achieve Theosis (participate in the divine energies) are the sacraments and human effort. The Orthodox stress on the sacraments as the means of deification (theosis) leads to the logical conclusion that theosis is impossible outside the church. The Sacraments are the way to theosis." Thus salvation or deification is possible only in and through the church, because "the Church and the Sacraments are the way to God, for the Church is in absolute reality the Body of Christ."</p> <p>One is not supposed to try to understand the mode in which the sacraments mediate the divine energies because they are mysteries. Consequently, the emphasis is laid upon participation in the sacraments and not upon a personal relationship with Christ mediated through the study of Scripture. ('Worthiness' to participate in the Lord's Supper is widely seen in Protestant churches in the Orthodox world.)</p> <p>Orthodox Christian doctrine concerning salvation may be likened not to traditional Arminian theology, but rather to a more legalistic version of Arminian theology. Consistent with Arminian theology, the Orthodox believe that synergism (cooperation between man and God) is necessary in the process of salvation. This in contrast the Calvinism which holds a more monergistic (puppet) model of salvation. But whereas there are Biblical aspects to both models, Orthodoxy deviates from a Biblical point of view in proposing that the justification offered through the gospel is essentially a works based justification system. Although they may object to such a characterization, this is consistent with their own description of their beliefs:</p> <p>Diagnostic question: Is the object of your faith a person or an organization? What are the goal and means of your faith?</p>
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Life	
<p>Q: What is the end of transformation?</p>	<p>To become like God - Theosis (обожение). "God became man so that man might become God." The Orthodox church explains salvation not in terms of justification but as mystical union with God. H.H. Kalistos Ware, "If a man asks 'How can I become god?' the answer is very simple: go to church, receive the sacraments regularly, pray to God 'in spirit and in truth,' read the Gospels, follow the commandments." Since God is transcendent, one might ask how union with God is possible. According to the Orthodox doctrine of salvation, union with God according to essence (nature, ousia) is impossible. The energies or divine operations, on the other hand, are forces inseparable from God's essence in which He manifests Himself and communicates. Mystical union with God, therefore, is man's way of participating in the divine energies. The divine energies are outpourings of the divine nature. The energies represent God's mode of existence outside His inaccessible essence. Therefore, God has two modes of being ≈ in His essence and outside His essence. The uncreated energies proceed from His nature and are inseparable, just as the rays of sun would shine out from the solar disk whether or not there were any beings capable of receiving its light.</p> <p>There is no assurance of ultimate transformation or acceptance by God in this life. One can only hope. An Orthodox priest at funerals will often pronounce the deceased "to the kingdom of heaven," but it is a hope and not a judicial statement, given that the deceased himself is not yet there anyway, having to roam the earth for 40 days until his earthly journey is truly complete.</p> <p>Diagnostic question: Why did God place you here on this planet? What is the meaning of life?</p>
Truth	
<p>Q: Can absolute truth be known?</p>	<p>Yes (the teaching of Orthodoxy). The Bible is part of tradition. Tradition also includes the seven ecumenical church councils, and often icons and liturgy. Rather than sorting through its heritage, the Orthodox church has preferred to hide behind the claim that the Holy Spirit guards it from errors.</p>
Scriptures (Sacred Writings)	

<p>Q: Why is it possible to know anything at all?</p>	<p>It is possible because the Church exists in history, and is a living testament to truth. Scripture is part of this truth, but not its entirety. Revelation is conveyed to the world not only through Scripture but also through Apostolic Tradition; that is, Christ entrusted the divine revelation to the apostles, and they entrusted it to the church, which became the custodian and the interpreter of revelation. This heritage, or Deposit of Faith, is not to be understood as a set of normative doctrines but as a new reality or new life made available to the world by the incarnation of the Word and through the operation of the Holy Spirit.</p> <p>Holy Tradition completes Holy Scripture....By the term Holy Tradition we understand the entire life of the Church in the Holy Spirit. "Scripture is not an authority set up <i>over</i> the church, but lives and is understood <i>within</i> the church. "Scripture owes its authority to the Church. It is the Church likewise that alone constitutes the authoritative interpretation of the Bible...the decisive criterion for our understanding of Scripture is <i>the mind of the Church.</i>" Liturgy and icons are considered by most Orthodox as part of tradition.</p>
<p>Morality / Ethics</p>	
<p>Q: How do we know what is right or wrong?</p>	<p>The teaching of the Orthodox church, including the seven church councils. Orthodox Church teaching, unlike Catholicism, has not changed substantively since the 7th church council (787).</p>
<p>Spirit Beings</p>	
<p>Q: What is the spirit world like [beings, places, authority, status]?</p>	<p>God, angels, Satan, dead saints. Some of the standards to becoming a recognized saint are that miracles are attested to on the basis of his corpse, and also on the basis of answered prayers directed toward this person.</p>
<p>Powers (Power objects)</p>	
<p>Q: Are certain objects viewed as being sacred or filled with awe-producing power?</p>	<p>All sacred objects (icons, crosses - in short, any object in a church) have the strength of grace, and the church itself is also so viewed.</p>
<p>Rituals</p>	

Q: What rites (such as rites of passage) and events do they observe?	The most significant are baptism, most commonly of infants, which confers the Holy Spirit, and the 40 days of a person's spirit roaming the earth following death (taken from Jesus' 40 days on earth after His resurrection.)
Q: What 'secular' rituals, rites, events, or superstitions are artifacts of an earlier religious significance?	All holidays have some religious foundation (most from paganism, pre 988AD [year of founding of Russian Orthodoxy])
Ancestor Worship	
Q: What part do deceased ancestors play in the religion? Is there interaction with the living?	None. Only saints (also dead) play a role in the lives of people today, through prayers to them.
Shaman	
Q: Are there people who serve as intermediaries to the spirit world?	Saints, and the Virgin Mary (goddess - богиня)
Prophets / Holy men	
Founder(s) / Heroes / Savior(s)	
Q: What is the foundation story of the religion?	
Witchcraft / Magic / Healing	
Totemism	

Q: Is there a division of the people into groups identified with animals or other things in nature?	No.
Major Contemporary Divisions of the Religion	
Q: What sects, denominations, or off-shoots of the religion exist today?	Catacomb, Virgin birth center (Богородочный центр)
Q: What are the basic differences between the sects, denominations, or off-shoots?	Allegiance to whom (to which human head - in Moscow or Kyiv)
Geographic / Sociological variables	
Q: Do people in rural areas hold more tenaciously to the basics of the religion?	Yes.
Q: Do people only become “religious” at certain times?	1) major life moments (baptism, marriage, death) 2) holidays (Easter, Christmas, and to a lesser extent, Pentecost and any number of other lesser Orthodox holidays, of which there are many [angel appearing to Mary, presentation of Jesus in the temple, ascension of Christ, etc.] 3) during times of personal, family, or national crises
Q: Is there a religious caste system?	No, not formally. Informally, there are some elements, but it’s not particularly strong, nor officially sanctioned.
Redemptive Analogies	

<p>Q: Are there any apparent redemptive analogies in their belief system?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ‣ Repentance (Russian movie in early 90's) ‣ Guilt of sin (typically a mile wide and an inch deep) and resulting separation from God caused by that sin ‣ Emmanuel – God with us
<p>Q: Where does/do the analogy/-ies break down?</p>	<p>They are inadequate to bring a person to God, because the understanding of sin is incomplete. Therefore the remedy to that problem is also incomplete. They point the direction toward the human problem, but do not understand it deep enough, nor do they offer a satisfying, assured remedy.</p>
<p>Q: Which of their beliefs are most obviously examples of “broken” revealed truth?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ‣ Repentance ‣ Means of grace ‣ Salvation by works ‣ Tradition
<p>Q: Which of their beliefs am I most likely to misunderstand based upon my beliefs and prejudices?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ‣ Salvation as a journey not a state of being, leading to ‣ Understanding of repentance ‣ Means of grace ‣ Assurance of salvation ‣ Role of tradition (councils) as a foundation of faith ‣ Role of Scripture (Orthodox sometimes view Protestants as idolaters for ‘worshipping’ Scripture) ‣ The pull of the Orthodox Church on lives of its adherents ‣ The essence of the church (both divine and human)

<p>Notes/Bibliography</p>	<p>Donald Fairbairn, <i>Eastern Orthodoxy Through Western Eyes</i>, Westminster John Knox, Louisville, 2002. 209 pp. \$19.95. ISBN 0-664-22497-0. http://www.equip.org/free/DE177.htm</p> <p>K. Ware & C Davey, ed., "The Agreed Statement Adopted by the Anglican-Orthodox Joint Doctrinal Commission at Moscow, 26 July to 2 August 1976," in <i>Anglican-Orthodox Dialogue</i>, (London: SPCK, 1977), 84.</p> <p>Kalistos Ware, "The Exercise of Authority in the Orthodox Church," <i>Ecclesia kai Theologia</i>, 946-47.</p> <p>John Meyendorff, <i>Catholicity and the Church</i> (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1983), 100.</p> <p>V. Lossky, <i>In the Image and the Likeness of God</i>, ed. J. H. Erickson (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1985), 13.</p> <p>Bishop Maximus Aghiorgoussis, "East Meets West: Gifts of the Eastern Tradition to the Whole Church," <i>St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly</i> 37 (1993): 4.</p>
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Major World Religion Worldview Analysis	Postmodernism By John Morgan
God	
Q: Does the religion express belief in a god or gods?"	Postmodernism has moved away from Modernism with regard to God. Modernism says, there is no God." Postmodernism says, "there is no single God". This is not to be mistaken with polytheism. Nor is it the espousal of theism. God is not a necessity but a convenience. God exists for the purposes of the adherent. "No one religious perspective or figure is normative for all people. Each religion can be valid for its followers." <i>Netland & Johnson. (Tell the Truth) 55</i>
Q: What are some of the characteristics of the god(s)?	This god is not authoritative nor is truth defined by this god. This god is neither personal nor historical.
Q: What is the really real (ultimate reality)?	There is no ultimate reality.
Creation	
Q: Does the religion have an influential creation story?	No. The miraculous is insignificant and unbelievable. <i>Carson 278</i> "The self is the only creator recognized. There is no thought of a transcendent Creator to whom one must give an account." <i>Hinkson & Ganssle (Tell the Truth) 86</i>
Q: What is the nature of external [to man] reality [the external world]?	"...we have no access to reality itself but only to our varying, limited perspectives on reality, with no way of determining which (if any) perspective is in fact true." <i>Netland & Johnson. (Tell the Truth) 54</i>
Man	
Q: What is a human being?	
Q: Is man made up of both material and immaterial parts?	Pluralism & syncretism are the pillars of Postmodernism. The best answer, from a Postmodern perspective is, "Yes & No. It may be "yes" for one, "no" for another but neither for everyone.
Q: What is the meaning of human history?	Every interpretation of history is subjective. There is no view of historiography that can make an exclusive claim to the truth. History is viewed on a continuum that is closer to fiction than science. "How to Read a Book" ; Adler; ed. 1972, p.236

Sin	
Q: What is the basic human problem?	Intolerance
Q: What is the cause of the problem?	The assumption of absolute truth
Death	
Q: What happens to a person at death?	
Q: What happens to an adherent (believer) at death?	
Christ	
Q: Is there a savior figure [in some cases, men who have delayed their final transformation to help others]?	There can be many savior figures but there is not one exclusive savior for everyone.
Q: Are there intermediaries between “the ultimate” (god) and mankind?	
Q: How is Jesus seen by this religion?	Jesus may or may not be relevant.
Cross	
Q: Is there a concept of substitutionary death?	No
Faith	
Q: What is/are the means of a transformation? (What must be believed or done to move into the ideal state of existence?)	This is self-determined
Life	

Q: What is the end of transformation (the ideal state of existence to be reached)?	tolerance
Truth	
Q: Can absolute truth be known?	No. “The preeminent characteristic of postmodernity is its lack of consensus concerning the concept of truth.” <i>Jones (The Challenge) 345</i>
Q: Why is it possible to know anything at all?	Truth is finite and relative. What is true for one culture or individual may not be true for another. “The Dangers and Delights of Postmodernism” © 2003, Modern Reformation Magazine (July / August Issue, Vol. 12.4). “All knowledge is perspective. There are no facts, only interpretations from one’s own perspective”. <i>Brown, (Challenge) 315</i>
Scriptures (Sacred Writings)	
How authoritative are the Sacred Writings?	Authority has not absolute application
If the Bible constitutes the Scriptures, what other authoritative books are there?	There are no writings that are uniquely authoritative for all people in all times and cultures.
Worship	
What forms of worship (rituals/ceremonies; Corporate/individual) are practiced by adherents?	
Morality / Ethics	
Q: How do we know what is right or wrong?	There is no ultimate means. We live in a pluralist society, therefore there are not absolutes. “The self is the only creator recognized. There is no thought of a transcendent Creator to whom one must give an account. Thus the project of life is not as much a moral as it is an aesthetic enterprise.” <i>Hinkson & Ganssle (Telling the Truth) p. 86</i>
Q: What are some of the moral/ethical requirements of the religion?	personal fulfillment

Major Contemporary Divisions of the Religion	
Q: What sects, denominations, or off-shoots of the religion exist today?	
Q: What are the basic differences between the sects, denominations, or off-shoots?	
Impact/Consistency	
Q: What is the impact of the religion on the daily life of adherents?	Minimalizes religion in society and trivializes belief in the transcendent. The most secularized, materialistic and hedonistic elements of the population are established as normative.
Q: To what degree do adherents live comfortably with values, beliefs, and life-ways that conflict with their religion?	Truth claims are considered intolerant. Absolutes are untenable.

<p>Major World Religions Worldview Analysis [see note below]</p>	<p>Roman Catholicism By Gil Thomas</p>
<p>God</p>	
<p>Q: Does the religion express belief in a god or gods?"</p>	<p>"Hear, O Israel, the LORD our God is one LORD. . ." (<i>Dt</i> 6:4; <i>Mk</i> 12:29). The supreme being must be unique, without equal. . . If God is not one, he is not God. Pgh. 228</p>
<p>Q: What are some of the characteristics of the god(s)?</p>	<p>God, infinitely perfect and blessed in himself, in a plan of sheer goodness freely created man to make him share in his own blessed life. For this reason, at every time and in every place, God draws close to man. He calls man to seek him, to know him, to love him with all his strength. He calls together all men, scattered and divided by sin, into the unity of his family, the Church. To accomplish this, when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son as Redeemer and Savior. In his Son and through him, he invites men to become, in the Holy Spirit, his adopted children and thus heirs of his blessed life. Pgh. 1</p> <p>Even when he reveals himself, God remains a mystery beyond words: "If you understood him, it would not be God" (St. Augustine, <i>Sermo</i> 52, 6, 16: PL 38, 360 and <i>Sermo</i> 117, 3, 5: PL 38, 663). Pgh. 230</p> <p>The God of our faith has revealed himself as HE WHO IS; and he has made himself known as "abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness". God's very being is Truth and Love. Pgh. 231</p>

Q: What is the really real (ultimate reality)?	
Creation	
Q: Does the religion have an influential creation story?	
Q: What is the nature of external [to man] reality [the external world]?	
Man	

Q: What is a human being?

The first man was not only created good, but was also established in friendship with his Creator and in harmony with himself and with the creation around him, in a state that would be surpassed only by the glory of the new creation in Christ.

Pgh. 374

By the radiance of this grace all dimensions of man's life were confirmed. As long as he remained in the divine intimacy, man would not have to suffer or die. The inner harmony of the human person, the harmony between man and woman, and finally the harmony between the first couple and all creation, comprised the state called "original justice". Pgh. 376

In man, true freedom is an "outstanding manifestation of the divine image".

Pgh 1712

The sign of man's familiarity with God is that God places him in the garden. There he lives "to till it and keep it". Work is not yet a burden, but rather the collaboration of man and woman with God in perfecting the visible creation. Pgh. 378

Man is obliged to follow the moral law, which urges him "to do what is good and avoid what is evil". This law makes itself heard in his conscience.

Pgh 1713

Man and woman were made "for each other" - not that God left them half-made and incomplete: he created them to be a communion of persons, in which each can be "helpmate" to the other, for they are equal as persons ("bone of my bones. . .") and complementary as masculine and feminine. In marriage God unites them in such a way that, by forming "one flesh",²⁴⁵ they can transmit human life: "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth." By transmitting human life to their descendants, man and woman as spouses and parents cooperate in a unique way in the Creator's work. Pgh. 372

Man, having been wounded in his nature by original sin, is subject to error and inclined to evil in exercising his freedom.

Pgh 1714

This entire harmony of original justice, foreseen for man in God's plan, will be lost by the sin of our first parents. Pgh. 378

Q: Is man made up of both material and immaterial parts?	Yes.
Q: What is the meaning of human history?	
Sin	

Q: What is the basic human problem?

Sin is before all else an offense against God, a rupture of communion with him. At the same time it damages communion with the Church. For this reason conversion entails both God's forgiveness and reconciliation with the Church, which are expressed and accomplished liturgically by the sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation.
Pgh 1440

See also "Death" for more on consequences of sin.

Only God forgives sins. Since he is the Son of God, Jesus says of himself, "The Son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins" and exercises this divine power: "Your sins are forgiven." Further, by virtue of his divine authority he gives this power to men to exercise in his name.

Pgh 1441

In imparting to his apostles his own power to forgive sins the Lord also gives them the authority to reconcile sinners with the Church. This ecclesial dimension of their task is expressed most notably in Christ's solemn words to Simon Peter: "I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." "The office of binding and loosing which was given to Peter was also assigned to the college of the apostles united to its head."
Pgh 1444

The words *bind and loose* mean: whomever you exclude from your communion, will be excluded from communion with God; whomever you receive anew into your communion, God will welcome back into his. *Reconciliation with the Church is inseparable from reconciliation with God.*

Pgh 1445

Christ instituted the sacrament of Penance for all sinful members of his Church: above all for those who, since Baptism, have fallen into grave sin, and have thus lost their baptismal grace and wounded ecclesial communion. It is to them that the sacrament of Penance offers a new possibility to convert and to recover the grace of justification. The Fathers of the Church present this sacrament as "the second plank [of salvation] after the shipwreck which is the loss of grace."

Pgh 1446

Over the centuries the concrete form in which the Church has exercised this power received from the Lord has varied considerably. During the first centuries the reconciliation of Christians who had committed particularly grave sins after their Baptism (for example, idolatry, murder, or adultery) was tied to a very rigorous discipline, according to which penitents had to do public penance for their sins, often for years, before receiving reconciliation. To this "order of penitents" (which concerned only certain grave sins) one was only rarely admitted and in certain regions

<p>Q: What is the cause of the problem?</p>	<p>Born with a fallen human nature and tainted by original sin, children also have need of the new birth in Baptism to be freed from the power of darkness and brought into the realm of the freedom of the children of God, to which all men are called. The sheer gratuitousness of the grace of salvation is particularly manifest in infant Baptism. The Church and the parents would deny a child the priceless grace of becoming a child of God were they not to confer Baptism shortly after birth.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Pgh 1250</p>
<p>Death</p>	
<p>Q: What happens to a person at death?</p>	<p>Yet certain temporal consequences of sin remain in the baptized, such as suffering, illness, death, and such frailties inherent in life as weaknesses of character, and so on, as well as an inclination to sin that Tradition calls <i>concupiscence</i>, or metaphorically, "the tinder for sin" (<i>fomes peccati</i>); since concupiscence "is left for us to wrestle with, it cannot harm those who do not consent but manfully resist it by the grace of Jesus Christ." Indeed, "an athlete is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules."</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Pgh 1263, 1264</p>
<p>Q: What happens to an adherent (believer) at death?</p>	
<p>Christ</p>	
<p>Q: Is there a savior figure [in some cases, men who have delayed their final transformation to help others]?</p>	<p>He who believes in Christ has new life in the Holy Spirit. The moral life, increased and brought to maturity in grace, is to reach its fulfillment in the glory of heaven.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Pgh 1715</p>

Q: Are there intermediaries between “the ultimate” (god) and mankind?	
Q: How is Jesus seen by this religion?	
Cross	
Q: Is there a concept of substitutionary death?	By his Passion, Christ delivered us from Satan and from sin. He merited for us the new life in the Holy Spirit. His grace restores what sin had damaged in us. Pgh 1708
Faith	

<p>Q: What is/are the means of a transformation? (What must be believed or done to move into the ideal state of existence?)</p>	<p>Baptism is the sacrament of faith. But faith needs the community of believers. It is only within the faith of the Church that each of the faithful can believe. The faith required for Baptism is not a perfect and mature faith, but a beginning that is called to develop. The catechumen or the godparent is asked: "What do you ask of God's Church?" The response is: "Faith!" Pgh 1253</p> <p>For all the baptized, children or adults, faith must grow <i>after</i> Baptism. For this reason the Church celebrates each year at the Easter Vigil the renewal of baptismal promises. Preparation for Baptism leads only to the threshold of new life. Baptism is the source of that new life in Christ from which the entire Christian life springs forth. Pgh 1254</p> <p>The second part of the Catechism explains how God's salvation, accomplished once for all through Christ Jesus and the Holy Spirit, is made present in the sacred actions of the Church's liturgy (<i>Section One</i>), especially in the seven sacraments (<i>Section Two</i>). Prologue, Pgh. 15</p> <p>The third part of the Catechism deals with the final end of man created in the image of God: beatitude, and the ways of reaching it - through right conduct freely chosen, with the help of God's law and grace (<i>Section One</i>), and through conduct that fulfills the twofold commandment of charity, specified in God's Ten Commandments (<i>Section Two</i>). Prol, Pgh 16</p> <p>He who believes in Christ becomes a son of God. This filial adoption transforms him by giving him the ability to follow the example of Christ. It makes him capable of acting rightly and doing good. In union with his Savior, the disciple attains the perfection of charity which is holiness. Having matured in grace, the moral life blossoms into eternal life in the glory of heaven. Pgh 1709</p> <p>Believing in God, the only One, and loving him with all our being has enormous consequences for our whole life. Pgh. 222</p>
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Life	
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Q: What is the end of transformation (the ideal state of existence to be reached)?

Those who belong to Christ through faith and Baptism must confess their baptismal faith before men.
Prologue, Pgh. 14

By Baptism *all sins* are forgiven, original sin and all personal sins, as well as all punishment for sin. In those who have been reborn nothing remains that would impede their entry into the Kingdom of God, neither Adam's sin, nor personal sin, nor the consequences of sin, the gravest of which is separation from God.
Pgh 1263

Baptism not only purifies from all sins, but also makes the neophyte "a new creature," an adopted son of God, who has become a "partaker of the divine nature," member of Christ and co-heir with him, and a temple of the Holy Spirit. 1265

The Most Holy Trinity gives the baptized sanctifying grace, the grace of *justification*:

- enabling them to believe in God, to hope in him, and to love him through the theological virtues;
- giving them the power to live and act under the prompting of the Holy Spirit through the gifts of the Holy Spirit;
- allowing them to grow in goodness through the moral virtues.

Thus the whole organism of the Christian's supernatural life has its roots in Baptism.

Pgh 1266

The Lord himself affirms that Baptism is necessary for salvation.⁶⁰ He also commands his disciples to proclaim the Gospel to all nations and to baptize them.⁶¹ Baptism is necessary for salvation for those to whom the Gospel has been proclaimed and who have had the possibility of asking for this sacrament.⁶² The Church does not know of any means other than Baptism that assures entry into eternal beatitude; this is why she takes care not to neglect the mission she has received from the Lord to see that all who can be baptized are "reborn of water and the Spirit." *God has bound salvation to the sacrament of Baptism, but he himself is not bound by his sacraments.*
Pgh 1257

The Church has always held the firm conviction that those who suffer death for the sake of the faith without having received Baptism are baptized by their death for and with Christ. This *Baptism of blood*, like the *desire for Baptism*, brings about the fruits of Baptism without being a sacrament.

Pgh 1258

Baptism makes us members of the Body of Christ: "Therefore . . . we are members one of another."
Baptism incorporates us *into the Church*. From the baptismal fonts is born the one People of God of the New Covenant, which transcends all the natural or human limits of nations, cultures, races, and sexes: "For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body."
Pgh 1267

Truth	
Q: Can absolute truth be known?	
Q: Why is it possible to know anything at all?	
Scriptures (Sacred Writings)	
How authoritative are the Sacred Writings?	
If the Bible constitutes the Scriptures, what other authoritative books are there?	
Worship	
What forms of worship (rituals/ceremonies; Corporate/individual) are practiced by adherents?	
Morality / Ethics	
Q: How do we know what is right or wrong?	
Q: What are some of the moral/ethical requirements of the religion?	
Major Contemporary Divisions of the religion	

Q: What sects, denominations, or off-shoots of the religion exist today?	
Q: What are the basic differences between the sects, denominations, or off-shoots?	
Impact/Consistency	
Q: What is the impact of the religion on the daily life of adherents?	
Q: Do what degree do adherents live comfortably with values, beliefs, and life-ways that conflict with their religion?	
Bibliography	The primary source used for this synopsis is the Catechism of the Catholic Church , which can be found at www.vatican.va/archive/catechism/ccc_toc.htm or www.scborromeo.org/ccc.htm .

Access Points to ‘The Religious Components’ of a Worldview	Secular Humanism By John Tolbert
Categories and Questions	Responses
What is the name of the society or people group?	Not limited to any one society or people group
Does the society view life holistically [so that religion is not a part of life but is infused through all of life]?	No
Name the predominant religious system(s) in the society.	Scientific or Secular Humanists (SH)
How many adherents does each religion have?	Estimates of at least 1.2 billion <i>atheists</i> alone in the world today.
God	
Q: Does the religion express belief in a god or gods?”	No. SH are generally non-theists.
Q: What are the characteristics of the god(s)?	There are no “gods”.
Q: What is the really real?	The “physical”, or, that which can be measured by “the scientific method”.
Creation	
Q: Does the religion have an influential creation story?	As “scientifically oriented” evolutionists, SH would lean towards the “Big Bang” theory of creation.

Q: What is the nature of external [to man] reality [the external world]?	Reality is the result of evolution. The physical universe will someday “burn out” and cease to exist.
Man	
Q: What is a human being?	The highest form of evolved life on planet Earth.
Q: Is man made up of both material and immaterial parts?	No. Since the “soul” can not be scientifically measured, its existence would be negated. Certainly the Christian concept of “soul” (Gen 2:7) would be dismissed.
Q: What is the meaning of human history?	It is a record of man’s evolution. It has no “meaning”.
Sin	
Q: What is the basic human problem?	Disharmony
Q: What is the cause of the problem?	Lack of education, primitive beliefs (religion)
Death	
Q: What happens to a person at death?	Existence ceases. There is no “afterlife”.
Christ	
Q: Is there a savior figure [in some cases, men who have delayed their final transformation to help others]?	No. Man is not in need of a savior. Man can “save” himself.
Q: If he is known, how is Jesus seen by this religion?	Probably, a great teacher of morality, like (they would say), Buddha, or certain other religious figures.
Cross	
Q: Is there a concept of substitutionary death?	No.

Faith	
Q: What are the means of a transformation?	Education, “the scientific method”, reason
Life	
Q: What is the end of transformation?	The advancement of the human race through higher evolution.
Truth	
Q: Can absolute truth be known?	Would probably deny “absolute truth” in moral categories, but accept it in “scientific categories”.
Scriptures (Sacred Writings)	
Q: Why is it possible to know anything at all?	Only through the “scientific method” and human reason.
Morality / Ethics	
Q: How do we know what is right or wrong?	The “scientific method”, reasons, and human experience.
Spirit Beings	
Q: What is the spirit world like [beings, places, authority, status]?	There is no such thing.
Powers (Power objects)	
Q: Are certain objects viewed as being sacred or filled with awe-producing power?	Perhaps, nature itself might be viewed as “sacred”.
Rituals	
Q: What rites (such as rites of passage) and events do they observe?	Minimal observance, if at all.

Q: What 'secular' rituals, rites, events, or superstitions are artifacts of an earlier religious significance?	None.
Ancestor Worship	
Q: What part do deceased ancestors play in the religion? Is there interaction with the living?	They are deceased, period, and have no interaction with anyone, or anything.
Shaman	
Q: Are there people who serve as intermediaries to the spirit world?	No.
Prophets / Holy men	
	None.
Founder(s) / Heroes / Savior(s)	
Q: What is the foundation story of the religion?	Matter mysteriously evolved into life (Evolution).
Witchcraft / Magic / Healing	
	Myth.
Totemism	
Q: Is there a division of the people into groups identified with animals or other things in nature?	No.

Major Contemporary Divisions of the Religion	
Q: What sects, denominations, or off-shoots of the religion exist today?	Atheists, agnostics, free-thinkers, humanists, Marxists, etc.
Q: What are the basic differences between the sects, denominations, or off-shoots?	Political and economic ideologies, social and cultural conventions.
Geographic / Sociological variables	
Q: Do people in rural areas hold more tenaciously to the basics of the religion?	No. They would probably be less likely to be SH.
Q: Do people only become “religious” at certain times?	The SH would probably so contend.
Q: Is there a religious caste system?	No.
Redemptive Analogies	
Q: Are there any apparent redemptive analogies in their belief system?	No.
Q: Where does/do the analogy/-ies break down?	n/a
Q: Which of their beliefs are most obviously examples of “broken” revealed truth?	There is no God, or He is not directly involved in the world.

Q: Which of their beliefs am I most likely to misunderstand based upon my beliefs and prejudices?	Their “faith” in the “scientific method” and reason.