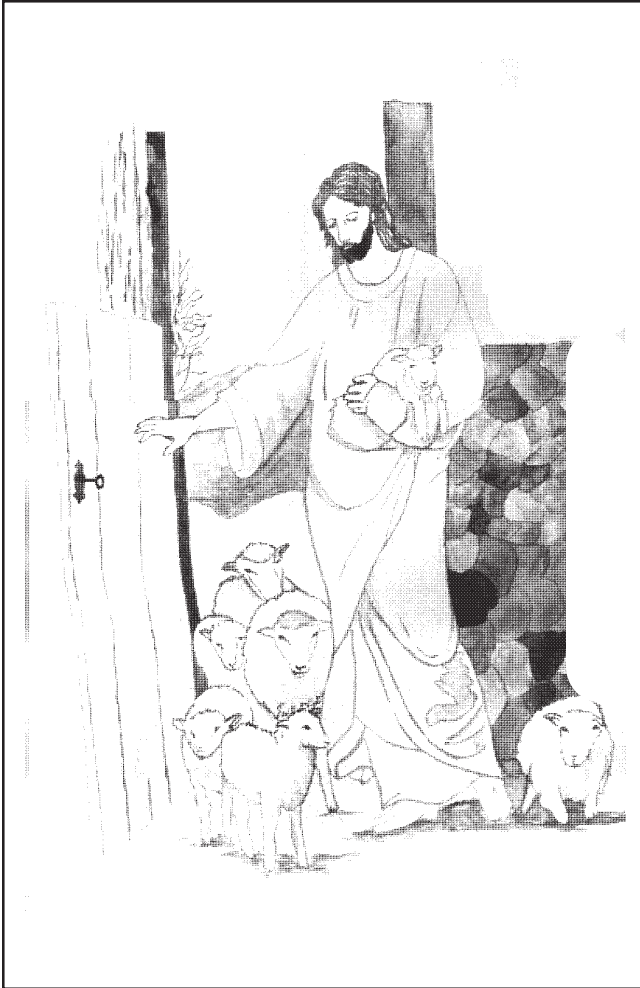


# World Religions



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# World Religions

a course about increasing our understanding of the Religions of the world,  
and exploring how to relate to them from our own religious perspective.

**INSTRUCTORS:** Jerry Kopitzke 795-1983  
Ken Curtis 795-0343, 795-9741 (Calimesa Church)

**TEXT:** World Views and Religions, Pacific Press, 1998.  
Suggested: Lewis, C.S., Mere Christianity  
Bell, Rob, Velvet Elvis: Repainting the Christian Faith

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:** Completion of reading and other written assignments  
Participation in class discussion  
Satisfactory scores on quizzes  
Short written responses to presentations by students  
In class presentation and paper on selected religion  
Visiting services of various religious groups, and recording your reflections  
Course notebook (to be turned in).

**FORMAT FOR THE NOTEBOOK:** The course notebook should be divided into four sections:

- A. Class notes and/or handouts
- B. Observation Sheets (religious visitation forms)
- C. Information Sheets
  - (1) Information sheets from student presentations in class
  - (2) Paper presented in class, along with any other notes or articles that you may want to include from your research.
- D. Seventh-day Adventist Section - class notes and other materials on the unique contributions made by Seventh-day Adventists.

<b>PAPER DEADLINES:</b>	Topic:	AUGUST 27
	Sources:	SEPTEMBER 5
	First Edition	SEPTEMBER 23
	Final Copy	OCTOBER 2
	Presentation	_____

## GUIDELINES FOR VISITING RELIGIOUS SERVICES:

1. You will need to make at least 4 visits to religious services. Your 4 visits should include:
  - A non-Christian service, (Islam, **Judaism**, Eastern Religion)
  - A **Catholic Mass**
  - A mainline protestant service (Methodist, Baptist, Presbyterian, Nazarine, etc.), a non-mainstream service, (Jehovah's Witness, Mormon, etc.), AND / OR a Pentecostal/Charismatic service (Assemblies of God, Foursquare church for extreme expressions; the **Rock**, or the Vineyard, for a more moderate expression.).
  - A Seventh-day Adventist Church Service

\* NO visits are required or suggested to services of any kind involving the worship of nature or spirits, Wicca, witchcraft, Satanism or the occult. If you have an interest in studying more about one of these, talk with the instructor about possible options.

2. During your visit, or as soon as possible afterward, fill out an observation sheet. These forms can be obtained from the instructor or on the Website.
3. While you may not want to fully participate in all aspects of the services you attend, it is still important to maintain an attitude of respect toward those worshipping there. In some cases, you might even want to let one of the people leading out in the service know ahead of time that you are coming, and ask questions afterwards.

# Know your Starting Point . . . Where do you stand?

I. *Should we be doing this? Why or why not?*

II. *HOW should we go about this?*

**A. *The Issue of Location: What you see depends a lot on where you stand.***

(1) The Structure of the Class (Yosemite Valley Model)

(a) Top View

(b) Trail View

(2) Getting Your Eye's Checked - Lenses / Filters / Perspectives

(a) Zoom

(b) Finding my Location (what makes up my prescription lenses?)

(c) How do I correct for my corrections, and why should I?

**B. *Language and Labels - (the problem of a clean room)***

(1). What we need to get started

(2) Figuring out where things go

The reality that there are so many world religions makes us wonder . . .

*If there is, as most of us believe, only one true God, how do we account for the fact that there are so many different religions with such different ideas about God?*

*Are the various religions of the world merely alternate paths that all lead to the same God in the end? Are they dangerous counterfeits? Or are they something in-between?*

*Has God been at work in other religions, or has He only been working with Jews and Christians?*

*Or for that matter, does it really make sense to believe in God? And if it does, how do we know that what we believe about Him is accurate?*

*What exactly is spirituality all about, what does it have to do with "religions," and how do I know if I am spiritual or not?*

### ***Other Questions That Come To Your Mind . . .***

What we need to keep in mind as we think about these, and other, questions:

1. World View(s)
2. Basic Starter Vocab (so we understand each other)

Natural Revelation  
Special Revelation  
Naturalism  
Theism  
Agnostic  
Atheist  
Monism  
Deism  
Monotheism  
Polytheism



# What Insight Does the Bible Give Us?

Does the Bible give us any clues as to how we should go about the task of understanding and relating to other world religions?

Insights from the Apostle Paul - 1 Corinthians 13:9-12

What does Paul mean by "childish ways"

How does this relate to Jesus saying we need to be like little children?

How has your world view changed as you have grown older? What brought the changes about?

What do these passages from from Bible contribute to the conversation about how we should related to other World Religions?

<b>Text:</b>	<b>What it's talking about</b>	<b>What attitudes / insights we find here</b>
Deut 12:1-4		
Genesis 14:15-20*		
Genesis 20:1-9*** (see also 1 King 19:15)		
2 Kings 5:15-19		
Acts 17:16-28		
Romans 1:20-25		
John 10:14-16		

### Notes:

\* Remember that Abraham was the first Jew, which means that whoever it was he met when he traveled to the lands surrounding Sodom and Gomorah, they were not Jews.

\*\* Remember that Abimelech, the ruler of Gerar, was not a Jew either. We don't know what he did or did not know about the God Abraham worshiped. It is quite likely that he, and those in his kingdom, worshipped another God. Yet, God spoke to him in a dream. Interesting?

\*\*\* For further study, read chapters 3 & 6 in The Desire of Ages.

# So, What is Religion All About Anyway?

"Religion" is the container we construct to hold our spirituality. It is what takes shape as we attempt to respond to, or come to terms with, some of the really "big" questions/issues of life. Some of these are:

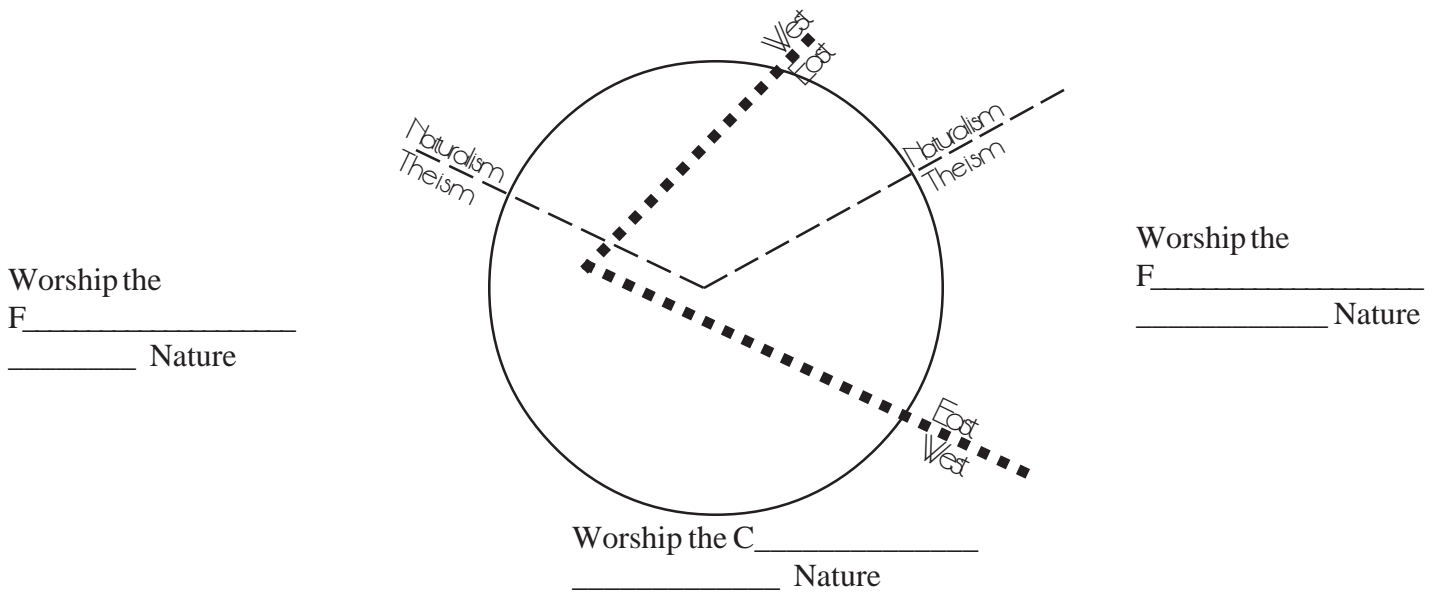


- The Mystery of Life
- Who/What is God? Can God be known? How?
- What happens to us when we die?
- The Problem of pain and suffering
- Who am I, What am I, and Where am I going?
- What, if anything, is wrong with us and how it can be fixed.?

## The Roads Most Traveled

Two major roads are taken in an attempt to find answers to these questions.

What the journeys on these roads are like is shaped by two major ways of thinking about reality.



## What is God like? - The Options of Theism

- Pantheism
- Monotheism
- Polytheism